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INDEX.

PAGE

Aberstone, The Heiress of, 49, 87, 210, 245, 363, 453
About a Carriage Clock 742
About a Surrey Heath 536
About Church Bells... 15
About Stained-Glass Windows 501
Air, The Gospel in the Open... 163
Allington, Robert, The Disappearance of 827
Alms-Boxes, Some Curious ... 747
Alone with Jesus 429
Ancient Churches, Some Curious Chairs in our 465
Apostle Spoons, Mrs. Page's ... 444
Are the Conditions of Life Improving? 758
"Awake, Sweet Harp of Judah" (*Hymn Tune*) 622

Baby 680
"Bad Name, Give a Dog a"... 35
Balance, On Losing One's ... 825
Baptist, The Misgivings of the 534
Bath and its Memories 737
Beauty of God's Handiwork, The 243
Befriending Child Cripples ... 892
Begin Where You Are 116
Bells, About Church 15
Below the Sea-level... 99
Bible Class, "The Quiver" 80, 159, 240, 319, 400, 479, 559, 639, 720, 799, 880, 952
Birchen Glades, In 937
Birds, Rainbows, and Colours in 612
Birds, The Migration of... ... 675
Blocks of Marble, The 27
"Blue, The Girl in" 780
Briar, The Discontented... ... 341
Bullfinches, Foxes and 255
"But Once" 623

Carriage Clock, About a... ... 742
Chairs, Some Curious, in our Ancient Churches 465
Chapters for the Sick and Infirm:—
O Radiant Dark 160
One Sure Way... 320
On Holy Ground 480
Higher Than Storms 560
Morning Without Clouds, A 640
Smiles of God's Goodness, The 800
Child Cripples, Befriending ... 892
Child, On Knowing the Scriptures from a 221
"Child, Only a" 582
Children, A Hymn for 670
Child's Eyes, With a 134
Chinese Seeker after Truth, A 432
"Christ is our Corner-Stone" (*Hymn Tune*) 904

PAGE

Christian Point of View, The 589
Church Bells, About 15
Cleansing, Life's (*Sundays with the Young*)... 591
Clothing, Life's (*Sundays with the Young*)... 658
Colours in Birds, Rainbows, and 612
"Come, I am"... 195
Common Lodging-Houses and their Patrons 83
Compulsory and Willing Cross-bearing 141
Consecration, Life's (*Sundays with the Young*)... 751
"Consider the Lilies" 671
Consolatio... 233
Conversions, Three 229
Corn-coloured Kitten, A... ... 517
Corner, An Old-World 579
Corner in Life, A 333
Cross, The Stars and the ... 498
Cross-bearing, Compulsory and Willing 141
Crypts, Some Famous 820
Cure, Life's (*Sundays with the Young*) 306

"Daughters, Our, as Cornerstones" 774
Death—Gain 785
Deborah 693
Demas (*Spiritual Failures*) ... 818
Devious Ways, Through, 3, 118, 167, 282, 342, 408, 487, 602
Disappearance of Robert Allington, The 827
Discontented Briar, The... ... 341
Dog, Wanted a 755
"Dogs Lie, Let Sleeping" ... 862
Dorsetshire Coast, On the ... 140
Driver of the Mail, The... ... 840
Dropped Stitches 281
Duty, A Little Homily on ... 360

East-End Dress, Nursery Tales in 295
Easy Yoke, The, and the Light Burden 18
Engagement, Winifred's ... 883
Episode, A Workhouse 372
"Eternity, Who Inhabiteth" 180
Evening Hymn, An 543
Evening Hymn, Their 68
Evening Thoughts 330
Evensong, A Forest 441
Experiences as a Sunday-school Teacher, My (*See under* Sunday-school)
Eye of the Soul, The 138
Eyes, Through Different ... 130

Fables, New, With Old Morals 150
Face of God, Seeking the ... 29

PAGE

Failures, Spiritual (*See under* Spiritual)
"Father of Mercies, Bow Thine Ear" (*Hymn Tune*) 277
Father's Love, A 295
"Father, Our" 867
First Work for God, The ... 97
Fligdit's Seeds, Mr., and How he Grew Them... 527
Folly, Frank's 664
For a Little While 64
Force of Habit, The 911
Foreign Missions: Is the Interest in them Deepening?... 594
Forest Evensong, A... 441
"Fortune, A Golden" 932
"Found Me? Hast Thou" ... 309
Foxes and Bullfinches 255
Fragrance of Gentle Ways, The 505
Frank's Folly 664
"Fraud, A Gigantic" 105
Funds, "The Quiver" 80, 159, 240, 319, 400, 479, 559, 639, 720, 799, 880, 952

Garments, the High Priest's, The Rending of 520
Gentle Ways, The Fragrance of 505
"Gigantic Fraud, A" 105
"Girl in Blue, The" 780
"Give a Dog a Bad Name" ... 35
God, Seeking the Face of ... 29
God, The First Work for ... 97
God's Handiwork, The Beauty of 243
"Golden Fortune, A" 932
Good Shepherd, The 714
Gospel in the Open Air, The... 163
"Great Shrouding" in Shanghai, A 657

Habit, The Force of 911
"Hands, O Clap Your"... ... 761
Handiwork, The Beauty of God's 243
"Hast Thou Found Me?" ... 309
Heart, Our Failing, Strengthened 392
Heaven, Lights from 143
Heiress of Aberstone, The 49, 87, 210, 245, 363, 453
Helmsman, The Unknown ... 468
Helton, The Station-Master at 854
"Her Majesty" 697
Hero, Myrtle's 707
Heroes Fund, The "Quiver" 396, 474, 554, 797
Hidden Life 220
High Priest's Garments, The Rending of the 520
Higher Than Storms (*A Chapter for the Sick and Infirm*)... 560

PAGE
Holloway, "Mad" Mrs.... ... 357
Home, On Entering the New 14
Homily, A Little, for Mothers 925
Homily on Duty, A Little ... 360
HONOURABLE SERVICE, THE "QUIVER" ORDER OF ... 478
"Horses, Swapping" 673
Hospital Sunday, Our Own ... 563
Housing the Houseless 421
How are the Masses to be Reached and Won?... ... 338
How Phœbe Moore was Tempted 143
How the Modern Jew keeps Purim 353
How the Potatoes were *not* Boiled 836
Humpty Dumpty 381
Hyacinth, The White 426
Hymn for Children, A 670
Hymn, their Evening 68
HYMN TUNES:—
"Leave God to Order All Thy Ways" 74
"Not to the Mount that Burned with Fire"... ... 131
"Lord, From Whom All Blessings Flow" 209
"Father of Mercies, Bow Thine Ear" 277
"O Love, Who Formedst Me" 384
"Jesus Lives"... 431
An Evening Hymn... 543
"Awake, Sweet Harp of Judah" 622
Hymn For Children, A 670
"Lord of Glory Reigns, The" 787
"My Song shall be of Mercy" 835
"Christ is our Corner-Stone" 904

"I am Come" 195
In Birchen Glades 937
In Mother's Place 838
Institutions, Some Interesting Swedish 403
Is the Interest in Foreign Missions Deepening? 594
Italian Reformer, A Modern ... 271

Jacob (*Spiritual Failures*) ... 42
Jesus, Alone With 429
Jesus in the Midst 378
"Jesus Lives" (*Hymn Tune*)... 431
Jesus, Zacchæus and 631
Jew, How the Modern, keeps Purim 353
Jewish New Year, The 927
Jonah (*Spiritual Failures*) ... 734
Judas (*Spiritual Failures*) ... 261

KEY, THE SMOKE 788, 869, 941
Kitten, A Corn-coloured ... 517

"Ladies, This Looking-glass for" 278
Lameness, Life's (*Sundays with the Young*) 181
"Large Room," The 419
LASS, A LINCOLNSHIRE, 544, 568, 646, 726, 841, 895
"Leave God to Order All Thy Ways" (*Hymn Tune*) ... 74
Lessons of Spring, The 450
LESSONS, SCRIPTURE, FOR SCHOOL AND HOME. (*See under* Scripture)

PAGE
"Let Sleeping Dogs Lie" ... 862
Library, My First Day with the (My Experiences as a Sunday-school Teacher) ... 643
Life, A Corner in 333
Life, Are the Conditions of, Improving? 758
Life—Christ 293
Life, Hidden 220
Life, The Nornes of 935
Life-Songs 646
Light Burden, The Easy Yoke and the 18
Lighthouses and Those who Attend to Them 483
Lights from Heaven 143
"Lilies, Consider the" 671
LINCOLNSHIRE LASS, A, 544, 568, 646, 726, 841, 895
Little Homily for Mothers, A 925
Little Homily on Duty, A ... 360
Little While, For a... 64
Lodging-Houses, Common, and their Patrons 83
"Looking-Glass for Ladies, This" 278
Loop-holes 913
"Lord, From Whom All Blessings Flow" (*Hymn Tune*) 209
"Lord of Glory Reigns, The" (*Hymn Tune*) 787
Losing One's Balance, On ... 825
Love, A Father's 295
Lovely, Things that are... ... 838
Love's Portrait... 930
LUNA GORDON'S STEWARDSHIP 681, 762, 806, 914

"Mad" Mrs. Holloway 357
Mail, The Driver of the ... 840
"Majesty, Her" 697
Marble, The Blocks of 27
Marvel of the Morrow, The ... 525
Masses, The, How are they to be Reached and Won? ... 338
Match, Such a Suitable 323
Maytime, A Song of 542
Midst, Jesus in the 378
Mighty Confounded by the Weak, The 890
Migration of Birds, The ... 675
Misgivings of the Baptist, The 534
Miss Tabitha's Verdict 538
Missions, Foreign, Is the Interest in them Deepening?... 594
Modern Italian Reformer, A... 271
Monotony, Sameness without 678
Morals, New Fables with Old 150
Morning without Clouds, A (*A Chapter for the Sick and Infirm*) 640
Morrow, The Marvel of the ... 525
Mothers, A Little Homily for 925
Mother's Place, In 838
Mother's Songs 907
Mothers, Those Other 723
MY EXPERIENCES AS A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER:—
My First Day with the Library 643
My First Day as a Teacher ... 777
My First Day as a Superintendent 864

PAGE
"My Song shall be of Mercy" (*Hymn Tune*) 835
Myrtle's Hero 707

New Fables with Old Morals 150
New Year, The Jewish 927
Nornes of Life, The 935
"Not to the Mount that Burned with Fire" (*Hymn Tune*) 131
November Sunshine 1
Nursery Tales in East-End Dress 295

"O Clap your Hands" 761
"O Love, who Formedst Me" (*Hymn Tune*) 384
O Radiant Dark (*A Chapter for the Sick and Infirm*) ... 160
Old-World Corner, An 579
On Entering the New Home... 14
On Holy Ground (*A Chapter for the Sick and Infirm*) .. 480
On Knowing the Scriptures From a Child 221
On Losing One's Balance ... 825
On the Dorsetshire Coast ... 140
On the Top of Mount Vesuvius 45
One Sure Way (*A Chapter for the Sick and Infirm*) ... 320
One too Many 908
"Only a Child" 582
Open Air, The Gospel in the 163
"Other Side," The 59
"Our Daughters as Corner-Stones" 774
Our Failing Heart Strengthened 392
"Our Father"... 867
Our Own Hospital Sunday ... 563
Our Silver Wedding 462
Out of the Shadows ... 385, 434

Page's (Mrs.) Apostle Spoons 444
Palace, Wolsey's 257
Picotée 200
Pictura Mathesis 3
Portrait, Love's 930
Power—Wisdom—Love... ... 208
Prayer, The Wings of 463
Privilege of Sanctuary, The ... 69
Purim, How the Modern Jew keeps 353

"QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS, THE 80, 159, 240, 319, 400, 479, 559, 639, 720, 799, 880, 952
"QUIVER" FUNDS, THE 80, 159, 240, 319, 400, 479, 559, 639, 720, 799, 880, 952
"QUIVER" HEROES FUND, THE 396, 474, 554, 797
"QUIVER" ORDER OF HONOURABLE SERVICE, THE ... 478

Rainbow, The 852
Rainbows, and Colours in Birds 612
Reformer, A Modern Italian ... 271
Rejoicing Together... 803
Rending of the High Priest's Garments, The 520
Revelation in the Whirlwind, The 111
"Room, The Large" 419

Sacred Ties 360
Salvation, Without Sin unto ... 654

PAGE

Same Sweet Tune, The 183
Sameness without Monotony 678
Sanctuary, The Privilege of ... 69
Saul the King (*Spiritual Failures*) 132
Scissors, Told under the ... 938
SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME 61, 102, 206, 274, 376, 442, 514, 598, 661, 753, 833, 905
Scriptures, On Knowing the, from a Child 221
Sea-Lavender 506, 624
Sea-Level, Below the 99
Seasons, A Song of the 601
Seeds, Mr. Flidgit's, and How he Grew Them... 527
Seeking the Face of God ... 29
Shadows, Out of the ... 385, 434
Shanghai, A "Great Shrouding" in 657
Shepherd, The Good 714

SHORT ARROWS:—

About the Death of Children 797
Absolute Faith 555
Absolute Silence 949
Absorption in Gambling ... 715
Adulteration, Biblical 952
Advice, Fruitful 159
"Age, Preachers of the" 313, 634
"Ah! this is Comfortable" 478
Alabaster Boxes 476
All are Strugglers 396
All can be Useful 952
All His Enemies Could Say ... 154
"All-Man's" Book, The ... 636
Angels at Work upon Earth 716
Another Step Forward 554
Apostolic Pioneer, An 637
As Useful as Pretty 396
Baptism, Dr. Mason on... ... 315
Be a Benevolent Institution 398
Begin at the Beginning... ... 717
Beginning and Ending Life ... 396
Beginnings, From Small ... 397
Best Cosmetics, The 235
Best Inheritance, The 75
Biblical Adulteration 952
Bishop Conquered, How the 555
Boards We Carry, The 317
Body, The Worth of the ... 478
"Book, On the" 639
Book, The "All-Man's" ... 636
Books for Everybody 638
Books for Prizes 235
Books for Young and Old ... 77
Books, Preachers' 718
Books, Some More New ... 951
Books, Some New ... 316, 716, 798
Books, Some of the Newest ... 558
Books to Have at Hand ... 399
Books to Read... 239
Boxes, Alabaster 476
Brave the Perils of Ridicule 878
Bright Side, The 234
Busy Idlers 396
"By Their Fruits Ye shall Know Them" 80
Calling, The Choice of a ... 720
Career, Finding a 398
Ceaseless Round of Interests, A 951
Censoriousness and Taste ... 238
Central Figure Everything, The... 475
Chained Library, A 234
Chair, The Coronation 636
Charity, Knowledge and ... 319
Cheerful Patient, A 636

PAGE

SHORT ARROWS—*Continued.*

Cheerful, Why He Was ... 633
Children, Markener 877
Child's Bitter Cry, A 314
Choice of a Calling, The ... 720
Christian Behaviour, The Garments of 314
Christian Song, Linked in ... 235
"Christian under Review, The" 155
"Christianity, Surface" ... 880
Christmas and New Year Mementoes 236
Church, Why should We Go to?... 948
Church, Wycliffe's... 876
"Civil Family, The" 797
Claus, Santa, in Earnest ... 878
Cloud Picture, A 794
"Comfortable, Ah! this is" 478
Common Life, The Witness of 239
Common Mistake, A 316
Common Phrases, The Teaching of 718
"Common Task, The, The Daily Round" 152
Concentration 795
Confidence, St. Paul's 75
Congregation, A Strange ... 556
Conqueror's Vow, A 76
"Consider the Lilies" 315
Contented, How to be Happy and... 75
Cordial for Low Spirits, A ... 951
"Corinth, Old—Nothing" ... 398
Coronation Chair, The 636
Correspondents Wanted ... 637
Cosmetics, The Best 235
Courage, He would not Have the... 799
Courage, Moral 719
Cow-Keeper, A Reverend ... 715
Crowd, Heard in the 76
Cry, A Child's Bitter 314
Curse of Drunkenness, The ... 476
"Daily Round, The, The Common Task" 152
"Darkness and Dawn" ... 152
"Dead, When We Are" ... 473
Death, Five Minutes After ... 78
Death of Children, About the 797
Death, Preparation does not Hasten 154
Death, Preparation for 237
Death, The Earth-side and the Heaven-side of 315
Debt, Large is Our 395
Decision Necessary 794
Desert, Literature for a ... 878
Desire of Many Prophets, The 950
Devil's "Missionary," A ... 474
"Devil's Paternoster, The" 152
"Die, When I, May the Poor Regret Me" 715
Difficulty, An Educational ... 795
"Dirty Hands, A Man with" 316
"Ditch? Must I be Drowned in a" 313
Don't Worry 948
"Drank Yesterday, I" 879
Drunkenness, The Curse of ... 476
Duke of Clarence, The Late... 478
Earth, Angels at Work upon 716
Earth-side and the Heaven-side of Death, The 315
Educational Difficulty, An ... 795
Efficacy of a Great Sorrow, The... 878
Encouragement 236
Enemies Could Say, All His 154
Enforced Inactivity 795
Enforced Sabbaths 313

PAGE

SHORT ARROWS—*Continued.*

Enjoyment, The Pretence of 879
Ephesus, A Wedding at ... 879
Evening 637
Everybody, Books for 638
Example, Luther's 553
Explanation, The 238
Eyes of the Wise Man and the Fool, The 78
Factory Girls Gamble, How Some 397
Failings, Forgetting 78
Faith, Absolute 555
"Family, The Civil" 797
"Far from the Madding Crowd"... 397
Fault, How not to Find ... 473
Figure, The Central, Everything 475
"Filter your Language" ... 877
Finding a Career 398
Finding, Seeking and 638
First and Last Thought, A ... 635
Five Minutes after Death ... 78
Foe, A Warning from the ... 156
"Follow, Pack and" 237
For General Reading 238
"For my Good" 154
For Preachers and Students... 156
For the Study and the Fireside 153
"Forest, Pacing Through the" 317
Forgetting Failings... 78
Forward, Another Step... ... 554
Freshly Turned Pages 395
Friend of the Young, The ... 633
"Friends, Only Plenty of"... 158
From Nature up to Nature's God 475
From One World to Another 875
From Small Beginnings... ... 397
Fruitful Advice 159
"Fruits, By Their, Ye shall Know Them" 80
Gamble, How Some Factory Girls 397
Gambling, Absorption in ... 715
Garments of Christian Behaviour, The 314
Gift-Books 79
Gipsy Prayers 473
"Give Me thy Heart" 316
Go, Whatever Thou Art ... 794
"God? Will a Man Rob" ... 75
"Good, For My" 154
Good Literature Supplied ... 395
Good Lives and Good Work... 318
Good News from Pekin... ... 157
Good of It? What is the ... 876
Good Works by Proxy 80
Greatest Misfortune of All, The... 78
Habitual Unselfishness 948
Hand, Books to Have at ... 399
Happiness, A Recipe for ... 878
Happiness, A Waste of 796
Happy, Rich but Not 718
Have Regard to the Sequel ... 155
"He Died Learning" 880
"He Never Told a Lie" ... 875
He Would not Have the Courage... 799
Healthy and Happy, Why He Was 473
Heard in the Crowd 76
"Heart, Give Me Thy" ... 316
Heart, In Head but not In ... 636
"He's My Bad Lad" 395
His Mother's Influence 875
Home of Knox, The 155
Home, Piety at 152
Home-Training, The Importance of Early 79

PAGE

SHORT ARROWS—*Continued.*

Homicides, Unconscious ... 156
Honour All Men 154
Hopeful Sorrow 877
How not to Find Fault 473
How Some Factory Girls Gamble 397
How the Bishop Conquered... 555
How to be Happy and Contented 75
"I Drank Yesterday" 879
Ideal of Life, An 398
Idlers, Busy 396
Importance of Early Home-Training, The 79
Importance of Trifles, The ... 394
In Head, but not in Heart ... 636
"In Our own Tongue, wherein We were Born" 75
In Westminster Abbey 950
Inactivity, Enforced 795
Influence, His Mother's... ... 875
Influence, Unconscious 719
Inheritance, The Best 75
Institution, Be a Benevolent 398
Interests, A Ceaseless Round of 951
"Internal Apparatus of Torture, An" 235
Irony... 475
Is not Enough Enough? ... 78
"Is there Anything in the Window?" 317
"It makes Me Feel Something I cannot Say" 79
It Might Have Been Worse ... 396
"It Neither Smells nor Tastes" 715
It Takes Two to Quarrel ... 635
Jesus Only 878
Judging Others 950
"Keep It to Yourself!"—"Out with It!" Which Shall I do? 638
"Kingdom of Heaven, Of Such Is the" 878
"Know not What They do, They" 239
Knowledge and Charity ... 319
Knox, The Home of 155
"Lad, He's My Bad" 395
Lands, Other, And our Own 476
Language, Filter Your 877
Large is Our Debt 395
Last, Peace at the 715
Last Word, The 79
Last Year of Life, The 876
Late Duke of Clarence, The... 478
Laughed Down, Not 152
"Learning, He Died" 880
Leaves, Withered 77
Lending Unto the Lord... ... 555
Lesson, A Short 878
Lessons, Useful 397
Letting His Rival Reap... ... 555
Library, A Chained 234
"Lie, He Never Told a" ... 875
Life, An Ideal of 398
Life, An Object in 718
Life, Beginning and Ending... 396
Life Not Worth Living, A ... 877
Life That is Worth Living, The... 155
Life, The Last Year Of... ... 876
Life, The River of 719
Life to Come, Trifling with the 475
Lifeboat, "THE QUIVER," A Rescue by 159
"Light, More" 78
"Lilies, Consider the" ... 315
Linked in Christian Song ... 235
Literature for a Desert ... 878

PAGE

SHORT ARROWS—*Continued.*

Little Things 554
Lives, Good, and Good Work 318
Lord, Lending Unto the ... 555
Love, The School of 878
Love's Opportunities 716
Low Spirits, A Cordial for ... 951
Lower Orders, The Wealthy 314
Luther's Example 553
"Madding Crowd, Far from the" 397
Man Proposing—God Disposing 478
"Man with Dirty Hands, A" 316
Markener Children... 877
Mason (Dr.) on Baptism ... 315
"Master, My Own" 635
Mementoes, Christmas and New Year 236
Memory, The Paradise of ... 557
Men, Honour all 154
Men, Old, Two Sorts of ... 318
Message from the West Indies, A 877
Messages, The Two... 315
Might Have Been Worse, It... 396
Ministry, Secrets of 558
"Missionary," A Devil's ... 474
Mistake, A Common 316
Mistake, Never Made a 314
Money, The Use and Abuse of 317
Monitors, Silent 394
Moral Courage... 719
"More Light"... 78
Motto, The Royal Exchange 796
"Must I be Drowned in a Ditch?" 313
"My Own Master" 635
Natures's God, From Nature Up to 475
Need of Quietness, The... ... 154
Never Before the Time 715
Never Made a Mistake 314
New Departure in Shanghai, A 798
New Year Mementoes, Christmas and... 236
No Common People 395
Not a Smile 478
Not According to Our Works 554
Not Laughed Down 152
"O Give Thanks"... 794
Object in Life, An 718
"Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven" 878
"Old Age Serene and Bright, An 75
"Old Corinth—Nothing" ... 398
Old Men, Two Sorts of 318
"Old, Old Story, The" ... 795
"On the Book" 639
One View of a Saint 634
"Only My Wife" 553
"Only Plenty of Friends" ... 158
Opportunities, Love's 716
Other Lands—And Our Own 476
Others, Judging 950
"Pacing Through the Forest" 317
"Pack and Follow" 237
Pages, Freshly Turned 395
Paradise of Memory, The ... 557
Parents, Two Kinds of 798
"Paternoster, The Devil's"... 152
Patient, A Cheerful 636
Paul's (St.) Confidence ... 75
Peace at the Last 715
Pekin, Good News From ... 157
People, No Common 395
Picture, A Cloud 794
Piety at Home... 152
Pioneer, An Apostolic 637
Plea that Prevailed, The ... 398

PAGE

SHORT ARROWS—*Continued.*

Polished Racks 878
Prayer 634
Prayers, Gipsy... 473
Preachers and Students, For 156
Preachers' Books 718
Preachers of the Age ... 313, 634
"Preachers, The Prince of" 556
Preachers, Two Powerful ... 474
Preparation Does Not Hasten Death 154
Preparation for Death 237
Pretence of Enjoyment, The 879
Prevailed, The Plea that ... 398
"Prince of Preachers, The" 556
Prizes, Books for 235
Prophets, The Desire of Many 950
Proxy, Good Works by 80
Quarrel, It Takes Two to ... 635
Quietness, The Need of... ... 154
"QUIVER" Lifeboat, The, A Rescue by 159
Racks, Polished 878
Read, Books to 239
Reading, For General 238
Reading, The Season For ... 950
Recipe for Happiness, A ... 878
Recreation Sanctioned by Religion... 76
Reminiscences of Mr. Spurgeon 949
Repentance, True 795
Reproof, Sympathetic 717
Rescue by "THE QUIVER" Lifeboat, A 159
Resignation, Youthful 234
Reverend Cow-Keeper, A ... 715
"Review, The Christian under" 155
Rich, But Not Happy 718
Ridicule, Brave the Perils of 878
River of Life, The 719
Royal Exchange Motto, The 796
Sabbaths, Enforced 313
Saint, One View of a 634
Santa Claus in Earnest... ... 878
Sayings, Three Memorable ... 236
School of Love, The 878
Season For Reading, The ... 950
Seasonable Souvenirs 158
Secrets of Ministry... 558
Seeking and Finding 638
Seer, The 555
Self-Restraint 555
Sequel, Have Regard to the... 155
Shadow, Swan and... 876
Shanghai, A New Departure in 798
Short Lesson, A 878
Side, The Bright 234
Silence, Absolute 949
Silent Monitors 394
Silent Sympathy 798
Simplicity... 235
"Slippers! Slippers!"... ... 236
"Smells nor Tastes, It Neither" 715
Smile, Not a 478
Some More New Books 951
Some New Books ... 316, 716, 798
Some of the Newest Books ... 558
"Something New" 158
Sorrow, Hopeful 877
Sorrow, The Efficacy of a Great 878
Souvenirs, Seasonable 158
Spurgeon, Charles Haddon ... 399
Spurgeon, Reminiscences of 949
Star-gazing 237
"Steer Straight" 636
"Story, The Old, Old" ... 795
Strandings 237
Strange Congregation, A ... 556
Strength, Union is 559

PAGE

SHORT ARROWS—*Continued.*

Strugglers, All are 396
Study and the Fireside, For the 153
"Surface Christianity" ... 880
Swan and Shadow 876
Sympathetic Reproof 717
Sympathy, Silent 798
Taste, Censoriousness and ... 238
Teaching of Common Phrases, The... 718
"Temper, They are All" ... 477
Thankful, Very 236
"Thanks, O Give" 794
"They are All Temper" ... 477
"They Know not What They Do" 239
Things, Little 554
"Thou God Seest Me"... .. 557
Thought, A First and Last .. 635
Three Memorable Sayings .. 236
Time, Never Before the ... 715
Time, We Shall Soon be Done with 479
"Torture, An Internal Apparatus of 235
Trifles, The Importance of ... 394
Trifling with the Life to Come 475
True Repentance 795
Two Kinds of Parents 798
Two Messages, The... 315
Two Powerful Preachers .. 474
Two Sorts of Old Men 318
Unconscious Homicides... .. 156
Unconscious Influence 719
Union is Strength 559
Unselfishness, Habitual... ... 948
Use and Abuse of Money, The... 317
Useful, All Can be 952
Useful as Pretty, As .. . 396
Useful Lessons 397
Very Thankful 236
Virtue of a Young Man, The 633
Vow, A Conqueror's 76
Wanted—Time 152
Warning from the Foe, A ... 156
Waste of Happiness, A... ... 796
We Shall Soon be Done with Time 479
"Wealthy Lower Orders, The" 314
Wedding at Ephesus, A ... 879
West Indies, A Message from the 877
Westminster Abbey, In ... 950
What is the Good of It? ... 876
What We All Can Do 477
"When I Die, May the Poor Regret Me"... 715
"When We are Dead"... .. 473
Why He was Cheerful 633
Why He was Healthy and Happy 473
Why Should We Go to Church?... 948
"Wife, Only My"... 553
"Will a Man Rob God?" ... 75
"Window, Is there Anything in the?" 317
Wise Man and the Fool, The Eyes of the 78
Withered Leaves 77
Witness of Common Life, The 239
Word, The Last 79
Work, Good Lives and Good 318
Works, Good, By Proxy ... 80
Works, Not According to Our 554
World, From One, To Another 875
Worry, Don't 948
Worth of the Body, The ... 478
Wycliffe's Church 876
Young and Old, Books for ... 77

PAGE

SHORT ARROWS—*Continued.*

Young Man, The Virtue of a 633
Young, The Friend of the ... 633
Youthful Resignation 234

SICK AND INFIRM, CHAPTERS FOR THE:—

O Radiant Dark 160
One Sure Way... 320
On Holy Ground 480
Higher Than Storms 560
Morning Without Clouds, A 640
Smiles of God's Goodness, The 800

"Side, The Other"... 59
Silver Wedding, Our 462
Sleeping and Waking 541
Smiles of God's Goodness, The (*A Chapter for the Sick and Infirm*) 800
"Smiths, Those" 264
SMOKE KEY, THE ... 788, 869, 941
Snow Twins, The 224, 298
Solomon (*Spiritual Failures*) ... 178
Some Curious Alms-Boxes ... 747
Some Curious Chairs in Our Ancient Churches 465
Some Famous Crypts 820
Some Interesting Swedish Institutions 403
Song of Maytime, A 542
Song of the Seasons, A 601
Songs, Mother's 907
Soul, The Eye of the 138

SPIRITUAL FAILURES:—

Jacob 42
Saul the King 132
Solomon 178
Judas... 261
Jonah 734
Demas 818

Spoons, Mrs. Page's Apostle ... 444
Spring, The Lessons of 450
Stained-Glass Windows, About 501
Stars and the Cross, The ... 498
Station-Master at Helton, The 854
Stepmother's Blessing, With a 615
STEWARDSHIP, LUNA GORDON'S 681, 762, 806, 914
Stitches, Dropped 281
Such a Suitable Match 323

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER, MY EXPERIENCES AS A:—

My First Day with the Library 643
My First Day as a Teacher ... 777
My First Day as a Superintendent 864

SUNDAYS WITH THE YOUNG:—

Life's Lameness 181
Life's Cure 306
Life's Cleansing 591
Life's Clothing... 658
Life's Consecration .. 751

Sunset, Winter... 41
Sunshine, November 1
Superintendent, My First Day as a (My Experiences as a Sunday-school Teacher) ... 864
Surrey Heath, About a 536
"Swapping Horses" 673
Swedish Institutions, Some Interesting 403
"Sweet Bells—Jangled" ... 703

PAGE

Tabernacle in Utrecht, The ... 32
Tales, Nursery, in East-End Dress 295
Teacher, My First Day as a (My Experiences as a Sunday-school Teacher) ... 777
Tempted, How Phœbe Moore was 143
Their Evening Hymn 68
Things that are Lovely 838
"This Looking-Glass for Ladies" 278
Those Other Mothers 723
"Those Smiths" 264
Thoughts, Evening 330
Three Conversions 229
THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS, 3, 118, 167, 282, 342, 408, 487, 602
Through Different Eyes... ... 130
Ties, Sacred 360
Time, Two Ways of Spending 204
Together, Rejoicing... 803
Told under the Scissors ... 938
Tools and Workmen among the Woods 192
Torringtons, The Two Miss ... 21
Truth, A Chinese Seeker after 432
"Try Wee Watty" 311
Tune, The Same Sweet 183
TUNES, HYMN (*See under* HYMN)
Tuning up 588
Twins, The Snow 224, 298
Two Miss Torringtons, The ... 21
Two Ways of Spending Time 204

Unknown Helmsman, The ... 468
Utrecht, The Tabernacle in ... 32

Verdict, Miss Tabitha's 538
Vesuvius, On the Top of Mount 45
View, The Christian Point of 589

Waking, Sleeping and 541
Wanted: A Dog 755
Waste 331
"Watty, Try Wee" 311
WAYS, THROUGH DEVIOUS, 3, 118, 167, 282, 342, 408, 487, 602
Weak, The Mighty Confounded by the 890
Weakness, Workers in 850
Wedding, Our Silver 462
Whirlwind, The Revelation in the 111
White Hyacinth, The 426
"Who Inhabiteth Eternity"... 180
Windows, About Stained-glass 501
Wings of Prayer, The 463
Winifred's Engagement... ... 883
Winter Sunset 41
With a Child's Eyes 134
With a Stepmother's Blessing 615
Without Sin unto Salvation ... 654
Wolsey's Palace 257
Work, The First, for God ... 97
Workers in Weakness 850
Workhouse Episode, A 372
Workmen, Tools and, among the Woods 192

Yoke, The Easy, and the Light Burden 18
YOUNG, SUNDAYS WITH THE (*See under* Sundays)

Zacchæus and Jesus 631

THE QUIVER.

NOVEMBER SUNSHINE.

BY M. PAYNE SMITH.

"Starlings in plenty on the sheep's backs." *p. 2.*

TO most people November is a month of dreary fog, cold depressing rain, and general darkness and discomfort; indeed, November is a word that brings a shiver with it in nearly all mouths; but, nevertheless, it has its charms, like all months, and they are as well worth notice as its disadvantages. After all, November sunshine is not so very rare, and it has a delicate brightness all its own, though town-dwellers rarely appreciate it.

In a fine autumn there are plenty of leaves still left on the trees—in some cases hardly changing colour: a fact which gives wonderful variety to the landscape. Elms and sycamores are only a little dingy as yet; before the month is out the elms will be gold, but the sycamores will have paid for the early beauty of their spring foliage by dropping all the dull leaves that get no colour from the magic touch of autumn. The ash, too, is fading and shabby, but oaks are beginning to show patches of yellow here and there, and will soon have changed to a sober brown. Just now the glory of woods and hillsides are the beeches, which shine out in the sunshine in every shade of orange and crimson, and leave the wild cherries (generally the most gorgeous of underwood) nowhere. It is curious that the older the beech is the more sober is its colour; the large trees, though gay enough if looked at alone, seem a dull russet beside the thickets of young saplings, in copse or wood, and the plantations on the chalk are brightest of all.

Poplars, again, have turned to a mass of pale shimmering gold, and every poplar fence beside a Kentish hop-garden is a study of delicate leaves, shivering in every puff of wind, and, alas! falling rapidly. Every hedgerow is gay with bramble and spindle trees, with flame-coloured leaves and dull pink berries, closed at present, as the orange seeds rarely burst their coverings till the leaves are all gone. Each wreath of clematis is silvery, and reflects the sunlight from every hairy seed-vessel, while the sturdy thorns, nearly leafless, bend under the weight of masses of crimson berries; and the hollies not only promise food in plenty for the birds, and ornaments for Christmas decoration, but are nearly at their brightest.

After all, this brilliant colouring belongs by rights to October, and the proper November landscape is

"The glory of woods and hillsides. —*p.* 1.

only to be seen here and there, when wood and hedge-row give place to open fields of pale yellow mustard, or blue-green turnips, ploughed fields with a cold look, and pasture-land nearly white in the sunshine; for the withered bents are bleached their palest by October's rains, and reflect the light, only allowing the thick short grass beneath them to appear on dull days. Blue mists shroud every distant view, soften every outline, and give a new beauty to hill and dale; fog is, no doubt, very unpleasant when laden with soot and odours of all kinds, but here it is etherealised and transformed into the most delicate haze.

It is as well to look at near, as well as distant sights in November. You cannot tell whether the wood a mile off is oak or fir—it is simply a dark mass on the hillside; but the turnip-field at your feet is a study in itself, for not only are the sturdy turnip leaves tinted here and there with half a dozen different shades of purple and yellow, where the frost has touched them, but between the roots grow a whole garden-full of flowers. Purple hard-heads, for the most part, keep to the banks, but daisy-like mayweed blossoms all over the field, and its white-and-gold is varied with tufts of scarlet poppies, quite as bright and nearly as large as they were in June. Here and there tall spikes of white lychnis assert themselves, while the dainty wild fumitory covers every clear patch of soil.

Swallows have long departed, but the plovers are going about in flocks, and there are starlings in plenty walking about on the sheep's backs, and picking off the ticks. Thrushes are feeding on the berries, and robin-redbreasts survey you from the hedge with their saucy black eyes, while the sparrows are going in flocks, like their betters. All the birds are plump enough now, between worms, berries, and their pickings from the harvest fields; in another two months they will have lost their sleek looks, but at present they are content, like ourselves, to enjoy the good things they have, and to make the most of November sunshine.

Old people call these bright days St. Martin's Summer, and welcome them as shortening the winter, and giving a pleasant interval between the extremes of heat and cold. How often we see this same autumn brightness in the old people themselves! How peacefully they sit and wait for their New Year, after the time of hard work is over, cheering and brightening us by their humble faith in God's promises to those that endure to the end. Happy they whose autumn is bright and flowery with the blossoms of love, and trust, and sunny content!

PICTURA MATHESIS.

FOLLOW the pictured forms that Van Dyck drew;
One life-wide lesson they may learn thee.
Every good gift, each perfect work and true,
To thy true self should turn thee.
Lo! the first essay of his Flemish style—
The proud patricians of the opulent seas,
His golden Genoese:
His noblest work comes last—the sorrow and the smile.

Early he strives to paint as Rubens did;
And then his charmèd soul he sets
Under a spell that doth the first outbid—
Titian's or Tintoret's.
He paints supremely last the magic-drawn
Kings that are kingly, forms that float in fold
Of olive-green and gold,
The immortal satin dress with ribbons red as dawn.

Forget the robe of state, the pageant's pride!
To genius prophecy is lent.
Upon its wondrous work shadows abide
Of fine presentiment.
Rise above amber sleeve or kerchief lace:
Turn thee to Charles and question low,
Why thou art haunted so
By that majestic king with long, proud, tragic face.

We too begin by being what is taught,
And work in our traditional gyves—
Think not at first with our own proper thought—
Nor live our very lives.
Raise up thy spirit o'er the narrow shelf
Where thou wast prisoned by thy former schools;
Wisely rise o'er their rules,
And then, divinely taught, divinelier be thyself.

WILLIAM DERRY.

THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS.

BY FAY AXTENS.

CHAPTER I.

"MISS HARDY, do you know it is nearly half an hour since you spoke to me last?"

After which remark, the speaker, a young man of some four-and-twenty years, who lay stretched at full length on the ground, raised himself on one elbow, and gazed with languid admiration at his silent companion.

They were alone, these two—alone in the deep woods. Overhead the blue summer sky could be discerned only through a network of green: a quivering, floating network of green, mass above mass, through which shafts of liquid light gleamed and darted, while chequered shadows danced on stem and branch. They had taken up their position on a grassy knoll. She was seated on the trunk of an old tree, her easel before her, a paraphernalia of art material scattered about; he, less ambitious and decidedly more lazy, lay on a carpet of moss beside her. Before them, a few yards away, a stream of water found its course down the rocky hill-side, dashing from boulder to boulder till, in divided streams, it fell with a crash and a volume of white spray into the deep dark pool below. All up the tortuous water-path the tall grasses waved on either side, rearing their tremulous pinions against the background of brushwood beyond, and, far above, a vista of the dim woods opened further visions of tall elms and slender beeches.

The air was full of life and sound; for where is there ever silence in the woods? The small birds calling to each other in the branches, the rustle of leaves as the squirrel bounded from bough to bough; the steady splash of falling water, the plunge of the grey lithe water-rat startled at the falling leaf, the murmur of tiny wavelets over level stones where saucy water-wagtail peers and pries about for unsuspecting flies; and every now and again the whirr of the pheasant's wings and the shrill cry of the woodcock.

There is something very drowsy in the sound of falling water, something very conducive to meditation in the conversation of birds. Felicia Hardy, absorbed in her painting, had listened till the manifold sounds had almost drowned the sense of sound, and when Will Lawley's clear, pleasant voice broke in suddenly, she started and looked round as if roused from a fascinating dream.

"Did I startle you? I suppose you had forgotten my existence."

"I was thinking," said she.

She made a very pretty picture as she sat thus, pausing in her work to look at her companion. Her form and features possessed the elasticity and roundness of youth; her complexion displayed the brightness and purity of absolute health. There is always a certain charm about youth and health, but Felicia Hardy had other charms than these. Hers was preeminently an attractive face—one that having once looked at, one would not easily forget. The eyes were

clear and frank, but full of a deep seriousness, and though her usual expression was bright and careless, there was a good deal of independence in the firm modelling of mouth and chin which gave evidence of much individuality of character, though undeveloped as yet, and hidden under the delicate, dainty graces of girlhood. One felt, in looking at her, that Felicia's spirit was not untouched by the deep mysteries of life, but as yet she had only looked across the border-line of undiscovered regions, so that the mingled joy and pain which knowledge and insight bring had but reflected its shadow on the fearless purity and innocence of youth.

She turned and looked at Will Lawley with so ingenuous a smile that the discontented expression his face had worn passed away, and took instead the reflection of her smile.

"I wonder," said he, "what you were thinking of."

"I was thinking of Miss Rosamond Wylde."

The young man dropped again into his former position with a little sigh of impatience. He would rather that she had given a different answer, or, indeed, he would rather she had given no answer at all, if only she had blushed and seemed ever so little embarrassed. But Felicia was not given to blushing, and she had a way of looking him so frankly in the eyes that he often found it impossible to give utterance to words which were hovering on his lips.

Felicia Hardy and Will Lawley were not lovers, as casual observers might have imagined, but only old friends. They had been "sweethearts," certainly, in the golden days of childhood, but those days seemed to both of them very far away. Long periods of absence, when Will was at school and at college, had given ample opportunities for an altered condition of things, and during later years Lawley Manor had been frequently closed while the family were abroad on account of Lady Lawley's health, so that there had grown up between these two a sort of reserve which one of them at least was anxious to break down. The very fact that latterly Will had seen so little of Felicia was sufficient to set all astir that tender feeling of sentiment which underlies nearly all old friendships. Having now been at home about a month, he considered he had had ample time to discover that the Rector's daughter, his playmate and companion in former years, had developed into a very charming girl; and having successfully recovered from sundry boyish attachments, he was quite free to fall very deeply in love with Miss Hardy.

For a few moments she sat still, looking at him with quiet contemplation as he lay there on the mossy bank, leaning his head on his hand and looking outward with half-closed eyes.

From an artistic point of view he was certainly a very pleasing object for contemplation. Tall and slightly built, his figure possessed the rare combination of grace and strength, whilst his features, in spite of an almost feminine delicacy and refinement, were yet bold and vigorous in outline. His complexion was fresh and fair, his eyes were of a bright blue, and he had an ingenuous expression and a frank and confiding manner, but the petulant curve of the lip and the ready contraction of the eyebrows told plainly enough that he was unaccustomed to opposition.

"Miss Rosamond Wylde! Miss Rosamond Wylde!" he repeated, with something like a snarl. "It seems as if everything and everyone revolved round this Rosamond Wylde. Even the old place has been turned upside down, every hole and corner poked into, the men and the maids blustering about, and making a nine days' gossip out of the confusion, every staircase and corridor invaded with decorators and upholsterers, each with a noble army of myrmidons, making day hideous, and my father and mother driven into four or five rooms in the west wing—and all on account of Miss Rosamond Wylde."

"Oh, come, Mr. Lawley, you exaggerate a little. Sir John has been talking about it for years. And, you know, a big place like Lawley Manor is apt to get into a disused condition, especially when it is shut up for long periods at a time——"

"Oh, it isn't the renovation that I mind," struck in Will, "though I think a lot of it might have been done when we were away. It is that upsetting young person Miss Rosamond Wylde."

"Sir John says she is very beautiful," observed Felicia.

"Oh, yes, after the wax-doll order, I dare say. You see, everyone doesn't care about that style." And Will turned a sentimental glance upward, as if asking for encouragement to proceed.

"There are plenty of people who will, though, I dare say, especially as she is an heiress."

"Did you ever hear about that?" asked Will, raising himself on his elbow with sudden energy. "She got it all by a sort of fluke, you know. The little boy, her half-brother, ought to have been his father's heir under the conditions of his last will, so they say, but that has mysteriously disappeared."

"The will, do you mean?"

"Yes. When the lawyers, in accordance with Lestrange's instructions, went to look for it, it was missing, and, hunt as they might, no trace of it could be found. Only Lestrange (who was sole executor) and the witnesses were aware of its existence; the will that the solicitors held was a former one made before Bert was born, under which Miss Rosamond was left heiress to all the property."

"It sounds a very curious affair," said Felicia. "Can't it be explained in any way?"

"It seems not. It is difficult to believe that Colonel Wylde, after making the will, as it is certain he did, should have destroyed it, since by doing so he would leave his son totally unprovided for. One naturally supposes that it was stolen, but how, when, and by whom, it is impossible to say. However, the upshot is that Miss Rosamond is the heiress, and little boy Bertram is penniless—absolutely penniless."

"Poor boy! it seems very unjust; but how was it that Colonel Wylde left two wills?"

"Well, you see, it came about in this way. For a long time after Colonel Wylde's second marriage, he had no child, and, such being the case, he added a codicil to his will leaving Miss Wylde sole heiress after his wife's death. When the little boy was born, of course other arrangements had to be thought of, and it appears that

the Colonel made a fresh will in his favour, but as the child was very weakly, and for a long time not expected to live, he said nothing about it to his legal advisers, but allowed the former will to stand over. I believe that on his death-bed he sent for his solicitor, meaning to put matters straight with them. However, in some way or other the letter miscarried, and he died the next day."

"And what about this poor little boy, then? What is going to be done with him?"

"There's the difficulty," replied young Lawley. "Miss Wylde intimated that, under the circumstances, she felt it her duty to look after the child—that is, to have him educated, and so on. I think her idea was to send him to school. She had no intention of taking charge of him herself; but Lestrange came forward and said *he* should take care of the child, and he has had the boy, nurse and all, ever since."

"That was very good of him."

"Yes, it was. But, you know, people said some very ugly things about the disappearance of that will. Lestrange was the Colonel's most intimate friend, and considering he was engaged to Miss Wylde, it *did* look rather bad, you know, though I think myself there was nothing at all in it. Lestrange was in a terrible way about it, and declares he won't rest till he has sifted it to the very bottom."

"What sort of a man is Mr. Lestrange?" asked Felicia.

"Oh, a decent sort of fellow, I think," said Will; "but you'll soon have an opportunity of judging for yourself. We expect him down in a few days, and the boy too."

"He and Miss Wylde have been engaged a long time, haven't they? Why don't they marry?"

"Really I don't know," said Will, laughing. "You had better ask Miss Wylde herself—or perhaps Lestrange could tell you. He ought to know, if anyone does."

Felicia blushed slightly, and looked down. "My curiosity does not reach that extent," she said.

Young Lawley laughed again.

"No, I will say curiosity is not one of your besetting sins. You have never yet asked me what I mean to do now I've left college, and yet you have had ample opportunity to ask me anything you liked."

"It is because I supposed you had not thought anything about it."

"Not because you are wholly uninterested?" he asked, looking at her very intently.

Again Felicia coloured slightly, and looked down. "You know I am always interested in you and your family."

Will puckered up his forehead into a discontented little frown.

"I am a nice little boy, am I not?"

Felicia stopped her painting, put down her palette and brushes, and looked at him with an amused smile. "Don't frown so, Mr. Lawley. What is the matter?"

"I shall not tell you," he said. "You would only laugh at me, as you always do, and I don't like to have you laugh at me—*you*, of all other people. You don't think how horribly sensitive I am."

"But indeed I am not laughing," said Felicia. "I never laugh when you say anything sensible, and I should like to know what you think of doing, very much."

"I will tell you some time," said Will, "when you are not laughing."

By this time the lights were changing rapidly. The fall of water which Felicia had painted with the fleeting sunshine aslant its impetuous course now looked grey and cold. The shadows that close in so early in a woodland ravine rose up on every side: a little fitful breeze stirred the leaves above their heads; but beyond, in the level woods, above the torrent's course, gleams of gold still illuminated the tree-tops, and lay in solid bars athwart the slender stems of the delicate silver beeches.

"It is time to go home," observed Miss Hardy, after a pause. "The light has quite gone."

"So it has," said Will, rousing himself; "but you have got it all in, and it looks extremely well."

"It is but a feeble attempt," said Felicia carelessly. "I don't hope to do justice to nature, but it is a pleasant way of spending an idle day. What are you going to do?"

Young Lawley had picked up the canvas, easel and all, and carried it to the edge of the water. There he set it up, and came back to his former position to study it. Miss Hardy meanwhile began to gather her things together. They were scattered about in all directions, and Will, seeing her occupation, went down on his knees to assist her.

As he handed up the last stray tube of colour, he took possession of both her hands and held them, kneeling before her.

"Felicia," he began, "can you listen to me a minute without laughing? If you knew what happiness it is to me——"

"Oh, do please get up, Mr. Lawley," said Felicia hurriedly.

"No," said Will; "you are a queen, and I am your slave. Don't turn your head away, Felicia. You know I—— Why, what is the matter? Did I hurt you?"

"Yes, no—that is—don't you see? it's the tube." And then she laughed aloud.

This was too much for Will. He withdrew his hands in dismay, and looking at them discovered that one was stained a brilliant crimson. Felicia was holding towards him a battered tube of vermilion which he had put into her hands. Already injured, it had yielded to the pressure, and the colour emerging on all sides had dyed his hands, and hers.

After this the process of packing up was very quickly accomplished. Lawley shouldered the easel and paint-box. Felicia took her sketch. Hand-in-hand they crossed on stepping-stones to the other side of the stream, and together climbed up by the side of the waterfall. If Will felt disposed to be sentimental, the sight of the red streaks on the little hand he held in his effectually prevented him from betraying it.

As they emerged from the wood into the open country, and turned down the lane that led homewards to the village, they could see the sun descending in a glory of crimson and amber, far away beyond the square ivy-crowned church tower, behind the great

elms in the Rectory garden. Will had quickly recovered his equanimity, but still they were both rather silent. They walked slowly down the quiet lane, whose high hedges were all ablow with wild roses and sweet woodbine. The air was laden with the perfume of hay which the men were busy carting in the Rector's field. The Rector himself, broad-shouldered, genial and kindly, was superintending the business. Standing amongst his men, his coat off, and the rake across his shoulder, he looked up and saw the two figures coming down the lane. He recognised at once his daughter's white gown and shady hat; and the tall young man in white flannels, with blue-beribboned straw hat, he knew could be none other than young Lawley. So he waved his hand and shouted to them cheerily to go round to the Rectory, where he would join them. But when they came to the gate, Will paused. "I don't think I shall come in this afternoon."

"Not come in, Mr. Lawley? Father expects you."

"Look here, Felicia," said the young man, "don't you think it just a little unkind to be so stiff with me? You always used to call me 'Will'; why should it be 'Mr. Lawley' now? It's too bad, when we are such old friends. You kissed me once—do you remember?"

He held the gate open. Felicia passed through, but he remained standing on the outer side. "That was a long time ago," said she gravely; "you are not a little boy now."

"I wish I were, if you would but treat me as you did then. But do call me 'Will' again. That isn't very much to ask."

She turned on him a glance, half-questioning, half-coquettish, but made no answer. He followed her into the house, and set down the things he was carrying.

"Good-bye, Felicia."

"Then you really are not going to stay?"

"Not to-day, thank you, but I hope I shall see you to-morrow."

She held out her hand.

"You will find it very easy to say," he suggested.

"Oh, yes," said she, with her frankest smile, "it is very easy indeed. Good-bye, Will."

CHAPTER II.

FELICIA HARDY had a little of the coquette in her nature. She could hardly have resisted a slight show of diffidence before making so important a concession. But in spite of this she was not altogether displeased at the afternoon's adventures, and though as yet she attached but slight importance to young Lawley's marked attentions, yet the consciousness was dawning in her mind that his altered behaviour had brought a change into her life. She had a vague feeling that it was but a very narrow border-line that divided jest from earnest; but, with the delightful confidence of youth, she advanced towards that border-line unassailed by any thought of fear.

Having taken leave of Will Lawley, she went into the large, low dining-room, where tea was laid, and busied herself for a few moments arranging the table as no Abigail's hand could. There was a jar of lovely yellow roses on the sideboard. She fetched them and placed them in the centre, lifting their drooping heads with a loving, lingering touch. Hidden among green leaves was one little half-opened, amber-tipped, red-hearted bud, and this she took out, and with deft fingers fastened into her dress. Then she sat down and fell into a pleasant reverie, of which, it must be confessed, the beginning and the end was Will Lawley.

Yes, she remembered very well indeed the incident to which he had alluded. It had happened on the occasion of a fancy-fair held in the grounds of Lawley Manor in aid of some charitable institution, at which the Rector's little daughter had been called upon to go through a minuet with young Will Lawley. They had made a charming couple in their quaint old-world costumes and powdered hair, and as they came up, hand-in-hand, with that grave composure which characterises the children of the aristocracy, and took their places, an admiring crowd quickly gathered round to witness the performance. Felicia recalled with a feeling of wonderment her own absolute unconcern and self-possession as she looked round on the groups of gay figures and smiling expectant faces, and remembered her half-amused surprise at the laughter and applause which ensued when Sir John, coming up, in his good-humoured way declared that "Will must kiss his little partner before he led her back. That was the rule in *his* young days, and, for his part, he thought it was a very good custom;" whereupon Will looked at Felicia, and Felicia at Will, who, upon Sir John's insistence, had performed the duty with a good deal of blushing, and amid renewed applause. But when they had at last got away by themselves, after running the gauntlet of more demands than either felt much inclined to accede to, and were regaling themselves with ice-creams and macaroons in their favourite window-curtained corner, Will slipped his arm round Felicia's waist and said, "I couldn't help kissing you, you know. Did you mind *very* much?"

"I didn't mind your kissing me, Will," was Felicia's grave reply, "but I didn't like being stared at so."

"Well," Will had answered gallantly, "if you are sure you don't mind, I 'll kiss you again." And then it was that Felicia had put both her arms round his neck and returned the compliment. It was the first and only time, for Felicia, even in childhood, had a dignity of manner that was not in accordance with much outward demonstration.

Memories of this kind, however, blissful as they were, were yet touched with a shade of gloom, for Felicia soon found herself thinking of another figure in that scene, the figure of a sturdy dark-haired boy who had before long broken in upon their quiet retreat with a summons to "come to play at 'ghosts' in the portrait-gallery: he was tired of all this dress-up and nonsense."

It was impossible for Felicia to think of her brother Dick without a profound feeling of sadness. She had been ardently attached to him in the old days, when he and she were every-day visitors at Lawley Manor,

but now there was a gulf between them, wider far than is measured by time or space, for Richard Hardy had turned out badly, and his name was hardly ever mentioned even in his own family. *Then* he had been the chosen friend and companion of Sir John Lawley's only son. They had studied together, and played together, had punted on the lake and roamed the old woods together; together they had robbed the orchards and tormented the stable-boys. If ever Will got into mischief, it was always through Dick's instigation; but when complaints were brought by neighbouring farmers, as had sometimes happened, Sir John used cheerfully to "pay the piper," threaten the boys with his severest anger next time, and "let them off easy that once;" for, in his opinion, such escapades showed much spirit and wit, and gave good promise of a fine manly character. So young Dick Hardy tyrannised alike over old and young, rich and poor, from Sir John himself down to the humblest dependant on his estate.

It was unfortunate both for Felicia and Dick that they had lost their mother in their early years, and there had thus been but little restraining influence at home, for Mr. Hardy, busy in his parish, and occupied with many matters, found himself unable to keep his children constantly under his control. He was therefore both glad and thankful that they should be such frequent visitors at the house of so esteemed friend as Sir John Lawley. and no thought of fear ever crossed his mind lest the indulgence and licence permitted in that home should have an otherwise than beneficial effect on the mind and disposition of his young son.

The knowledge, learned too late, of Richard's wild tendencies came in after years, when Mr. Hardy, anxious that his son should have every advantage, sent him, with many prayers and good hopes, with young Lawley to Cambridge. It was a heavy pull on an income none too large, but the Rector was willing to deny himself for his boy's sake, and both he and Felicia cheerfully made sundry sacrifices, lessened the household expenditure, and said nothing about it. When that college career, so hopefully begun, ended during the third term in "rustication," Mr. Hardy was almost heart-broken. Richard returned with a lost character and a formidable array of debts, which his father scarcely knew how to meet. It was then that Sir John proved not only the reality of his friendship, but also his own sterling worth. As in the old days, he came forward with real assistance, arranging difficulties so kindly and with such tact that none but those two ever knew the real extent of young Hardy's misdemeanours.

But, so far from showing any real shame or contrition, Richard took all this kindness as a matter of course. Having been supplied with means to make a fresh start in life, he soon forgot all promises of amendment. From this time his course was a downward one. Sometimes for a period of months nothing could be heard of him, but from time to time news came, and always in the form of a request for money, a request which was always met, though the money never found its way back again. It was hardly surprising that these periodical epistles came to be looked on with suspicion and dread by both father and daughter, for Richard's demands were often far in excess of his father's means. This state of things kept the Rector in very straitened circumstances; yet none but Sir John Lawley knew his real financial position, for the Hardys were very proud. They knew only too well the meaning of economy and self-sacrifice, yet no hint of it was ever heard. Felicia managed her father's household with tact and cleverness, and though the Hardys had their difficulties and troubles, they always kept their heads above water, and showed a brave front to the world.

As Felicia sat thinking of these things—driven by the fair wind of pleasant memories upon the rocks and shoals of anxious care—the Rector came into the room.

"What! not got your hat off, little one. I want my tea."

"Yes, father," said Felicia, jumping up with a smile; "it 's quite ready, and I won't be a minute."

"Where is Lawley?" asked the Rector, as she came again into the room. "I thought I should have found him here. Have you sent him home without his tea after making him a beast of burden?"

"I asked him to come in," said Felicia, laughing, and colouring slightly.

"Ah, well, wait till these fine folks come to the Manor. You won't see very much of Master Will then: he 'll be much too stuck-up." And the Rector stole a mischievous sidelong look at his daughter.

"Father, have you heard anything of that affair about the will?"

"Yes—a good many queer tales."

"What do you think about it? How could it possibly have disappeared?"

"I think it was certainly appropriated for some unknown purpose by some unknown person. No one has any right, so far as I can judge, to impute the sin to any particular person without more evidence than at present exists."

Felicia looked thoughtful.

"Is my little girl going to make herself unhappy because she can't solve the riddle?"

"I was thinking about Mr. Lestrange, father, and wondering what he is like."

"Shall I tell you a secret, Felicia? If you like to go up to the Manor to-night about eight o'clock, you 'll have a very fair chance of satisfying your curiosity."

"Do you mean that Mr. Lestrange has come?" asked Felicia with interest.

"No, my dear. I mean that he is expected to-night. I have just met Sir John, who has received a telegram from him. He is going to bring the little boy."

"Then he will be at church on Sunday."

"Probably," replied the Rector; "but you need not take an opera-glass. It might make him feel uncomfortable."

Felicia laughed, and going round to her father's chair, perched herself on the arm of it, and leaned her cheek against his.

"Have you had a pleasant day, little one?" he asked presently, putting his arm round her fondly.

"Yes, very, father. I wish you could have been with us. It is so still and quiet and peaceful down in

the glen. It seems as if one had got right away into dreamland."

"Ah, child, it's well to get away from the grim realities sometimes, isn't it?" And he stroked her bright head caressingly. "But I must be going now, I suppose. Roger says it's blowing up for rain, and if the hay lies it will all be spoiled. I must get that field in to-night."

He rose, and went to the window, thrusting his hands into his capacious pockets and looking speculatively at the clouds.

"Going out again, father! I hoped you had finished."

"Not yet, child—not yet. Will you fetch me my hat? I'll go out this way."

Felicia did as he requested, and having kissed her, he went out through the French windows and across the broad lawn with great swinging strides. A moment later his daughter heard the click of the gate, and his cheery call to his men across the fields.

CHAPTER III.

IN the library at Lawley Manor, a handsome and luxuriously furnished apartment, Sir John Lawley that evening entertained his newly arrived guest. A strong, hale old man was Sir John, with iron-grey hair and moustache, keen, shrewd eyes overarched by large, shaggy eyebrows, and a hooked nose. When his face was in repose his expression was very determined: it might even have been hard and severe, but that a perpetual smile lurked in the corners of his eyes, betraying the extreme amiability of his disposition.

His *vis-à-vis* was a young man of about eight-and-twenty years, not handsome, but with the kind of face one instinctively trusts. His features were of the Greek type, and were characterised by much refinement and delicacy both of outline and colouring; yet there was a sense of strength and power, of vigour and determination in his air and mien. His eyes were of a clear grey, very frank and straight-looking, and he wore a short beard, which gave him a decidedly English appearance.

There was one other person at the table, Sir John's young kinsman Bertram Wylde, who had been sent for at Sir John's request as soon as dessert was on the table, and having been provided by the butler with a high chair, he now sat regarding Sir John with a pair of wide-open, astonished eyes. True Lawley eyes they were, deep and luminous, and of that peculiar bright blue which strikes the beholder instantly with a sense of their blueness.

"Now, my little man, what would you like?" said Sir John, in his blunt, homely fashion. "Here, let me help you to what's good, lest you should take too much." And he began heaping the child's plate with grapes and peaches till Mr. Lestrange begged him to desist.

"Eh, what? not eat them?" said Sir John, with a loud, good-humoured laugh. "Nonsense! In my young days children would eat as much as you liked to give them."

Bertram received his plate with imperturbable gravity. He selected the ripest peach and held it with chubby fingers to his little ruddy lips, but not for one moment did he withdraw his wondering gaze from Sir John's bushy eyebrows and hooked nose. He tasted the peach and put it down; then he lifted it again to his lips, and still he continued to gaze, for the problem that was puzzling his baby mind was as yet unsolved. Presently, however, a flash of intelligence came into the big blue eyes, for it had suddenly occurred to Bertram that the problem could best be solved by the asking of a simple question. So he put the peach down promptly and opened his lips to speak.

"Who *are* you, old man?" he asked, in his politest tones.

Mr. Lestrange looked up quickly with an amused smile, while Sir John ejaculated, "Bless my heart!" and burst into another loud laugh.

"This gentleman is Sir John Lawley, my boy,' observed Mr. Lestrange, addressing himself to Bertram. "He is a very kind gentleman, and you will love him very much. You must not call him 'old man.' He is your—your——" He paused a moment, but Sir John promptly filled up the hiatus.

"Grandfather, to be sure. I'm your grandfather, my dear," said he, not with exact truth, but with a desire to impress upon the child a sense of close relationship.

"Oh," said Bertram, evidently much shocked; and he addressed himself to the grapes with great energy.

"Come and give your grandfather a kiss," said Sir John invitingly, surprised at the way in which his announcement was taken.

"No, thank you," said Bertram decidedly, without lifting his eyes from his plate.

"Bertram!" said Mr. Lestrange, "I am surprised at you. Go at once and kiss Sir John."

"No, thank you," repeated the child still more decidedly. "I don't want to."

Mr. Lestrange was about to remonstrate, and to insist on the duty being performed, but Sir John entreated him to take no notice of the refusal, and so he, rather unwillingly, refrained. Thereupon the two men fell back on the original topic of conversation; but soon Sir John found the big eyes fixed upon him again. Curiosity had evidently conquered the deep disgust which had taken possession of the boy's mind, and Sir John was startled by hearing the clear, childish voice addressing him once more from the other end of the table, and this time the question was—

"Did they dig you up? And did you see *him* down there?"

The old gentleman stopped talking, and failing to understand the question, looked to his companion for an explanation. Lestrange turned to the boy, and leaning his arms on the table, surveyed him with puzzled gravity.

"What do you mean, child?"

"He says he is my grandfather," began Bertram

eagerly, getting up in his chair and laying hold of his guardian's coat-collar, "and how did he get up again unless they digged him? 'cause Nurse said a lot of men put grandfather in a box and hided him deep down in the ground—down where *him* is, you know. Grandfather had a white beard—a lot whiter than his," and he pointed at Sir John, "and he used to say wicked words. Will *he* say wicked words, now he's digged up again?"

"My dear boy," Lestrange was saying, "whatever put such ideas into your head? Sir John has never been under the ground. That was another grandfather. You must go and kiss him, and see what a nice, kind, good uncle he is."

"She turned and looked at Will Lawley."—*p.* 4.

"Bless my heart!" cried Sir John, "I'm not that grandfather, child. I'm quite another grandfather—that is—no, I'll be hanged if I'm your grandfather at all. I'm your nephew—that is, your uncle—oh, dear, dear! do explain it to him, Lestrange!"

Thus admonished, Bertram slipped down to the ground, ran round the table, climbed up on the old gentleman's knee, and gave him a series of sounding kisses. Sir John returned them heartily, and began jogging him up and down on his knees by way of improving their friendship. Bertram chuckled with delight, and caught hold of the big glittering seals at Sir John's waistcoat, and they were getting on quite famously together; but no sooner did

Sir John pause in his exertions than Bertram asked suddenly—

"And so you didn't see *him*, after all?"

"See whom, my dear?" asked Sir John, perching the boy on his knee at arm's length.

Bertram peered cautiously round the room, and then said, in a low, impressive whisper, nodding his head at his uncle significantly—

"*Him with the horns.*"

Sir John put the boy down hastily. "Good gracious!" said he, "this is an awful child. Upon my word, Lestrange, you've got a handful here."

"If you'll allow me," said Lestrange, rising and ringing the bell, "I'll send him off to bed now." And filling the child's hands with his untasted fruit, he kissed him, wished him good-night, and sent him away with the butler. Then he followed his host into the verandah which ran round one side of the house.

"I am afraid," said he apologetically, as he joined Sir John, "my poor boy's education has been sadly mismanaged. You see, he has necessarily been left a great deal with servants."

"Yes, poor little beggar," said Sir John.

"I should have had a governess for him, but I could not very well introduce a lady into my bachelor establishment, so I have kept on his old nurse; but she is not at all the sort of person I should choose for the guardian of such a boy as Bertram. He has a very lively imagination."

"So it seems. He credits me with some very disreputable acquaintances."

"That sort of influence will have to be counteracted."

"Certainly," said Sir John meditatively. "Have you any plans concerning him?"

"No," said Mr. Lestrange slowly; "it is very difficult to know what to do with him while he is so young. I could not part with him to strangers, and, as you see, I can't, under existing circumstances, make just the arrangements I should like."

"For my part," said Sir John bluntly, "I don't see where the difficulty comes in. Why don't you and Miss Rosamond set up housekeeping at once? Nothing to wait for, that I can see. You're both old enough."

The young man looked down, coloured, and hesitated.

"Wait till the young lady comes, then I'll tell her my opinion. You'll forgive my plainness, I know, my dear fellow—it's the privilege of age; but I can't see any sense in it. I think you are losing the best years of your lives. I suppose if you had an income of about a hundred a year, and a mother, or a grandmother, or a sister, or all combined, dependent on you, you'd be all for marrying; but because fortune has blessed you with health and means, and never an obstacle in the way, not even a testy, cross-grained relative, it never seems to occur to you to ask the lady to name the day. That's just the way of young people nowadays."

"Your advice is very good, Sir John," said Mr. Lestrange, with the slightest possible touch of *hauteur*, "but you entirely mistake. I can hardly explain. There are reasons, however."

Sir John, though usually not much gifted in that respect, had the tact to perceive that he had made a mistake.

"It's years since I've seen Miss Rosamond," he remarked, after a short pause. "I think the last time was a few months before Colonel Wylde married poor dear Emma. I remember his telling me all about it, and wondering how his daughter would like the idea. He had a fancy, I think, that Emma, being young and fond of society, would be such a nice companion for Rosamond. Never looked at the practical side of things, you see."

"Just so," said Lestrange drily

"She never lived at home afterwards, did she? after poor Emma died, I mean?"

"Not for long at a time. She has a great number of friends, you see, and likes travelling about."

"Yes, just so—never knew such a girl for getting about and enjoying herself. Every facility for it now, too—more than there used to be, eh?"

Lestrange knew that he referred to Miss Wylde's fortune, and a shadow crossed his face.

"Never got to the bottom of the will mystery, I suppose?"

"No," said Lestrange, with some energy; "but the matter will be cleared up some time, no doubt. I have pledged myself to see justice done by the boy."

"Yes, yes, my dear fellow," said Sir John, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder, "I know that very well, and I pledge myself to help you all I can, not more for my young nephew's sake than for yours, because it's a cruel thing that scandal-mongers and gossips should have any handle to lay hold on to take away the reputation of an honourable man. Look you here, Lestrange, I'm your friend, mind that. You may rely on old John Lawley, whatever turns up."

"Sir John, I am deeply indebted to you," said the young man, grasping the proffered hand. "Reports have been circulated, as you know, which are utterly without foundation. I am very grateful to you for your sympathy and help."

"Not at all," said Sir John, "not at all. It's only right. By the way, how soon do you think Miss Rosamond will honour us with her presence?"

"I hardly know," said Lestrange; "she is so dependent on her friends' movements. They have not yet decided by which route to return to England. I suppose, though, it is only a matter of days. She will certainly communicate with you as soon as her arrangements are made, and I shall probably hear where to meet her."

"We shall be very glad to see her," said Sir John; "it will quite liven up the old place, and Lady Lawley will feel quite young and gay again. Ah, here she comes."

As he spoke, Lady Lawley, enveloped in a white diaphanous shawl, came languidly up the wide terrace-steps with a bunch of roses in her hand. Lestrange went forward to meet her. She was a fair, elegant woman, with a pale, delicate face that had once been pretty, and was still interesting. One saw at a glance the likeness between her and her stalwart son—the curve of the eyelids, the petulant mouth drooping at the corners, the facile eyebrows, square

chin, and long, graceful throat, even the very tone of voice, clear, soft, and plaintive, all were the same. Only that Will was strong, buoyant, full of life and vigour, and Lady Lawley was fragile, languid, slow of speech and slow of movement.

She placed her hand on the young man's arm, and allowed him to lead her to a seat and to fetch her some coffee, which the butler had just brought.

"How serious you both look!" said she playfully. "I wonder what can have been the subject of your conversation."

"Well, my dear," said Sir John, "if you must know, we were talking of Miss Wylde."

"How very uncomplimentary to Miss Wylde! Such a subject should have made you both cheerful, if not merry. However, I suppose the poets would tell us that a lover should always be sad in the absence of his lady, so there's good excuse for both of you. Where is Will?"

"I am sure I can't tell you, my dear, but as he spends a good half of every day at the Rectory, I dare say he might be found there at this moment.—I want to introduce you to my dear old friend Mr. Hardy, Lestrange," he continued, turning to his guest. "You will like him, I'm sure, and his daughter too. —Suppose you drive round there to-morrow, my dear. Shall you feel equal to the exertion, do you think?"

"Yes, certainly," said Lady Lawley. "I shall be most happy to introduce Mr. Lestrange. I have not seen Felicia for a long time, and I want to ask her all about the affairs of the parish: who is married, and who is dead, and what the farmers say about the harvest, and the farmers' wives about each other. There is the parishioners' tea coming off soon, at which, I suppose, I shall be expected to appear, and it sounds so dreadful to know nothing of what is going on amongst those people."

"Oh, well, you can kill two birds with one stone," said Sir John, laughing. "I'll have the ponies ordered to be ready. I wish I could go with you, but I must ride round with Harris to look after some cottages they say are out of repair."

"Never mind," said Lady Lawley. "I will trust myself to Mr. Lestrange's care. Shall we go in now? It is getting chilly."

She rose, drew her shawl round her, and entered the house, followed by the gentlemen.

CHAPTER IV.

FELICIA awoke next morning with the delightful feeling, often experienced by sanguine minds, that something was going to happen. Perhaps the knowledge that one at least of the expected guests had arrived at Lawley Manor was sufficient to account for this, for Felicia's life at Carsthorpe was so quiet and uneventful that the smallest incident was enough to create great expectations.

The morning was a lovely one, clear and soft as an early July day should be, and Felicia, having attended to her household duties indoors, went out into the garden to gather currants. The garden at the Rectory was a thoroughly old-fashioned one. No modern gardener had ever had a hand in its arrangement, and the consequence was that its well-ordered paths and shady ways kept for each succeeding generation a store of memories. A broad lawn occupied the space in front and round one side of the house, at the end of which ran a wide terrace which separated the upper from the lower garden. In this upper garden the gardener bestowed his care upon the choicest flowers. Here were the standard roses, the asters, the geraniums; and though no laid-out beds disturbed the rich sweep of green, the borders were gay with varied hues, from the dazzling purity of the golden-sceptred lily to the deep crimson of the glowing carnation: while bushes of lilac and laburnum, of syringa and guelder-roses, made a bright contrast amid the profuse greenery of the extensive shrubberies that flanked the lawn on either side.

But in the garden below a profusion of old-fashioned flowers found for themselves odd corners among the carefully kept strawberry-beds, the rows of scarlet-runners, the tall raspberry canes, the homely cabbages, the graceful asparagus, the unassuming potatoes. Among the winding paths one was met at every turn with rows of tall hollyhocks, plots of mignonette and London pride, sturdy clumps of sweet-williams, of clove-pinks, and pansies. Here also the wide-eyed marigold turned its golden face sunwards, while clustering roses mingled with sweet-peas and honeysuckle, and climbed the rugged walls with the confidence of old custom. Thus an added brightness and fragrance mingled with the rich colour and sweetness of the loaded fruit-trees, and it was no wonder that butterflies found a paradise within these walls, and that heavily laden bees went drowsily humming in every nook and corner.

It was into this lower garden that Felicia went. As she tripped lightly down the path in her blue cotton gown and shady hat, she seemed to take the sunshine with her wherever she moved. Amid a little colony of currant-bushes she had taken up her position, and was busy filling her dish with clusters of the ripe fruit, when a step on the gravel path and a well-known voice speaking her name made her look up quickly.

"Good-morning, Mr. Lawley. You are an early visitor."

"Good-morning, beautiful vision," returned the intruder, uncovering his fair head. "You have forgotten your contract."

"You should not appear so suddenly, if you wish me to remember anything."

"I have been looking at you from the terrace for full five minutes. I was wondering to what I could best compare you, when a happy thought came into my mind. It just suits you: 'Queen lily and rose in one.' Don't blush so, Felicia, or you will look more like it than ever."

Felicia really was blushing, and was, moreover, conscious of it as she put the dish down and held both hands towards him.

"'Upon my word, Lestrange, you've got a handful here.'"—*p.* 10.

"It is quite wonderful how poetical you have grown lately, Will. You may develop into a genius in time, if you go on cultivating your imagination at this rate. See, I can't offer to shake hands with you."

"I can with you, though," said he, suiting the action to the word. "It is not the first time I have caught you red-handed, is it? Are you busy? I was going to ask you to have a game of tennis before it gets too hot."

"I should like to very much—but see, I have only half-filled this one dish, and there are at least a dozen bushes waiting to be stripped. Duty before pleasure, you know."

"Where did you learn that unpleasant word, Felicia? I wish you were not so fond of it. I am afraid by-and-by you will be talking to me about *my* duty."

"I was just thinking," she answered, "you must surely be neglecting it in coming here this morning."

"Why?" asked Will. "What duty am I neglecting?"

"Your duty to your friends, of course. Mr. Lestrange has come, has he not?"

"Oh, never mind Lestrange. He is old enough to take care of himself. Look here, Felicia, I'd much rather help other people do their duty than attend to my own. Let me have the dish. We'll fill it together."

Felicia laughed. "You will soon get tired."

"Not while you are here," he returned.

He set to work in good earnest, and very soon the dish was filled.

"I will go and get another," said Felicia; but Will interposed: "No, let me. This is too heavy for you to carry; and, besides, I want to ask cook what she is going to do with all these."

"I wonder," he remarked, on returning, "when Martha will leave off calling me 'Master Willie.' Shall I tell you what she said to me when I walked into her kitchen?"

"What did she say? You startled her, I expect, and made her forget her company manners."

"She said, 'Lawks, Master Willie! why, it's never you!' (and she dropped a hot spoon on the old grey cat in her excitement). 'I'd never have thought to have seen you a-helpin' with the currints and setting so free-and-easy on my kitching table again, now you've a-grown so fine and all. Why, it minds me of the old days quite. Many's the time I've a-seen you in among them currint bushes with your fingers and face all smeared, and your pinafore not fit to be seen.' Fancy going back to the days of pinafores, Felicia! But what happy times they were, after all! Do you ever think of them?"

"Yes," said Felicia, with unusual gravity.

They went on picking for a few moments in silence, till Will presently looked up and asked suddenly: "Felicia, do you ever hear from Dick now?"

"Not often," she answered evasively.

"Where is he?"

"I don't know. He wrote last from Paris, but that was a long while ago. I think we can leave this bush now, Will, and turn our attention to the next."

They continued their work industriously for about half an hour, and then Felicia took the dish from Will, and said with a smile—

"I think we have earned a rest, and it is getting very hot. Shall we go and sit in the arbour?"

Her companion acquiesced gladly. As they passed the strawberry-beds they could not resist stopping to gather some of the rich, luscious, juicy fruit which peeped temptingly out from among the green leaves.

"If duty were always as pleasant as it has proved to be to-day, I would not mind," observed Will presently, as they sat together in the arbour. "It is very kind of you to let me help you. By the way, how does your sketch look this morning? I must see it when we go in."

"It wants another day's work," said Felicia.

"Then it must have it. When shall we go?"

"Oh, not you," she interrupted. "You forget about Miss Wylde."

"Felicia, don't. Why should you be so practical, and spoil my poor little dreams of happiness?" He leaned forward and took one of her hands, holding it in both of his with gentle but firm pressure. "I am going to ask a favour of you. I want you to give me something. Can you guess what it is?"

"No, indeed," said Felicia, regarding him with rather less than her usual frank composure. Perhaps the expression in her eyes gave him courage. He was about to reply when the sound of wheels and the quick trot of horses' feet made them both jump up and look over the wall into the high-road, which lay on the other side of it. A carriage drawn by a high-stepping pair of bays was advancing quickly down the road.

"My mother and Lestrange," said Will, with a short laugh.

"I believe they are coming here," cried Felicia; "and look at my hands!" She started off at full speed towards the house, followed more slowly by Will. He had a strong inclination to beat a retreat, but they had already been seen by Lady Lawley, who waved a graceful recognition.

When, a few minutes later, the ponies drew up before the house, Miss Hardy, smiling and composed, stood at the door to receive her visitors.

"Well, my dear, how are you?" said Lady Lawley, kissing Felicia with much show of affection. "It seems years since I saw you last, but you look as blooming as ever. Is your father at home? You see, I have brought Mr. Lestrange to see you." And, turning to the gentleman, she introduced him to their hostess.

Felicia looked up into his face with her frankest smile as she offered her hand. He, returning her glance, felt a thrill of surprised admiration, which disturbed for a moment his usual easy courtesy. It was but for a moment, though, for the next his attention was attracted by little Bertram, whom Will had just lifted out of the carriage.

"I like this house," he observed, trotting up to his guardian and pulling him by the coat. "I should like to stay here till I'm a man. Will you stay with me?"

Lestrange looked down with an amused smile on the little upturned face. Felicia drew the child to her and kissed him.

"Bertram has soon made up his mind," she said, laughing. "Can't he stay without Mr. Lestrange?"

Bertram hesitated a moment while he surveyed Felicia with critical gravity. "I think I could," was his final decision. "I could stay with *you*, but I should like Uncle Tony to stay too—that is, if you like."

At this they all laughed, and Felicia took the little boy up in her arms, and invited her guests into the house.

"I am sorry my father is not at home," she said to Lady Lawley. "He is out about the village now, but I expect he will be in soon. How good of you to come this morning. Did you find it very hot driving?"

"Positively suffocating," said Lady Lawley, fanning herself. "I should like to stay out on your shady lawn, Felicia. Come and sit down under the trees and tell me all the news."

Lady Lawley was not a very frequent visitor at the Rectory, but when she did come she always made a great fuss of Felicia. She was really fond of her in her own way, and if her affection was somewhat shallow, and her manner of showing it a trifle artificial, it was not altogether her fault, for her nature was neither very deep nor very original.

The Rector came in soon after, and Lady Lawley so far overcame her languor as to be able to walk round the garden with him. Felicia then felt herself at

liberty to introduce Bertram to the strawberry-beds. The child had evidently taken a great fancy to her. He clung to her hand, and toddled along beside her, prattling in his little babyish way about everything that took his attention, looking back every now and then to see if "Uncle Tony" was following.

"How one envies the confidence and trustfulness of childhood!" observed Lestrange: "particularly as one hardly ever finds children mistaken in their instincts. Bert took to you, Miss Hardy, the moment he saw you."

Felicia smiled. "And I to him," she answered. "I hope you will often let him come and see me, Mr. Lestrange."

"Yes, indeed, with pleasure. I shall be only too glad, if he does not trouble you. But you must please promise not to spoil him, Miss Hardy; and please don't steal his heart quite away from 'Uncle Tony.'"

"I don't think there is much danger," said Felicia. "He is a dear little fellow, and I don't wonder you are fond of him. Will he be staying here long?"

"I hardly know, Miss Hardy. My plans are very undecided yet with regard to Bertram. It will depend a great deal on circumstances. If Miss Wylde——"

He stopped, and Felicia, divining with quick instinct that she had touched on a delicate subject, turned to look at Bertram, who was amusing himself with a snail.

They were joined soon after by Will, who was looking very discontented and out of humour. He felt strongly aggrieved that he should twice have been interrupted just when he had made up his mind to say something definite to Felicia. That the interruption should in this case have been the arrival upon the scene of his mother was, he felt, the most annoying part of it. Though nothing had ever passed between them on the subject, Will knew very well that however much Lady Lawley might like Felicia for her own sake, she would not approve that her son should enter into a matrimonial alliance with the Rector's daughter. It was natural that she should be ambitious for an only son; perhaps it was scarcely surprising if maternal vanity considered that a young man possessed of a fine face and figure, broad lands and an ample fortune, was quite worthy of the noblest lady in the land. Will, however, did not feel disposed to give much thought to such considerations. He only wanted to be left free to follow his own fancies.

"My mother talks of going now," he said, in his injured, petulant way, "and Mr. Hardy is asking her to stay to luncheon. I think you had better go and settle it, Lestrange."

"I was just going to make the same request," said Felicia, moving towards the house; "it is not worth while to come so far for such a short visit. Why, it is nearly lunch-time now: how quickly the time has gone!"

"Yours is such an ideal garden, Miss Hardy," said Lestrange, "it is small wonder that time passes quickly."

Lady Lawley, who had not nearly finished her talk with the Rector, was easily prevailed upon to remain, greatly to Bertram's satisfaction. When the time for their departure arrived, and the carriage was brought to the door, he was very much distressed because Felicia was not going with them. The tears rushed into his big blue eyes, though he tried very hard to keep them back, but he was comforted when Felicia told him that she had promised to spend the whole of the next day at the Manor.

"We will have our game to-morrow, at any rate," said Will in an aside to Felicia; "and another day you will let me help you again, won't you? I can't think why my mother must needs come to-day."

But Felicia only smiled as she gave him her hand, wisely making no promises.

(To be continued.)

ON ENTERING THE NEW HOME.

BY M. S. HAYCRAFT.

O THO[illegible] dwelling-place is highest heav'n!
Through change unchanging, Shelter ever near,—
Behold this home Thy tender Hand hath given—
O God, be present here.

We see not, know not of life's hidden ways,
But let Thy Face as in the past appear;
We lift an altar in our prayers and praise,—
O God, be present here.

Choose Thou the joys, the griefs that shall befall,—
The golden radiance or the shadows drear;
Only, as Guest, as King, abide through all!
O God, be present here.

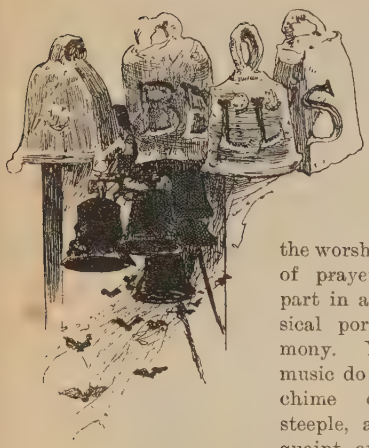
Where'er we dwell, who name Thy holy Name,
Lord, keep us faithful to our calling clear;
Let our light shine Thy glory to proclaim,—
O God, be present here.

A sense of strangeness round our spirits clings,
But Thou art Rest and Hope and Strength and Cheer;
We fain would build our nest beneath Thy wings,—
O God, be present here.

And if, in days to come, some pilgrim-heart
Shall hence to Jordan's swelling flood draw near,
To whisper of that Home where none shall part,—
O God, be present here.

ABOUT CHURCH BELLS.

BY J. F. ROWBOTHAM, AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF MUSIC."



HAVE been from the earliest times the instruments *par excellence* of churches, playing there the humble and somewhat prosaic *rôle* of summoning the worshippers to the house of prayer, without taking part in any way in the musical portion of the ceremony. Yet what lovely music do they make as they chime overhead in the steeple, and perform their quaint and cabalistic overture to the sacred rites which commence at their conclusion! A recent poet has chosen as a type of weird and romantic musical effect

> "The sound of bells, whose distant chiming
> The wind doth weakly waft along."

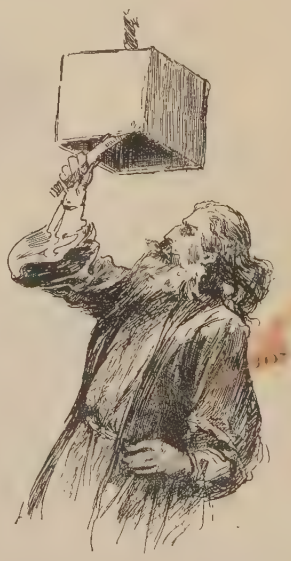
When the impulse of the wind has fainted, and the tone floats in a burst of sweet melody on the ear in some sequestered and romantic spot, what can be more lovely or appealing?

Compared with the joyous jangling of bells with which we greet our holy day, the staid, melancholy silence in Oriental lands on the day of worship is chilling, frigid, and unnatural. The muezzin mounts the mosque to announce the hour of prayer from a balcony, or, in some cases, from a turret adjoining the principal entrance. His voice, trained to carry far by constant practice, certainly effects its object, but in a most unmusical manner. The harsh grating sound—something between a strong nasal intonation and a howl—will be remembered with anything but pleasure by those who have happened to pass a few weeks in Constantinople.

The bell has had a strange history in relation to its introduction to Christian worship. To this latter, indeed, it owes its *raison d'être*. Bells, though they answer divers purposes at present in the economy of civilisation, would never have come into existence at all but through the fostering care of Christian worship, to which they were fated to form so melodious a decoration, and in connection with which they have gradually grown out of nothing into their present admirable development. In the earliest days of the Church, bells would have been entirely unnecessary—in the succeeding epoch they would have been an impossibility. The first meetings of the infant Church took place in upper rooms—generally the best room in the house—and owing to the semi-private nature they possessed, may be supposed to have been completely familiar in respect of the hour of assembling to the few members of the communion who were in the habit of attending. Subsequently, when persecutions began, the Christian worshippers were accustomed to gather together in catacombs, in caves, in mysterious hiding-places. Bells, or any indication of the existence of their timorous assembly, were the last things they desired.

When basilicas began to be used as places of worship, after those troublous times were over and the Christian community, recognised by law, could raise its head openly in the world, the method of summoning the congregation to prayer was by means of a *tessera*, or watchword, which was passed round from one to the other when any service, not in the ordinary routine of Sunday and week-day meetings, was to be performed. For the usual gatherings the congregation trooped at appointed hours to the house of God, far too happy in being allowed to practise their beloved religion without hindrance to care for or desire any demonstrative announcement of services which none would be likely to fail to attend.

But shortly before this time, in a remote district of the Christian world, a custom had commenced from which bells and our entire campanology have since been evolved. In the monastery of Pachomius, in Egypt, where recluses and fugitives from the persecutions lived in thousands, leading a life devoted to prayer



RINGING THE WOODEN BELL.

and asceticism, to call such a vast multitude to daily prayers, so as to avoid the interruption of those who came late, and ensure punctuality in the attendance, it was the custom to send a man round, who struck a blow with a mallet on the door of every cell, by this

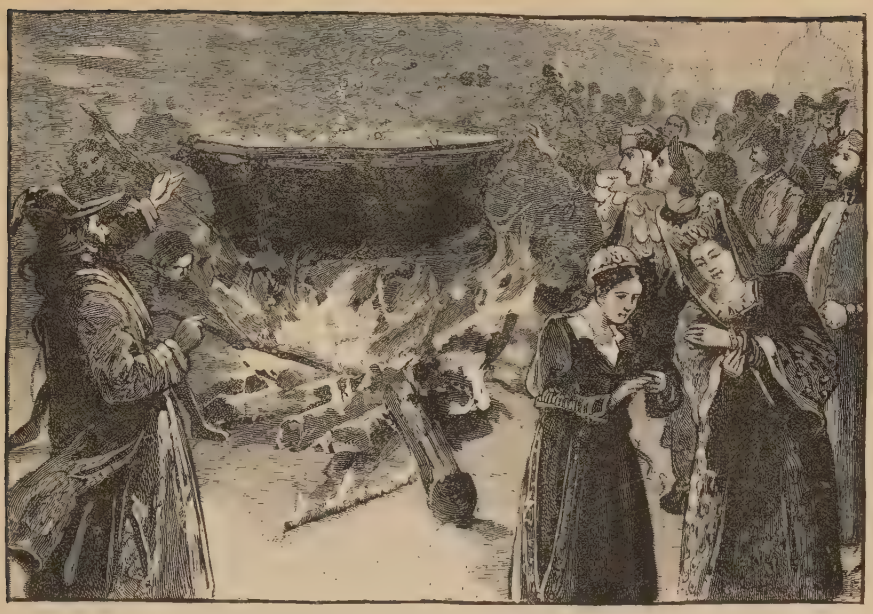
means apprising the tenant of the hour of worship. Probably this man—though we only hear of one—had assistants who helped him in what would otherwise have been an exceedingly lengthy task, and by the application of many wooden mallets the signal was given to all the recluses. This was a very cumbersome and laborious method, and eventually a substitute for the practice was found by stationing a man with a piece of board and a mallet in some post of vantage near the cells, who, by hammering on his homely instrument, gave the call to service quite as effectually, and with far less trouble.

The next step in the evolution of the bell was for the man to discover that if he had two pieces of board instead of one, or rather if he used something in the shape of a box in lieu of the simple board, he could produce his clatter on the wood with greater ease to himself by striking each side of the box alternately, and thus producing a quick repetition of the sound. This idea was accordingly acted upon, and with a cudgel wielded inside the box, the latter being probably suspended by a rope for the purpose, the primitive bell-ringer performed his rude and singularly unmelodious duties. The attaching of the cudgel to the box was a step which was shortly afterwards taken, and by this means the wooden bell gained a clapper, the vibration of which produced the same effect as the vigorous exercise of the cudgel-wielder, with half the muscular exertion on his part. Such wooden bells, the name of which was *signa*, began to be used soon afterwards not only in the monasteries, but at churches, to summon the people to the building at the hours of prayer. Similar instruments, it may be mentioned, were found by Cortes in use among the Mexicans at the time of their discovery. The Mexican wooden bells, however, were more shapely than those of the early Christians, being beautifully fashioned in the form of the head of a poppy—round, smooth, and symmetrical, with the wooden tongue inside answering to the pistil of the flower. The wooden bells of Christendom were in the shape of a box, as we have mentioned, and that form was never improved upon.

The next step was to make these bells of metal instead of wood. There is no definite record of when this important change in bell manufacture was introduced; and the substitution was a gradual one. The old square form was still adhered to, and the bell was made in the shape of a box, but of iron. Some of these square bells are to be seen at the present day. There is one in the monastery of St. Gall—perhaps the oldest bell in existence. It is most rudely fashioned, and looks no different from an iron box. The tone of it also when struck is harsh and unpleasant. In Denmark, and likewise in Ireland, such bells are reported still to exist as curiosities, while of their manufacture in England in large numbers during those early days we have ample evidence. The iron was sometimes coated over with bronze, either to sweeten the tone or to improve the appearance of the bell and preserve it from rust.

"The tone floats in a burst of sweet melody on the ear."—*p.* 15.

The round form of bell gradually superseded the old square one, and indeed seems a most natural innovation, though as to how or where it was invented we have no positive testimony. Considering that the metal bell had to be cast in a mould, one shape was as easy as another for the artificer to produce, and all feeling for symmetry would point to the round form. Copper and tin now began to be used instead of iron, owing to the sonorousness of the alloy, the proportion being two parts of copper to one of tin. Other metals, too, have been found in mediæval bells—silver and even gold in large quantities. The explanation of how they came there for a long time puzzled campanologists, since the presence of the precious metals was completely disguised to sight in the overwhelming mass of copper and tin, while it answered no



"The richer members of the congregation were accustomed to cast into the liquid metal gold and silver coins, chains, and other ornaments."

purpose of sweetening the tone. A study of mediæval manners and customs, however, revealed the fact that when a bell was being cast for a church in those days the members of the congregation were accustomed to assemble in great numbers while the metals were fusing, an operation which took place in a large caldron over a wood fire. Here the tin and copper boiled and bubbled in a churning mass, and a sluice was attached to the caldron, on drawing the slide of which the molten metal would rush gurgling into the mould. But before this was effected the richer members of the congregation were accustomed to cast into the liquid metal gold and silver coins, chains, rings, and other ornaments, imagining it a pious act to give of their substance to the beautifying of the bell. When the gold and silver had melted and disappeared amid the superabundant mass of tin and copper, the master-smith, who was standing by, drew the slide, and the great vat of liquid metal emptied itself with a roar into the mould. The latter, made of baked clay, lay in a pit close to the caldron, and, after the metal had hardened, was broken, and revealed the bell to view.

Some bells in those days were made of more costly substance than tin and copper, and contained the precious metals exclusively in their composition. Six silver bells were not uncommon in German churches, but in Italy purity and beauty of tone were most successfully cultivated, and bells made of pure gold were occasionally employed. At Bologna there were three golden bells, which made celestial ringing, whose loveliness has been celebrated by poets. The Italian bell-founders exceeded those of the rest of Europe in the melody of their metal, about which authentic stories are told, some of which attain the interest of romance. The beautiful peal of bells which once hung in Limerick Cathedral, came originally from Italy, and in relation to them the following story may be set down :—They were the work of an Italian bell-founder, who had exhausted upon their manufacture the whole resources of his art. They rang with the loveliest melody of any Italian bells in their age, and having made them he was loth to part with them.

"All the wish of his life had been fulfilled."—*p.* 18.

But dire necessity compelled him to sell his bells. Not to be deprived of their beautiful sound, however, with which his soul was ravished, he removed from the city where he lived, and built himself a little cottage on a point of land near the country church, nigh Modena, where the bells were hung, finding his only happiness in listening to their melody. At this time Italy was given up to civil wars, and in the course of a raid from a neighbouring potentate the man was carried into captivity, the church was destroyed, and the bells, its priceless possession, were sent for sale into a foreign country. On recovering his liberty the bell-founder, grieving much at the loss of his dearest treasure, resolved to travel all over the earth but he would find in what part of the world his bells were placed and hear their sound before he died. Many years did he spend in weary pilgrimage, futile and disappointing. He listened to the bells in all the churches in Europe, and never heard such beauty as pealed from his own beloved chimes. At last he sailed up the Shannon, and floating on the air from the tower of Limerick Cathedral came the tones familiar and beautiful to him beyond all other earthly music. Sinking on the deck of the ship, he died with excess of rapture, declaring with his last words that all the wish of his life had been fulfilled.

Our churches received their bells in mediæval times very much in the same way whereby they are provided with them at present—that is to say, some generous member of the congregation presented the peal, or sometimes an individual bell, in token of thankfulness to God for preservation from danger, recovery from sickness, or out of a pure spirit of benevolence. Occasionally the incident which led to the gift was of some special character, rendering a present of bells singularly *à propos*. The peal of bells given to Langham Church, Rutland, was presented by a lady who had been benighted on the moors hard by. Remembering how welcome would have been the sound of bells to her in her loneliness and danger, she gave the peal in question, so that other travellers might enjoy a benefit of which she was deprived. Similar gifts of bells were not uncommon in our old churches. The bells of Chipping Warden in Northamptonshire were presented by a gentleman who was lost on the moors in a similar way, with the intention that they should act as a warning signal to travellers, like the bell on a rock to seamen in a storm.

We have spoken of the method of the muezzins in Mahometan mosques who call people to prayer, but one would scarcely imagine that a similar primitive method existed in Christian England at no very distant date. A traveller passing through Messingham in Lincolnshire one Sunday morning found three men on stiles near the church door who were addressing people by name as they passed along the lanes with the words, "Come to church, Thompson!" "Come to church, Noakes!" "Come to church, Brown!" The church having no bells, the vicar took this highly original means of issuing the summons to devotion. Tradition reports that the first peal of bells given to Messingham Church was presented by a generous patron in order to stop this practice.

One of the largest bells in the world—certainly the largest in Spain—is that in the cathedral of Toledo, with regard to which the Spaniards express its size very graphically by saying that fifteen shoemakers could sit under it and draw out their cobbler's thread without touching. The purpose of this monstrous bell may be gathered from the following story:—A count of Toledo had a son who, having killed an antagonist in a duel, fled to the cathedral for protection. His father undertook a pilgrimage to Madrid in order to ask his pardon from the king; but that monarch refused utterly to grant it, and terminated his refusal by saying, "When you can make a bell at Toledo which I can hear at Madrid, then only will I pardon your son." The count took him at his word, and this monstrous bell, the sound of which is declared to carry sixty miles, wind and weather being favourable, was the outcome of the paternal solicitude. But stories of bells are endless, and perhaps there is no kind of superstition which is more difficult to analyse, so as to separate the true from the false.

THE EASY YOKE AND THE LIGHT BURDEN.

BY THE REV. A. BOYD CARPENTER, RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY.

"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—ST. MATT. xi. 30.

THERE are two sources of peace and strength to the human soul. The one is the clear recognition and acceptance of the inevitable—the acquiescence in the fact that we are not our own masters, nor are we possessed of irresistible might, and that therefore there are many things which we cannot hope to accomplish, and there are also many duties and responsibilities which we ought not to avoid. Much time and energy and feeling have been wasted by attempting and longing for the impossible—beating the wings of our desires against the bars of the impassable, and expending mind and heart in the hopeless pursuit of that which cannot be. The sooner, then, that we recognise the clear line which parts the possible from the impossible—the sooner we accept what must be—the sooner may we hope to take up the practical business of life. And just in proportion as a man acts thus will he give us proof of the clearness of his judgment and the force of his character. But this apprehension or recognition alone does not suffice. We can readily imagine the recognition bringing no

rest or desirable results in its train. The apprehension of the fact that such and such must be, and that such and such cannot be, does not of itself necessarily lead to strength and repose, and the patient and wise taking up of life's duties. There are different ways in which the inevitable may be accepted. The recognition that we are not to have things just as we fancy, that there is both limitation and obligation resting upon us, may be accepted in a very different spirit; and as this spirit is, so will be the moral result upon life and character. If, for instance, the recognition be made under the influence of sheer compulsion—as a great disagreeable necessity—there will be but a sullen submission, and life's duties will be but as drudgeries, accepted in a mechanical obedience that covers the smouldering fires of rebellion, which are only too ready to break out on the first prospect of success. Here is neither peace nor strength to be found. Or, again, suppose the recognition be made simply out of a sense of duty or moral obligation; that the man says, "I yield because I feel I ought." Here we have a moral yielding to that strict martinet spirit that looks upon duty as supreme, and is ready to trample on all feelings, and obey at all costs. It is duty, but duty without love—duty stern, terrible, irresistible. And there is no joy, no spontaneity, no freedom. It is all law, the law of duty instead of the force of compulsion.

Now, there is a far higher spirit of acquiescence; not that of mere duty or compulsion, but the recognition of the right and goodness of such a yielding, and the apprehension of a goodness which thus inspires and calls through what it asks. The above is the spirit of free, spontaneous, and cheerful acquiescence. And we can see that the spirit in which life is accepted will make all the difference, and will exert a transforming influence upon the whole of life's experiences and duties. We may almost say that the whole question turns upon the spirit in which we act.

And this brings us to the second requirement, which is, that besides the bare fact of recognition, there must be a willing and trustful spirit in which that recognition is made. And these two will constitute two of the most efficient factors in making life wise, practical, and happy.

Now, it is just these two elements which seem to breathe through these words of Christ. We have two points suggested—first, the recognition of duty; and, secondly, the spirit in which that recognition was made. Let us consider these two.

I. *Christ's recognition of duty.* Here our Lord makes use of two expressions to convey His idea of duty. He speaks of the yoke and He speaks of the burden. The yoke is that which restrains; the burden is that which is carried. In other words, Christ, by the use of these expressions, conveys the ideas of obedience and service; and thus His sense of duty resolves itself into these two important factors. Thus we have our Lord standing forth and acknowledging that He is under the law of obedience and service; and not only so, but that He is ready to impose this same obedience and service on His followers; that He regards them as part of the natural and proper life of every man; and that He did not come to escape these Himself, nor to release mankind from them.

Now, this fact becomes more significant when brought into contrast with the too frequent conceptions which men form of life. If we could analyse what is working in many minds and hearts, we should find that the ideal life is there taking a very different form, and that the very opposites to those recognised by Christ are being cherished. Too often is freedom—the getting rid of all restraints and the absence of law—regarded as one of the ideal factors in life; whilst if we can avoid or shake off the burden of duty and follow the bent of our own inclination, how desirable a consummation this would be. In a word, freedom and idleness are too often the thoughts which rise in the mind when we attempt to conceive of an ideal life for ourselves.

But Christ never dreamed of these. He not only takes up, but He takes up patiently, and readily, the opposites of these, and proclaims for Himself and for mankind law and service. And in doing so He has presented us with a higher conception of life. When we look at the matter, we begin to find not only the truth, but the wisdom and nobility of this view of life adopted by Christ; for this is—

1. The true life. Wherever we turn we find that these two—law and service—form part of every true life. If we look at the natural world outside ourselves, there we find each thing has its law and its work; and just as each is thus living and acting does it win our admiration and gratitude, and enter into its real glory and greatness. Flowers, trees, birds, stars, they all follow their laws and play their parts; and it is just out of this obedience and service that the strength and beauty and harmony of the universe are born. Or if we ask of history and experience to tell us who have been the truest men, we are not pointed to the idle and self-willed, the self-indulgent and the reckless, but to the diligent and the useful—the men who have lived under a sense of duty, and out of that have served mankind. We find there men who willingly wore the yoke and bore the burden.

And if, apart from experience, we attempt to form for ourselves an ideal of what the highest life ought to be, we find our thoughts instinctively going in the same direction. We know so well how many evils result from disobedience and idleness, that we feel that, after all, the perfect man and the highest influence on man must exemplify, and result in, the recognition and fulfilment of these two—obedience and service.

2. But this life of obedience and service is not only the true life for man; it is also the noblest life. For these two factors give width and noble expansion to the individual life by bringing it into connection with the vast life of mankind. Law and service, what are these but the connecting-links which make the life of each pass into co-operation with the lives of his fellow-men? No life can be truly great and noble that is not lived more or less for the sake of others. The more the individual lives for himself, the less great and noble does he become. He shrinks

into not only feebleness, but ignobility. Whereas the man who recognises his duties towards others, and gladly takes up those responsibilities which bind him to his fellow, his life merging itself into the life of the whole becomes in turn clothed with, and inspired by, that mightier life. Hence the truly noble life we must live in conjunction with our fellows, and that means accepting with joyful appreciation our duty as consisting of obedience and service.

3. Nor is that all. It is just by this obedience and service that our life becomes divine. For what is law? All law is the expression of the Divine Mind and Will. And what is all service but the work we do for God? It is thus that through obedience and service we have converse together with God, and our single life is caught up until it forms a very part of the great Divine plan. It is this which transforms obligation and duty, obedience and service, into those honours and responsibilities which reflect a glory and sacredness upon man and all his life here.

II. *The spirit in which Christ recognises duty.* Our Lord calls His yoke easy and His burden light. This opens the question as to the sense in which we are to take these words. Was His yoke easy and His burden light? Two explanations may be offered. The one is that the words are to be taken literally, and that Christ's duty was of the lightest and easiest character in itself; the other is that the force of the expression lies not so much in the nature of the duty as in the transforming influence which came from the spirit in which this was accepted by Christ.

Now, in which way shall we regard these words? Can we say that literally Christ's yoke was easy and His burden light? Can we say that His life was so highly favoured that He was sheltered from the toil and obligations which fall to the lot of man? Nay, were we asked to describe Christ's life, it is not as easy and light that we should represent it. If ever there was a life into which heavy burden and painful toil entered, it was His. Weary and hungry, full of the sorrow that comes from unrequited toil, misunderstanding, misrepresentation, opposition, He bore a burden and obeyed a law which too often must have seemed to those who could appreciate His life as hard and heavy to the last degree. And yet we do not get the impression from anything that Christ Himself said or did that He regarded His life as such. There is no complaint coming from Him. Everything is accepted, undertaken, done. in the spirit of patient and ready acquiescence, and so we are led to the conviction that it was the spirit in which He met duty wherein lay the secret of the ease and lightness with which He regarded His yoke and burden.

And what was this spirit which thus animated Christ? Can we penetrate sufficiently to the depth of that life so as to perceive the nature of the spirit in which He lived, and which thus conquered and transformed the yoke and burden of life? Can we form an idea of that inner strength and nobility which could not only bear, but could transform, duty and service, sorrow and conflict, and make them easy and light? It must have been a splendid spirit, and presents a far grander idea of manhood than that which gets its ease from external arrangement. We can trace this spirit—at least, some of its traits.

1. It was a spirit of righteousness. It regarded obedience and service as right—the right of God to command, the right of man to obey. Christ never regarded obedience and service as something forced upon Him or upon man. It was part of the very right of man, conferred upon him as God's child, to live under God's law and to do God's service. "Son, thou art ever with Me," was the voice He heard speaking and calling upon all men to share in God's great work. And so the spirit of obedience, representing the right of God to man's obedience and service, and the right of man to take part in these, would lift obligation and work into noble gifts and evidence of man's greatness and God's goodness.

2. It was a spirit of love for God and for man. This would at once transform obedience and service. The heart that loves will ever crave for something that it may do to show that love. Any task, any service, any sacrifice, how good these become when done by love for love! And just because that spirit of love, in all its purity and intensity, was the very atmosphere in which Christ's Spirit lived—was that which inspired each thought, each word, each act—how good, how joyful, how light became the yoke and burden!

3. It was the spirit of faith. This makes the yoke and burden not only easy and light, but necessary and full of significance. These laws, these duties, had their divine ends towards which they pointed, and he who obeyed and served was ever advancing towards the great consummation. Thus faith was faith in God—in His wisdom, His goodness, His power. It filled the soul with the sense that no law, no duty, no obligation, no power, was given in vain, but that each and all formed parts of the great purposes and work of God. It meant also faith in man; that notwithstanding his errors, his sins, his follies, there was that in him which contained the promise and potency of better and greater things.

It was thus faith in God, and faith in man, and faith in life. It was a spirit to which there was nothing small in duty or service. Each man, each woman, each child, each obligation and service, however apparently insignificant, had its definite end, its definite meaning. And it would be the highest distrust to assume that any man's work could be spared or this or that service could be neglected. It was this spirit of faith which could impart not only comprehensiveness, but unfaltering hopefulness to the yoke and burden, as good and needful, and to be borne joyfully.

And Christ says not only that His yoke is easy and His burden is light, but He says, "Learn of Me." He presents to us life as He lived it, and as He would have us live it. Hence He says, "Learn of Me, and you shall find rest." Yes, learn of Him in three ways.

First, by example; for He stands out clearly before us, as One surrounded by trouble and conflict, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and yet so calm, so strong, so gentle, so uncomplaining. And He bids us look at Him, as the One who can teach us how to take up the yoke and burden of life as He did.

Secondly, we may learn of Him by the teaching which He offers us; for He opens His own heart and shows us the secret of His success, and how He met life's duties and life's trials, and how He would have us meet them.

Lastly, we may learn of Him by the Spirit which He will impart to us. He offers us the Spirit of peace and power which was His, so that however weak and hard beset we are, we may become like unto Him. He speaks to us now in the battle and burden of life: "I will give you the Spirit of righteousness and love and faith. This shall be yours; and you shall share my Spirit as well as my experience, and your yokes shall be easy, and your burdens light."

THE TWO MISS TORRINGTONS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TUNE ST. ELWYN'S," "A ROSE BEDEWED," ETC.

"Josie buried her face in her hands."—*p.* 22.

CHAPTER I.

THEY sat facing one another at the breakfast-table. Josepha Torrington the elder, a bright spot burning on either cheek, was fidgeting nervously with the sugar-tongs and the teapot-holder, in an endeavour to preserve an easy and unconscious air by pouring out the second cup while she talked. Josepha Torrington the younger was more than usually pale, as the contrasting darkness of her downcast lashes evidenced, and not a muscle moved but those of the delicate pink lips and the finger-tips that crumbled so industriously a crust of toast in her plate.

"It seems to me, my dear, that this is an opportunity which you should not miss," said the elder lady in hurried tones. "You are frequently troubled with a cough in the winter, and residence in the Riviera would be a real boon to you; and you have often said how much you would like to travel."

Josie's trembling lips parted, but she seemed unable to speak.

"I have not the slightest fear as to your suiting Mrs. Courtney," Miss Torrington resumed, dropping

a lump of sugar in the milk-jug, and pouring the tea into the slop-basin to make up. "I have nothing but praise to bestow for your services to me. You read excellently, your singing is very entertaining, you are well up in several kinds of fancy work, and when you like can be very bright and amusing; no one could be better adapted for a companion to an invalid than you, and so I could assure Mrs. Courtney. No doubt you will be sorry to leave Chiverley; we have got on very nicely together; but you must see, my dear, that now my health is so nearly restored I am really no longer justified in keeping so expensive a luxury myself. And this is really an opportunity, as I said before, which should not be lost."

"I know I can't expect to stay here always," said Josie, in a low, choking voice. "But—but Bordighera is so far, and Mrs. Courtney wants me to go so soon."

"Not for a fortnight, at least. There will be plenty of time to get ready between now and then. And as to the distance, you have no ties in England but myself; and you know, my dear, what a gem of a correspondent *I* am!"

She laughed nervously as she handed Josie her cup, and Josie forced up a ghastly attempt at a smile in reply.

"We must write to each other very often, Josie, and I promise to tell you all the news."

"I have no doubt you would be very good, aunt," said Josie; "but I have no wish to leave England. I would rather go to London; and Mrs. Brooks would be glad of me at any time to help teach her children."

"London? That will never do!" leaped from Miss Torrington's lips before prudence could interpose a check. And, having betrayed herself thus far, it seemed impossible not to follow up with a frank avowal of her ideas then and there.

"The fact is, Josie," she went on, "I may as well be candid, and then we shall understand each other better. I think it best for all concerned, yourself included, that you and Laurence should not be again thrown in each other's way. You are not fitted for one another, my dear, not at all. And though I cannot deny that his tender heart seemed touched on more than one occasion by your forlorn and isolated condition, there was an understanding between him and Ellen Morton long before you ever came to Chiverley. Ellen is very fond of him, and I'm sure you would not wish to—to win him from his old allegiance."

"Oh dear no! Not upon any account. It is quite news to me that—that there was such an understanding."

Josie's pale face had grown red enough before she uttered this emphatic repudiation; when she had spoken, ears, brow, and throat alike were submerged by the swelling crimson wave.

"Oh yes," Miss Torrington assured her, with a matter-of-course air. "It will not be exactly acknowledged until Laurence has finished his curriculum, and the wedding will probably not take place until he is settled in practice, but it has all been arranged since the little things were as high as the table. A sweet girl is Ellen. (My dear, you are not getting on. I always like to see young people make a good breakfast.) There is no one I should be so pleased for my boy to marry, and the Mortons think as much of Laurence already as if he were their own. Try a little honey, Josie; it is capital on toast."

"No, thank you, aunt," replied Josie. "I have had quite sufficient. I think, if you will excuse me now," she added hurriedly, "I will go and write a postcard to Anderson about my boots. I should like it to go by the first post."

"To be sure, to be sure! Run and do it at once."

So calm was Josie's manner, and so prosaic her suggestion, that Miss Torrington felt quite at ease, and delighted with the success of her own management.

"It was much the best to be outspoken," she said to herself, "much the best. It was the wisest possible course to stop the thing before it went any further. So far it is pretty certain that no harm has been done on either side. But Laurence's vacation will be in three weeks, and he is so soft-hearted, and Josie is really a very taking sort of girl; and—well, I shall be very thankful to get her out of the way, for *that* would not do at all."

Could Miss Torrington, senior, have beheld her youthful namesake at that moment, she might have felt somewhat less content.

Josie was standing erect in the middle of the little room which had been hers during the ten happiest months of her life. Still, and pale, and rigid she stood, choking back the sobs that rose so simultaneously from her aching heart, while her hands, fiercely breaking a penholder to fragments, were alone expressive of the storm that raged within.

"Win him from his allegiance"! She would die rather than anyone should dare to accuse her of this. No, she would never come between any girl and her lover. But what sort of a lover was he who could offer flowers and books and gentle courtesies (with such tones and looks!) to any but the *one?*

"Oh, Laurence! how *could* you?" It was unchivalrous, unmanly, untrue to them both! But it was only that "his tender heart had been touched by her forlorn condition." He pitied her loneliness and poverty, and tried to be kind, and she must needs therefore jump to the conclusion that—— Pah! it was too disgraceful to think of!

Flinging the splinters of wood away, Josie buried her crimsoned face in her hands, and dropped, a palpitating heap of shame and misery, on the floor by the side of her bed.

The very thing she had condemned most in others—a too ready surrender of their unwooed affections—she had been guilty of herself! Oh! why had no

one told her of this affair with Ellen Morton before? She knew that Laurence and Ellen had been playfellows in childhood, and were still great friends, yet any closer tie she had never once suspected. But Laurence was not to blame—not in the very least. He was as honourable as he was sympathetic and good. He had only meant to be kind. Hers, hers only, were all the fault and folly, and humiliation and grief!

But he should never know—never! She would go right away at once. To Italy, to the ends of the earth if she could—the farther the better! No one should guess by breath or look of hers how unmaidenly she had behaved; and Laurence should never see her face again.

CHAPTER II.

THE August dust lay thick and soft in the roads; the whitened hedges were hung with trailing stalks of corn that they had stolen from passing wains on behalf of their friends the birds; all the summer freshness was gone, the flowers were gaudy, the air was heavy, grass and trees alike were over-baked; yet Laurence Brant, stepping out briskly along the road between Helford station and the village of Chiverley, thought he had never seen the country look so lovely before.

The figure of a lady was standing at a cottage door, apparently taking leave of the occupant. Something in its contour seemed familiar, and his heart gave a rapturous jump. Did that interposing dome of shimmering silk shade the pure pearly face, the sweet pink lips, and those shy dark-fringed eyes he hungered once more to meet? With a long mile between there and the village it were fortune *too* good!

Too good indeed! The next instant the parasol was shifted, and revealed the faded, pleasant countenance of the vicar's middle-aged sister, Mary Dean.

Mr. Brant's disappointment was out of all proportion to its cause, but he did not allow it to chill the warmth of his greeting by a single degree.

Miss Dean's pleasure at seeing him was most cordially expressed. If there was any latent geniality in anyone's nature, the sunny glance of this blue-eyed young Hercules was sure to kindle it into life.

With boyish eagerness he began to pour out question after question about his village friends, especially any who were known to be ailing, for, prolix correspondent as Miss Torrington was on some points, she possessed a healthy aversion to "symptoms" which was scarcely satisfying to the enthusiastic young medicus.

"You are hardly looking the thing yourself, Miss Dean," he presently said. "You must let me make you up a nice little tonic. One needs something of the sort in such weather as this."

"You are very kind," the lady replied. "I do not generally suffer so much with the heat as some people, but just now I am tired. I have been tramping the neighbourhood all the afternoon on an unsuccessful errand—trying to get someone to undertake Miss Torrington's—young Miss Torrington's—class at the Sunday-school."

"Has she then given it up?" queried Laurence, with a keener inflection of interest in his tone than even old Podgeby's lumbago had been able to evoke.

"She has left Chiverley, you know."

"Left! No, I had heard nothing about it. When—how did she leave?"

"She has gone abroad as companion to an invalid."

"Gone abroad!" repeated the young man, obviously aghast at the unexpected news. "And my aunt never told me!"

"Miss Torrington only went last week," replied Miss Dean. And more than half suspecting the state of affairs, she considerately excused herself from accompanying Mr. Brant any further, leaving the bewildered young man to continue his walk unembarrassed by her presence.

"Aunt, what is this I hear about Josie?" he demanded, almost before greetings had been exchanged. "Is it a fact that she has gone away—gone abroad?"

"Yes. We heard of an excellent opening for her, and she decided to embrace it at once," answered Miss Torrington, her metaphors becoming slightly mixed, and her colour rising beneath her nephew's penetrating gaze. "I had a letter this morning announcing their safe arrival at Bordighera. And how was London looking, dear boy, when you left?"

If the "dear boy" allowed an observation to escape his lips that was hardly complimentary either to the great metropolis or his questioner, it was at that moment almost excusable, his discomfiture was so complete.

"And you never even told me she was going!" he said.

"It was settled rather hurriedly at the last. I 'm not quite sure that anything had been decided when I wrote to you."

"Did she—I suppose she did not leave any note or message for me?" asked Laurence, after a pause, as he rather inopportunely examined the soles of his boots.

"Oh dear no!" replied Miss Torrington, genuinely surprised at the question. "She never mentioned your name."

Another pause, after which Mr. Brant, having apparently satisfied himself that his "understanding" was sound, pulled his muscular form into its wonted upright position, and said he would "go and have a wash."

"Do, dear," said his aunt. "And will you have ham and eggs, or a bit of cold chicken?"

"Oh, anything you like—or nothing! I don't care!" was the response as Laurence bounded away, two stairs at a time, to his accustomed quarters.

"Well, really!" ejaculated Miss Torrington beneath her breath. "Can it be possible that I was mistaken, and that it is not Ellen after all? But it must come to it: I've made up my mind to that. They are suited to each other in every way; but the other would *never* do!"

The union of her favourite nephew, the boy she had herself brought up, to the daughter of her oldest and dearest friends, was the pet project of Miss Torrington's life. Until her distant relative, Josie, niece only by courtesy, came upon the scene, she had no fear whatever as to its ultimate realisation, though, so far, nothing that could be called actual love-making had taken place. Josie was good and graceful, and rather pretty; but, friendless and absolutely penniless as she was, had been thankful to receive her board and lodging, with kindness and comfort added, in return for nearly a year's services to Miss Torrington in the capacity of nurse-companion, when the latter was recovering from a tedious illness. Hence, though there was positively no fault but this to be found in her, Miss Josepha senior, from the first moment that the thought of her presented itself in connection with Laurence, had said to herself that it would never, never do.

When once Miss Torrington had made up her mind to anything, she was tenacity embodied. And so very near to her heart was this cherished plan of hers that she could not trust it even to the wisdom or submit it to the will of a Higher Power. She knew best. She was scheming for the happiness of others. There was not, she told herself, the slightest adulteration of selfishness in her desires at all. So when she saw affairs tending somewhat differently from the course she had mentally mapped out, she instinctively laid her hand upon the reins to guide them right. Thus, in her blind wilfulness, she made misery all round.

Laurence's stay at Chiverley was brief and unsatisfactory. He did not seem like himself, and matters between him and Ellen Morton did not appear to progress a single inch.

He left his aunt's house to finish up his vacation alone at some south-coast watering-place; and when the Christmas holidays came he had an invitation, which he accepted, to spend them elsewhere.

Miss Torrington could have cried with vexation.

Josie's letters, moreover, had steadily been growing shorter and cooler, and coming at longer intervals. Before the new year was three months old they had entirely ceased.

"Ingratitude! ingratitude!" groaned Miss Josepha. "They are all alike. One may spend one's life planning for other people's happiness, and get nothing in return but neglect."

The last drop in her cup of bitterness was added when Nellie Morton came, all dimples and happy blushes, to tell of her engagement to George Frome, the prosperous young gentleman-farmer of Chiverley Hall.

CHAPTER III.

THE cessation of Josie's letters to her "aunt" is briefly explained.

Mrs. Courtney and her young companion had not been long in their Italian home when the former was visited by the friend who had been the means of Josie's introduction to her: a sometime neighbour of Miss Torrington at Chiverley.

This Mrs. Malden was a kind woman, and a good woman too in her way, but rather inclined to let her tongue outrun her discretion.

"It was *hardly* nice of Miss Torrington to pack you off as she did, I think," she said to Josie one day. "But, of course, anyone could see what it was for."

Josie made no reply.

"It is a great misfortune to be poor," continued the lady: "it lays one open to so many unfounded suspicions."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, my dear, you were saying the other day that your mother named you Josepha out of pure affection and admiration for Miss Torrington. And yet—perhaps I ought not to mention it, but it may just put you on your guard—I have reason for supposing that she fancies it was done with an eye to her snug little income!"

That was enough for Josie. She made some careless answer at the time, but she brooded over the unheeding words till they burned ineffaceably into her soul, and the ending of her correspondence with her namesake was begun on that day. Miss Torrington, considering the obligation to be entirely on the girl's side, would have felt it beneath her dignity, and contrary to all that was fitting, to press Josie to write to her, so her unanswered letter remained the last, and the acquaintance was allowed to die. It was not quite right for Josie to behave in this matter as she did, but she was a high-spirited, impulsive girl, whose pride was equal to her poverty; she had yet much to learn.

And no better teacher or example could have been provided for her just then than she found in her new employer. Mrs. Courtney was one who, after many years of sorrow, caused by the unhappy results of a wilful marriage and the loss of three dear children, had settled down at last to find the happiness she had for years pursued in vain waiting for her in a corner where she would, in her youth, have least thought to look for it. Despairing of ever being happy herself again, she began to devote her disabled life to studying and promoting the welfare of those about her, and when Josie first became acquainted with the gentle invalid, her room was already a centre whence flowed unceasing streams of comfort and love, and her shadowed existence was glowing with the reflected radiance of others' joy.

To such a woman the girl found it easy to confide her own little story, and from her learned to raise the motive of her renunciation of the one she loved from the mere recoil of wounded pride to the realm

of a willing sacrifice for his sake. Mrs. Courtney succeeded in making Josie feel that even had it been possible to have really gained Laurence's heart through the avenue of his compassion, it would have been unfair to him and cruel to her who was his earlier love; she assured her that she had done the only heroic thing in coming away. But she also convinced Josie that her future need not be therefore spoiled: that it should the rather be enriched and ennobled, and brought into closer and more inspiring sympathy with Him who for love of us had given up all. Continually, though far more by her practice than by words, she showed that—

"Life hath still its waiting beauty, light is born anew of duty,
And each throb of needful sorrow draws some ray of sunshine down.
Passion-flowers, I read in story, budded 'neath the tree of glory,
And the mortal cross upon them toucheth the immortal crown."

Mrs. Courtney's sympathies were very tenderly drawn out by the needs of the poorer Italians among whom she lived, but even more specially did she feel for those exiled in our gloomy London. Had her health permitted residence in England, it would have been to the amelioration of their condition that her money and talents would have been devoted. But a few days only in the English metropolis rendered her incapable of anything, so, as she often cheerily said, "If I cannot do what I would, I must do what I can."

She soon, however, imbued her young companion with her own missionary spirit, and so revealed her

"A four-year-old boy had just fallen asleep on her lap."—*p.* 26.

hopes from time to time, that when, after two years of collaboration, the blessed invalid was called to receive the eternal reward of her works, it was scarcely a surprise to Josie to learn that the greater part of Mrs. Courtney's fortune had been willed to her for the purpose of establishing in London a private centre of help for Italians, such as she herself had dreamed of in vain.

So it came to pass that Josie returned to her native land.

It was a curious coincidence in connection with this removal that, in packing up, she should come across a newspaper paragraph a few weeks old, alluding to the wedding of Ellen, only daughter of Ralph Morton, Esq., to George Frome, Esq., J.P., of Chiverley Hall, Bucks.

A thrill ran to Josie's finger-tips as she read it, and a sudden hope darted up, rocket-like, in her heart. But it almost instantly died. Even were *he* still unmarried, and even supposing all her trouble had been a mistake, how, in the city millions, were they ever likely to meet? As to making Miss Torrington a medium of indirect communication, she so shrank from an imputation of interested motive that, although not half an hour before she had been seriously considering the possibility of making her return to England the occasion of penning a conciliatory letter to her "aunt," such an idea was forthwith abandoned.

CHAPTER 17.

MISS TORRINGTON SENIOR sat at a window in Dudley Square, lost in meditation. A four-year-old boy, the child of the friends with whom she was staying, had just fallen asleep on her lap, tired out with a grand romp they had been having together, and in the quietness that ensued the lady's usually cheerful face had fallen into lines of anxious care. This perplexed, uneasy expression, though new to her, was gradually becoming habitual when she was alone or unoccupied, for she was not happy.

She had seen her mistake, she had in part realised the harm she had unwittingly wrought, but it seemed that reparation could never now be made to either of those whose lives she had marred.

Until the very day of Ellen Morton's marriage, she had hoped against hope that something might yet happen to bring about the fulfilment of the plan to which she so pertinaciously clung, but now she could hope no more.

About three months after the wedding she resolved to pocket her dignity, and reopen, if possible, a correspondence with Josie, if by any means she might bring her back to England and set things right with "poor Laurence, poor boy!" who had never been the same since the day he came to Chiverley and found Josie gone. But here she was doomed to disappointment; for the letter was returned to her through the Post Office, the whereabouts of the person to whom it was addressed being unknown.

It wrung Miss Josepha's heart to see the alteration in her darling nephew. He was now a full-blown M.D., but he did not seem to care. He no longer spoke with aspiration of the time when he should be in practice on his own account, but remained content with a very inferior position as assistant to another doctor. He did his work patiently and painstakingly and well, it is true, but it was wholly for the work's own sake and because he was a manly fellow. Anyone could see that the natural sweetness and gladness of life was no longer for him; and if, instead of daily labouring for the succour of his fellow-creatures, he could have died for them once for all, the sacrifice would have been smaller. It is so hard for the young to toil without the inspiring influence of love and hope.

"To think—to think that I, who would have done anything to make him happy, should have caused all this!" sighed Miss Torrington, her eyes filling with tears as she gazed at the shrivelled trees in the square. "Everything has gone wrong, and my selfish persistence in trying to force things *my* way is alone to blame. Oh God, forgive me, for I have sinned indeed!"

Just then a sentence from a book or a sermon she had somewhere read flashed into her mind: "Nothing can go wrong but God can set it right, and set it right better than it was before." Here was relief, here was infinite hope, if she could but grasp it. "Set it right *better than it was before!*" Humbly, self-abasingly, she laid the tangle in the merciful hands of the only One who could unravel it, beseeching His help for them all.

Little Freddy awoke from his brief nap, refreshed and ready for renewed sport, and from Miss Josepha's heart a burden had been rolled away.

A few mornings later Josie the younger sat writing in a room exactly opposite to that whence Miss Torrington had tearfully gazed, for she had engaged a house for the prosecution of her work on the other side of Dudley Square. She and her namesake had thus been living within a couple of hundred yards of each other for nearly three weeks; but no one acquainted with the circumstances of London neighbourship will wonder that they had never met; and as the elder lady was now spending a few days in another suburb preparatory to returning to Chiverley, it was improbable that they ever would.

A servant tapped at the door and handed the young lady a letter.

"They've just sent this in from No. 58, miss," she said. "It was left there by mistake."

"How strange!" observed Josie, examining the superscription. "It is Miss Josepha Torrington plain enough; but it is directed to No. 15 instead of 55; and then for it to be left three doors off. What a complication!"

With no great curiosity she opened the envelope when the maid had withdrawn. She received correspondence now from all parts of London, and an unfamiliar postmark gave rise to no conjecturing.

The enclosure was dated from the Camden Road, and ran as follows :—

"DEAR MADAM,—A young gentleman, Dr. Brant" (a thousand needle-points seemed to stab Josie as she recognised that name, and the sheet quivered so in her hand that she could hardly decipher what followed), "who has been lodging with me for the past month, is now lying seriously ill. He was thrown out of a cab two days ago, and received injuries to his head. I do not know the address of any of his friends that I could write to ; but he constantly utters the name of 'Josie,' and having found among his papers a note signed with your name, I conclude that you must be the lady he means, so I hasten to inform you of Dr. Brant's sad state.—I am, Dear Madam, yours truly,

"C. TEBBUTTS."

If this missive had been dropped at Josie's feet out of the clouds she could not have been more amazed. For several minutes she sat gazing at it like one petrified. But it was a time for action, not for wonder. Laurence was ill, his life was in danger, and in his extremity hers was the name his lips unconsciously framed. *He wanted her!* Oh, joy unspeakable! The greatness of this sudden blinding happiness left no room for conjecturing as to the "how" and the "why," scarcely any for anxiety about the possible ending of the episode. Josie at once got up, put on her hat and cloak, and set out for the Camden Road. Before arriving at her destination, however, she had come to the conclusion that the note referred to was one from his aunt, and that Mrs. Tebbutts had found *her* address in the Directory. In this she was partly right and partly wrong. But what matter? "Josie" could be but one, and that one herself.

"Miss Torrington, I suppose?" said the motherly looking person who opened the door to her, with a sympathetic inflexion in her voice.

"Yes; how is he now?"

"About the same. Sometimes quiet, sometimes talking—mostly about you."

The good woman probably thought that the pair were betrothed, and conducted Josie at once to the sick man's chamber. If so, her belief was doubtless confirmed, when the girl, after standing timidly on the threshold for a few seconds, caught the sound of a feebly breathed "Josie!" and stepping forward, bent over the bed.

"Laurence! Laurence!" she murmured, thus calling him for the first time, and laying her cool soft hand lightly upon his, "I have come to you, dear!—I am here!"

And Mrs. Tebbutts slipped quietly away.

* * * * * *

There was great consternation at 15, Dudley Square. Freddy was lost out of the enclosure for nearly a quarter of an hour. Not long after he was reclaimed, another loss was discovered—not so serious a one, but very annoying. Half a dozen letters and packets which had arrived for Miss Torrington at various times during her three days' absence from her friend's house had mysteriously disappeared. They had been lying all together on a side table awaiting her return, and on the same morning that witnessed the scare anent Master Freddy, they vanished.

Everybody was questioned, but nobody could throw any light upon the subject, until the juvenile artlessly confessed, as though the recollection of his feat had just recurred to him—

"I postered all dem letters, I did! I knocked 'rat-tat' at all the doors. I dess peoples thought it was a weal pose-um!"

And so the riddle was solved.

Very soon the missing documents were re-delivered, one by one, by messengers from the houses at which they had been left by the amateur postman; all but one—the missive that was dropped into the box of No. 58, across the square, and thither passed on to No. 55, never re-appeared.

* * * * * *

"It is more than I deserve, far more, to see you two so happy together at last," said Miss Torrington senior, when, on the first day of Laurence's convalescence, Josie made tea for them all in Mrs. Tebbutts' drawing-room. "I have been a meddling old marplot, trying to plan human beings' lives for them as if they were puppets to be worked by a string. But another time I'll leave it for Providence to order best."

And if Master Freddy reflected on the subject at all—which is doubtful—he may have concluded that it was more than *he* deserved to figure as a tiny page in turquoise plush at the wedding which took place three months later; but Josie thinks not.

JENNIE CHAPPELL.

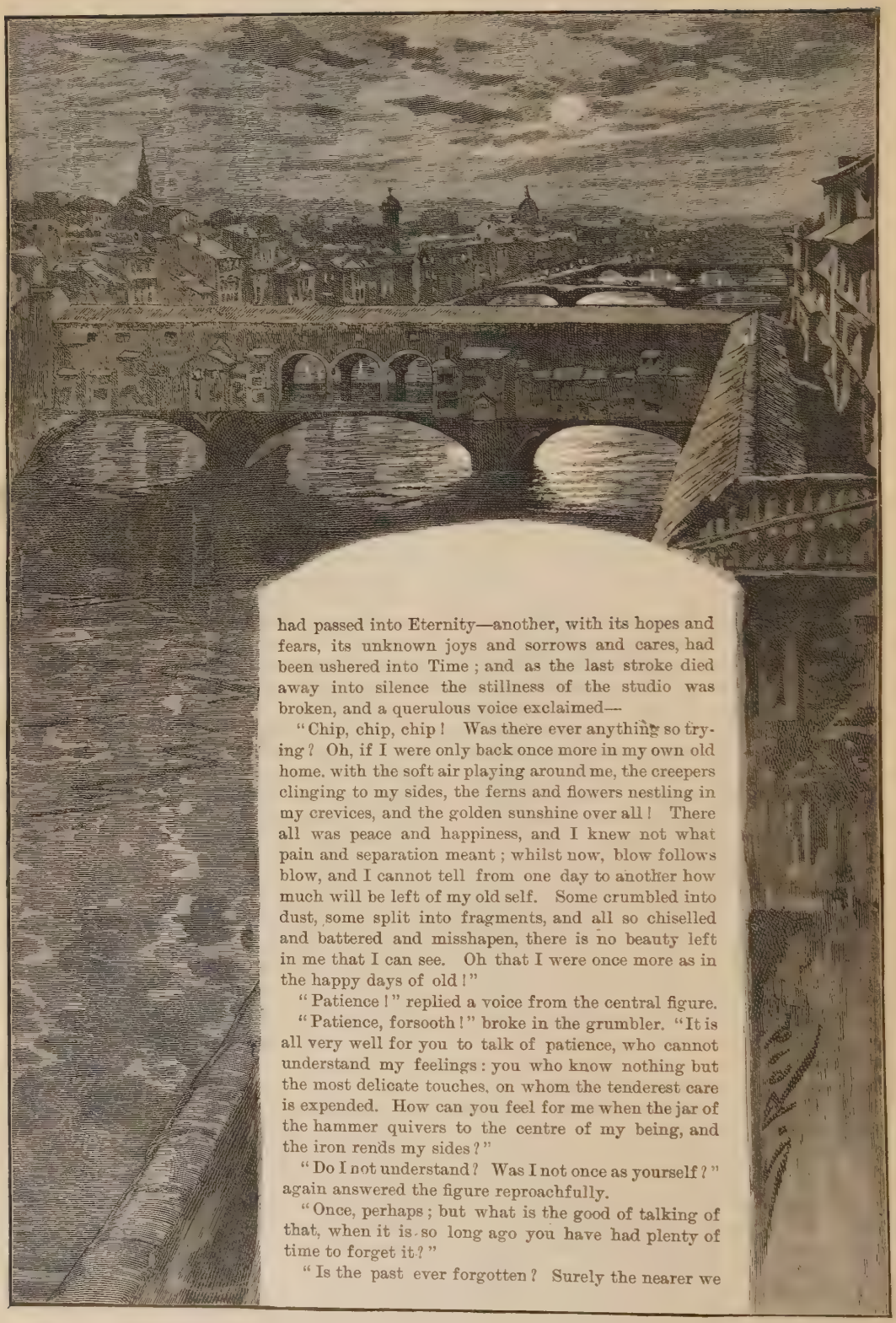
THE BLOCKS OF MARBLE.

A PARABLE. BY THE LADY LAURA HAMPTON.

"Art is the shadow of God's wisdom, and copieth His resources."—TUPPER.

THE rays of the full moon were illuminating the workshop at the back of one of the many *ateliers* which line the banks of the Arno, glancing here and there amongst the blocks of marble waiting for the master's chisel, or forming grotesque shadows on the wall from those which were already taking shape under his hand, or lingering amid the folds of drapery, and bringing into strong relief the all but completed figure in the centre of the room.

The midnight chimes rang out from the many churches, telling to the sleeping city that another day



had passed into Eternity—another, with its hopes and fears, its unknown joys and sorrows and cares, had been ushered into Time; and as the last stroke died away into silence the stillness of the studio was broken, and a querulous voice exclaimed—

"Chip, chip, chip! Was there ever anything so trying? Oh, if I were only back once more in my own old home, with the soft air playing around me, the creepers clinging to my sides, the ferns and flowers nestling in my crevices, and the golden sunshine over all! There all was peace and happiness, and I knew not what pain and separation meant; whilst now, blow follows blow, and I cannot tell from one day to another how much will be left of my old self. Some crumbled into dust, some split into fragments, and all so chiselled and battered and misshapen, there is no beauty left in me that I can see. Oh that I were once more as in the happy days of old!"

"Patience!" replied a voice from the central figure.

"Patience, forsooth!" broke in the grumbler. "It is all very well for you to talk of patience, who cannot understand my feelings: you who know nothing but the most delicate touches, on whom the tenderest care is expended. How can you feel for me when the jar of the hammer quivers to the centre of my being, and the iron rends my sides?"

"Do I not understand? Was I not once as yourself?" again answered the figure reproachfully.

"Once, perhaps; but what is the good of talking of that, when it is so long ago you have had plenty of time to forget it?"

"Is the past ever forgotten? Surely the nearer we

reach the Ideal, the clearer we can trace the working of the hand which has led us towards it."

"The Ideal! what is that?"

"Ah, now," it replied, "we have reached the point from which we parted when you interrupted me. You see no beauty in your battered sides, no happiness in your altered life, and I say, Have patience. You know not yet the master's will concerning you, the form he would have you take, the idea he would work out in you."

"Form! how can I take it?"

"By being passive in his hands. The blows you complain of, the delicate touches you envy in me, are all needed to bring out the hidden thought of his heart concerning us."

"Far better would it have been for me," objected another piece of marble as yet untouched by the chisel, "had he left me amid the flowers upon the mountain-side where for ages I had sparkled in the sunlight, or gleamed amid the winter snows, and when life was all beauty and joy."

"Of self," interposed the figure.

"And if so, what then? Of what use am I here? Have I not been passed by over and over again, and other blocks preferred before me? Why does he thus deal with us?"

"Patience!" once more it answered, "and in his own time and way you will also show forth the Ideal; for are not all his dealings to glorify himself in us as he moulds our rough-hewn sides into the human form divine, and to glorify us in him; as men, recognising only the artist's spirit which breathes in us, forget the deadness of the marble, and say of his finished work, 'Behold, it lives!'"

Years passed, and again the moon shone brightly in the heavens and lit up the workshop with its pale clear light; but the speakers, where were they?

Far away in a distant hamlet, a beautiful figure of Faith graced the porch of a little wayside chapel, and the people who came from far to see it said it was wasted where it stood, that it should have adorned a cathedral, and been admired by the wise and understanding in Art; but the poor people loved it, and as they trudged to their daily toil, and paused awhile to gaze on its upturned face and clasped hands, they too looked upward, and thought of the rest which was to follow toil, and were strengthened.

In the midst of a square in the thoroughfare of a great city, with the roar and hum of life ever around it, stood the statue of a knight in armour, with poised spear and uplifted shield, attacking and defending himself from the dragon beneath his feet, every line of the figure denoting confidence, strength, and assurance of victory; and oftentimes the weary and heavy-laden would rest beside it, and gazing, gather fresh courage and hope wherewith to face again the battle of life.

Over a tiny grave in an out-of-the-way corner of a quiet country churchyard gleamed a plain white marble cross; no carving of lily or of tracery adorned its surface, for had not the sculptor found it needful so to reduce the block that no depth remained for ornamental work thereon? But from its centre the sacred monogram stood forth in bold relief; and as the mourners looked to it from the flowers upspringing at their feet, they were comforted, for in its simplicity did it not tell of love stronger than the grave, of faith in God, of hope of immortality?

And the moon, as it shone on all the works of the sculptor's hands, beheld that the words of the speaker in those bygone days were verified as each showed forth to others the Ideal he had wrought out in them.

SEEKING THE FACE OF GOD.

BY THE REV. HENRY ALLON, D.D.

"When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek."—PSALM xxvii. 8.

THE Psalms lend themselves very spontaneously to our Christian religious uses. The theology of the Old Testament has been left a long way behind by the teaching of Jesus Christ; the ethics of the Old Testament fall far short of the holiness of the New Testament. The Old Testament is the historical record of God's teachings and dealings with ignorant and imperfect men, leading them on from lesson to lesson in Divine knowledge, from stage to stage in holy character, unto the full revelation and supreme sanctity of Jesus Christ.

But there is one element of the Old Testament that is unchanging. Besides its theology and its morality, it embodies religious sentiment, the emotions, aspirations, and prayers of religious men. These are embodied chiefly in the Book of Psalms—the Hymnal and Prayer Book of the ages before Christ—a collection of songs and prayers by different men, living centuries apart, but all embodying the characteristic sentiment of the religious life. And in this sentiment there is a wonderful identity. We can trace a difference between the theological notions of Abraham and those of Isaiah; we can trace no difference between the devotional psalm of Moses and the devotional psalm of the time of Ezra. We never think about the period when a particular psalm was written. We cannot distinguish. It is always true to the common religious sentiment of men. It is as true an expression of our religious sentiment to-day as it was of the religious sentiment

of Moses. Men's theological notions may differ; all men's religious hearts, human affections, and conscious necessities, are alike. The religious heart comes before all theological notions, and will last longer than they. The Psalms appeal directly and powerfully to the religious heart; they could not do this if their ideas were untrue: they must express and represent realities; mere religious imaginations could not possibly survive. There must, therefore, be some common religious truths answering to common religious feelings which differing theologies do not affect. Science changes many of our notions; it never touches the religious heart of the Psalms. It is not mere sentimentalism; that could not last long. It is that men have common religious necessities and feelings which find expressions in praise and prayer; and that there are in God and religious things real satisfactions for these religious necessities.

When we use the Psalms, therefore, we scarcely think of inquiring concerning their authorship, or chronology, or circumstance: they are not expositions of theological dogma, they are moods of religious life. It is not theology speaking to religion, it is not circumstance appealing to expediency: it is heart speaking to heart; the one touch of religious nature that makes the whole world kin.

And these religious utterances come out of great depths; they are shaped by lofty and spiritual imaginations, by strong spiritual affections. Some of these casual expressions of religious feeling contain profounder religious philosophy than whole theological treatises. And enshrined in the tender sentiment of religious feeling, they have a mighty power: they inspire feeling in us, they become the forms of our prayer, the voice of our praise, the sentiment of our religious life. These psalms abound in sentences which find us at great depths in our religious nature.

Whether or not David was the author of the psalm, or what was the occasion which inspired it, need not concern us now. The psalmist is not proving any theological dogma: he is not arguing; he is simply praying and praising, expressing to God his religious feeling. It is an utterance of strong emotion, it is a psalm of fluctuating human feeling, of foreboding and faith, of desire and satisfaction, of sorrow and joy. He will trust and rest in God, whatever the experiences of life may be. It is a taking-heart in God. He is sure that "God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." The desire for God is as spontaneous and natural a feeling of his life as his desire for human love. Everything else in human life has its proper satisfactions. The eye is satisfied with light, hunger with food, the heart with love; so the religious soul has its satisfaction in God. The thirst of the soul for God is as natural as the thirst of the hart for the water-brook, and the sufficiency of God is assumed as a kind of treasure that can never fail.

This particular verse is abrupt and somewhat obscure in expression. Its general meaning, however, is clear. God does call to human souls, and human souls do respond to God's call. The poetic imagination puts this as a dialogue, brief, terse, and weighty. "Seek ye My face"; precise as an echo is the response, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." The religious sentiment answers to that which it recognises as God's call.

I. God urges us to seek Him. The giver seeks the recipient; the faithful, loving Father seeks the heedless, almost heartless, prodigal. God is not a sequestered being, distant, ceremonious, self-contained, selfish. He wishes to be known; not because of a cold magnanimity, but because of a yearning, benevolent desire. He craves the love of His children, He is grieved when it is denied. "How shall I give Thee up?" Moral creatures, that is, are far more to God than material things. They are not merely the work of His hands: they are the breath of His Spirit. The difference is that between a man's material possessions and His children. Do not let us be afraid of speaking about God's sorrow and disappointment, His gladness and gratification. If we make Him an impassive, self-contained being, we make Him less. If He could not sorrow, He could not love; if He could not feel pain of heart, He could not feel joy. We are not frightened at the big word anthropomorphism. There is a great deal of human nature in God, as there is a great deal of Divine nature in man. All moral creatures are made in God's image, partakers of the Divine nature.

God does, therefore, yearn for us to come to Him, to have fellowship with Him. He Himself is blessed in so blessing us. He yearns for love as our own human hearts do, but with an infinitely greater intensity.

The phrase is a peculiar one, and demands noting. "Seek ye My face." It is a bold corporeal metaphor. God is not afraid of human forms of speech. He speaks of His thoughts and feelings, of fellowship with Him, and of His helping, as one human being might of another. He is not a metaphysical God, a mysterious first cause, a "tendency not ourselves making for righteousness." He is a person, with a yearning, loving heart: speaking about His feelings, His face, His eye, His arm, His heart. No fear of a reverent loving soul misunderstanding Him. Does He mean by the face of the Lord merely what an Eastern monarch meant:—His presence?—as when David said, "Let him not see my face"; or is it a general expression for becoming acquainted? "Let him become acquainted with Me; come and establish intercourse of friendship with Me; come and know My thoughts and ways; come and experience My love and help, My inspiration and blessedness."

Probably it means all these, and more. It seems a general expression for all of light, and love, and joy, that we can realise by communion with God—by thoughts about Him, by praise and prayer to Him, by fellowship with Him, by His inspirations of truth, and

life, and blessedness. At any rate, the assumption is that there is a God who may be known in this way; there is a light of the Divine countenance which can be "lifted up upon us;" there is a wrath of the Divine countenance from which we flee away. It is, I say, not very likely that we shall misconstrue this.

There is also a sense in which no one can look upon the face of God and live. We see by the light of the sun: it illumines our path, enters our windows, gives the beauty of colour to everything we see, and indicates the face of love. If we look directly at it, presumptuously seek to compass or to analyse it, we are "blinded by excess of light." We all understand both the privilege and its limitations.

"Seek ye my face." It is a vision of God to which we are invited. It is not said, "Analyse My attributes, seek to understand My omnipotence, My omniscience, or even My love." There are two ways of knowing. I may examine parts, analyse qualities, and so infer and demonstrate the character of the whole. Or I may simply look at it, see it: not piece parts together, but take in the whole at a glance; apprehend the whole before I examine the parts. In this way I am to seek God; not by the method of the theologian, examining the parts of God's character, and then putting them together by a process of reason, but by the eye of my soul seeing God as I see the face of a father or a mother. The last thing that love thinks of is to analyse the elements of character; that which you analyse you first kill; living love you simply see, and rejoice in. So in virtue of my spiritual vision I look into the face of God; I see Him a holy, loving, helping Father, and I simply rejoice in His love.

I do not seek Him by long and painful search, as if He were a being far back in past history, or far distant from my personal life. I do not at mid-day go out with a lantern to seek the sun. I have simply to open my eyes and they are filled with His light. I have simply to "walk all day in the light of His countenance."

Do you ask me how, and where? I point to the *works of His hands*, which proclaim "His eternal power and Godhead." Whatever the laws of nature, can any sane man deny the Lawgiver? The more wonderful the latent potency and the evolution of physical laws, the more imperative a Divine Lawgiver. Science is eloquent about evolution and its laws; it cannot even speculate about causation. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth His handy work." Every created thing invites me to seek the Creator.

The *Providence* of the world, in its wonderful complexity, its large sweep of cause and effect, its marvellous oneness and harmony, together with its freedom and diversity;—the recognised oneness of purpose broadening beneath the progress of the sun—I have not credulity enough to believe that all these things find their order, harmony, and end by chance.

I point to the *Moral Nature of Man:* the mysterious and imperative faculties of his moral being—as truly and indestructibly a part of him as his senses or his intellect: his power to think and feel, to guide and purpose and act in moral things: a power recognised wherever there is man. I am impelled by it to seek God. All men are, even if they seek Him through idols of wood and stone, or through virtual deifications of intellect, or of physical law.

My *Human Necessities* urge me to seek God: my ignorance, my sinfulness, my unsatisfied spiritual yearnings; the disappointments, sorrows, weariness of my life. I crave for some being to teach, inspire, and bless me.

And I need not add that *The Bible* urges me to seek God. It is the purpose for which it is given: it is God's message to me. And above all its other teachings, it urges that my soul seek life in the living God.

These are answers to the question, In what way does God say to me, "Seek ye My face"?

It is a wonderful conception of the supreme Deity: a wonderful representation of His essential love and yearning. It is not a special instance of His individual favour that the psalmist cites; it is a general characteristic. God is blessed in blessing us. There is not a moral being that He has made that He does not so solicit: not a sinful man or woman that He does not pity, and seek to woo from sins and to bless by His love. "Not that we loved God, but that God loved us." "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is the greatest light, the greatest hope ever revealed to human life. Whatever the authority of the Bible may be, it has created this great conception of God.

II. What answer, then, does the human soul give to this solicitation? "My heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." It is an instant, eager response: it is an echo, a rebound of God's very words. There is no process of reasoning, no possibility even of debate or delay. Of course, it is not every heart that so responds. It is our fearful prerogative that we can refuse, our terrible experience that we can debar and pervert the very desire to come to God. Only a gracious heart—a heart full of sympathy and yearning—will so respond. There be many that say, "Who will show us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." The disorder and disease of our moral nature are no argument against the normal character and feeling of that nature. It is the answer of the unperverted human soul: the moral harmony of a soul consciously needing God, and eagerly coming to Him Perhaps there is no heart that does not feel some yearning when such a call is addressed to it. We cannot wholly destroy our religious sensibilities. We intuitively know that it is God, and we turn with at least a wistful look, a conscious motion.

There the response is instant and full, as if of expectation and anxiety. Even delay would be a kind of denial. It is an outburst of thankful relief. It

is hearty, unreserved, personal. Perhaps most people who respond to God at all respond in this way: "Immediately: I conferred not with flesh and blood." If we begin to debate, manifestly our feeling is not very intense. Good intentions do not often lead to God; more commonly they pave the way to hell. It is the surprise, the relief, the rapture, that so impel men to God. We cannot reason with, we cannot tender excuses in reply to such proffers of love and mercy. He who does, reasons away God's earnest meaning; the feeling that there is cools down, and becomes all the harder by the process. Nothing hardens like resisted love; just as there is no wound so deep and bitter as that which its refusal inflicts. Think of men, in the name of religion, plunging into metaphysical theology, marshalling their critical and captious difficulties, asking God whether He is, and whether He has really spoken. A heart yearning for God will at once recognise God when His love so speaks—"My sheep hear My voice."

How individual it all is! If there is no suggestion of a creed, neither is there of a Church, or of a privilege of the future. It is the individual soul face to face with the living God: God speaking, my soul answering: every man answering for himself. "Seek ye"; "I will seek," my consciousness of need and yearning answers: "I will try the experiment for myself; I will seek Thy face." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." I seek my individual blessing in the common grace. The expression of resolve has the brevity of strong, impatient purpose. The original is stronger than the translation. Men in earnest use few words. The fixed resolve, the compressed lip, the alert movement, need brief verbal expression. It is done almost as soon as said.

It is only an invitation—the invitation of earnest, yearning love—but only that. God cannot save me if I will not respond. It is the feeling of a man who has found God—the response of his heart is so clear, direct, and eager. God's invitation pledges Him. Nothing on His part is wanting. Not only will He receive all who come, He pledges His eager love that they shall be gladly received. "I have never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye My face, in vain." If He bids us to the marriage feast, He does not set us down to an empty table. If He offers the love of His heart, He does not receive us with coldness. If He bids me seek His face, He will not hide His face from me. So that the issue rests wholly with myself. I shall find in Him all that I seek for—that measure of light, forgiveness, love, and blessedness which my heart really desires. No place of my heart shall remain unfilled, no desire unsatisfied, through His lack. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." This marks the difference between one religious life and another. Oh, what parsimonious and dubious religious lives some men live! Whether do they serve God or mammon? Which is the preponderating element, the spiritual or the material; the "precious stones," or the "wood, hay, and stubble"?

How we wrong and debase this manhood of ours when we refuse to seek God at all: deprive it of its loftiest character, its noblest inspiration, its supreme blessedness. Think of what is meant in respect of his thought, his affections, his practical life, his look, when it can be said of a man, He is "without God in the world." It is an archangel fallen. Will you not then seek more and more this crowning glory and blessedness of your manhood? It will brighten every place of darkness, and comfort every experience of sorrow. It will give you peace, and satisfaction, and sympathy, and faith. "Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee." It is the sunshine, and the vital inspiration in the nurture and the blessedness of human life. What fellowship can be so perfect and ineffable as the fellowship of man with God? "Then shall ye seek and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."

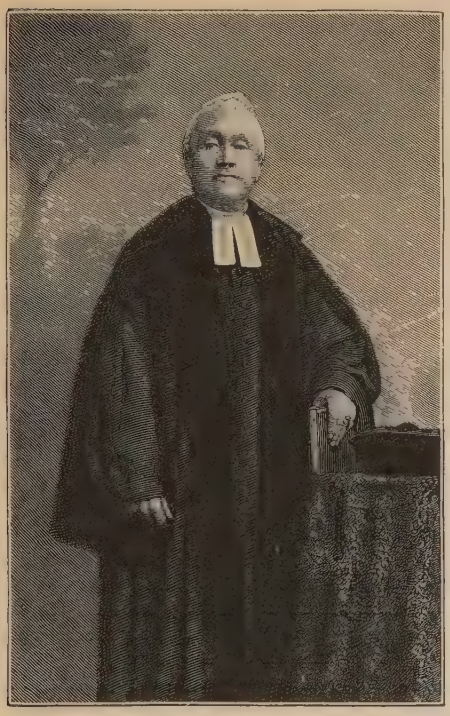
THE TABERNACLE IN UTRECHT.

"COME over to Holland and see the famous Tabernacle!"

Such was the proposal repeatedly made to the writer by a friend. It seemed, on first thoughts, a somewhat wild idea to go so far to see a model of the Tabernacle; but the rapturous descriptions given again and again of this costly model, and of the rich variety of treasures in the Biblical Museum of which it forms the *chef d'œuvre*, at last prevailed, and the testimony of one who had himself already visited the collection began to make it appear to be well worthy of so long a journey.

A promise was accordingly made that "some day" the proposed trip should be undertaken.

Not very long after, this indefinite engagement was caused to assume a practical form by my receiving an invitation from the wealthy owner of the museum to accept his hospitality during the proposed visit to Utrecht. Being thus at last persuaded to accompany my friend to Holland, we found ourselves one night on the steamer at Harwich, bound for Rotterdam; and, after a pleasant passage, arrived about breakfast-time next morning at the mouth of the river Maas. Slowly steaming up the river, we had abundant opportunity for studying the monotonous scenery, which consists of interminable embankments, raised



THE REV. L. SCHOUTEN.
(From a Photograph by T. Gesterkamp, Utrecht.

above high-water level and planted with long rows of trees, which appear to be all of precisely the same shape and size, and to have been planted so many feet apart with the strictest regularity.

On arriving at Rotterdam, a short journey by train brought us to Utrecht, where we were met by the son of our host, who escorted us from the station to his father's house.

Utrecht is famous as being one of the most scrupulously clean of all the Dutch towns. The inhabitants wage a constant warfare against dust and dirt, and are never happier than when they are engaged in "turning-out" their houses from top to bottom, and indulging in a regular "spring cleaning." It is not only the first of the four seasons of the year which is thought to demand this household ceremony, but it appears to go on at intervals all the year round. To such an extent is the virtue of cleanliness inculcated, that every householder is responsible for a weekly washing and scrubbing of the very pavement before his dwelling; and it is said that no one could, in dry weather, reasonably object to taking his seat upon the flagstones of the pavement and eating his dinner in that position.

Through many of the streets run canals, bordered by trees, and having on either side a well-paved street and a row of goodly houses.

Arrived at our destination, we received a hearty welcome from the Rev. L. Schouten and his family, who, during our brief stay, were unremitting in their efforts to make our visit as pleasant and interesting as could be; nor is the memory of the kindness we received ever likely to fade from our minds.

The Rev. L. Schouten, who is a pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church, has devoted a lifetime, and a considerable portion of his ample means, to the formation of his museum, which, it may safely be said, is unparalleled amongst private collections, and deeply instructive and interesting to the student of the Bible.

Mr. Schouten's collection is arranged in a handsome *salon* within the mansion.

On entering, the eye is at once arrested by the grand model of the Tabernacle. It is raised about table-height above the level of the floor. The court of the Tabernacle is no less than 20 feet long by about 10 feet wide,* and is strewn with sand brought from the wilderness of Sinai, where the actual Tabernacle was first pitched, and it is surrounded by curtains of fine linen made expressly for the model from Egyptian flax. Sixty pillars of pure silver uphold the curtains, and silver rods stretch from pillar to pillar, as well as from the capitals downwards, in lieu of cords and pins.

At the gate or entrance of the court is a white curtain, covered with choice embroidery in blue, purple, and scarlet. Within the court are several groups of coloured figures, about 12 inches high, beautifully carved in solid wood, which impart a lifelike character to the scene, and enable the visitor to take in the *scale* of the model at a glance. On one hand is a group of Levites, representing the choir, bearing trumpets, harps, and cymbals; some holding small parchment scrolls inscribed with Hebrew psalms written in minute characters.

The great altar of burnt offering is made of stone taken from one of the original walls of the Temple platform at Jerusalem, and it is filled within with earth brought from the Haram area—the site of the ancient Temple of the Jews.

A figure, representing a murderer, lays hold on the horns of the altar, whither he has fled for refuge.

A priest, in white linen robes and mitre, stands by the altar and stirs the fire; another blows a trumpet, and a third receives a leper, who, with shaved head, leads in a lamb for his sacrifice, and carries a cage containing the two birds and a bunch of hyssop which were prescribed for the ceremony of his cleansing.

The fire on the altar is cleverly carved in wood, and coloured, and between the flames lie the various joints or portions into which a sacrifice was to be cut up.

Beside the altar lies the body of a slain bullock, its feet bound together and its throat cut.

A worshipper is seen at a little distance bringing in ears of corn in a basket, as an offering of the first-fruits of harvest.

The High Priest appears in the usual robes of his office, and his crown is of pure gold, engraved with the motto, "Holiness to the Lord;" his breastplate is also of pure gold.

Further off are pens for sheep, goats, and oxen; they contain the animals required for sacrifice on the Great Day of Atonement—eighteen in all, beautifully carved in wood, and even such small details as the red cord which was bound to the horn of the scapegoat

* The scale is 2½ inches to the cubit.

are represented. Four tables for the meat-offering and four for the cutting-up of the sacrifices, bowls and basins of pure gold, knives, tongs, cups and flagons, and caldrons, are placed in the court, and even a three-pronged fork, such as is mentioned in the history of Eli's sons, may be seen.

Near the pens are the "shambles," where the carcases of sheep and oxen hang, cut open for inspection by the priests. At the further end of the court is the Tabernacle, which is six feet long.

In order that we might more closely examine the details of the structure, the attendant removed several portions of the floor of the court, and a passage was thus made, through which we walked up within the court till we stood close to the Tabernacle and could look inside.

The building is covered by four curtains. The outer curtain of badger-skins is represented by *seal*-skins, the second is of cloth made of thread spun from the hair of the Syrian goat, the third is of rams' skins dyed red, the fourth of fine linen, adorned with costly embroidery in blue, purple, and scarlet, representing "Cherubim" and palm-trees. Within, every board is covered with gold, and fits into two silver sockets. The seven-branched "candlestick," the incense altar, the shewbread table, and Ark of the Covenant, are veritable works of art, and are made in pure gold.

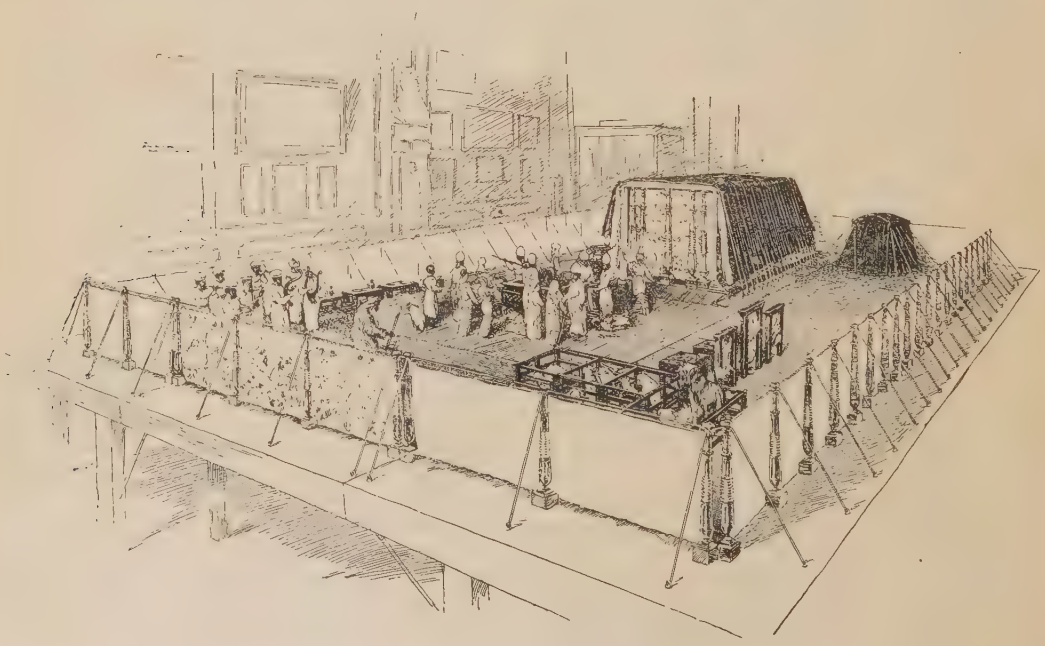
Two miniature "tables of stone," made from a piece of the granite rock of Mount Sinai, are within the Ark; they are engraved with the ten commandments in minute Hebrew characters.

Such is the grand model of the Tabernacle; and as we gradually took in the costliness of the materials and the elaborate and delicate character of the workmanship, we were astonished at the amount of study and the great expense which had been devoted to its construction.

Some of us have seen a model of the Jewish Temple in England which is said to have cost £600 or £700; but a far larger sum must have been expended in the production of Mr. Schouten's Tabernacle. Every object has been constructed, so far as was possible, of the same material as in the original Tabernacle. The most skilled artificers have been employed upon the work, and no expense has been spared in the attempt to render the smallest details with a scrupulous precision that almost baffles description.

The Rev. L. Schouten is a specialist on the subject of the Tabernacle, and has during a considerable part of his life made a close study of the detailed descriptions contained in the Pentateuch, and he possesses quite a small library of works bearing on the subject. At the age of twelve years he began a model of the Tabernacle, and his interest in the building is alive and vigorous to-day. He has arranged fixed times for showing the model to those who desire to visit the museum, and these occasions he makes an opportunity for religious service and instruction. A three-hours' service in Dutch would, however, not have been very edifying to myself, and I was thankful to be admitted to a private view of the collection without the said service, being a guest and not merely a visitor at the time, and to have the great advantage of having the Rev. L. Schouten, not only to explain his treasures, but to answer any questions which were put to him.

This description would not be complete without some reference to the other subjects of interest in the museum.



THE MODEL OF THE TABERNACLE.

On the left hand of the grand model is a wall-case containing Egyptian antiquities, bronzes, mummies, and vases used for the reception of the internal portions of the body, which were usually embalmed apart from the body. These last date back to a time previous to the emigration of the Israelites from Egypt.

Near this case is the figure of a Jewish High Priest, three feet in height, with every detail of the robes of his office represented in needlework. The little bells on the skirt, the crown upon his head, and the "breastplate" are of pure gold; and of the twelve stones in the breastplate nine are precious stones such as are mentioned in Exodus.

In another case are insects, fruits, and other products of Palestine, a collection of coins bearing on Bible history, a model of the sacred rock beneath the mosque of Omar (the supposed threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite), specimens of the various kinds of rock-formation on which Jerusalem is built, a brick from the ancient Pithom, etc., etc.

Models of Herod's Temple and of ancient Jerusalem, each about three feet square, are shown in table-cases, and the walls are adorned with a collection of pictures illustrating and explaining the Bible.

In another room is an immense model of the old site of the Temple in its present condition, made by Herr Schick, who, during his long residence in the Holy City, has probably acquired more knowledge of underground Jerusalem than any man living.

This is but a brief description of the principal objects in Mr. Schouten's museum, which is known far and wide on the Continent, and has attracted many thousands of visitors from all parts. Mr. Schouten has written a large work on the Tabernacle, and it is much to be hoped that it may some day be translated into English, that the results of the patient toil of so many years may be put within the reach of the Bible-students of this country.

Space forbids me to speak of the remaining portion of my pleasant visit to Utrecht, but I feel confident that I shall never forget the trip, and I would have gladly gone even farther to see such an unparalleled collection. I returned home much interested and instructed, and with a stimulated desire to make the little "Biblical Museum" of the Church Sunday School Institute, of which I am the Hon. Curator, more worthy of its name; and to my friend, whose importunate entreaties at last resulted in the visit, I shall always owe a debt of gratitude.

J. G. KITCHIN.

"GIVE A DOG A BAD NAME."

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"'GIVE a dog a bad name, and he may as well earn it;'—a new rendering of an old proverb, and one which commends itself to my inner consciousness as peculiarly applicable to the present crisis. The old divines believed that the devil of old time appeared to men, saying, 'Ye are gods; therefore know yourselves gods"; but he appears to me now with this temptation, 'Thou art a sinner; know thyself, show thyself, a sinner.' No doubt the highly respectable and respected persons who are superior to all human infirmities would stand aghast if I told them they were to me in the place of the Tempter; but I can't help it. I am compelled to wound their tender susceptibilities."

Alva Chisholm threw himself back in his chair and stared defiantly into the fire. He did not look exactly like a social pariah, yet in effect he had declared himself one, and, strangely enough, he was so in truth. A young fellow of nineteen, undoubtedly clever, well connected, not unhandsome, and with good prospects of success later on in life—he was at present in the University studying medicine—young Chisholm was about the last person one would have supposed likely to attain to such a position. How was it? No one could very well tell. Chisholm had come from some remote eastern district a year or two ago, entered the University, and got so far on in his career with honours. He had but lately come to the highly select suburb in which he now abode, and taken up his residence with a clergyman's widow struggling to keep up an appearance of "refinement" on a small pension and two or three boarders. It was by this suburban society that Alva was ousted and ejected, declared to be an improper companion for innocent youths, and a still more undesirable acquaintance for innocent maidens. How all this came about no one seemed exactly to know. It was vaguely hinted that Alva was "fast," that he kept late hours, that he "took more than was good for him," that he flirted with "servant-girls," that he seldom attended church; but no one seemed in a position exactly to prove any of these statements. In fact, no one seemed inclined to ask for any proof. It was enough for the good people of Pentland that stern mammas refused to recognise Alva's presence anywhere and prohibited their daughters from doing so, that ancient widows and spinsters shook their condemning heads and sighed loudly when Alva's name was mentioned, and that the Rev. Osgood Learmouth, clergyman of the parish church, spoke of him as "that graceless lad, Alva Chisholm." Some of Alva's class-mates, it is true, clung to him in spite of the ban; but they were not many. Alva's manner was not likely to make many friends—at least, friends of that uncommon type which includes those who, saith the preacher, "are born for adversity."

Of Alva's few friends, Bertie Ferrier was, perhaps, the only one who thoroughly believed in him. He it was to whom Alva now poured forth all the bitterness of his soul.

"I am quite reckless, Ferrier—upon my word I am! I have reached that stage of soul-deterioration in which a man ceases to be ashamed of his own wrong-doing. I am expected to do evil. Why, then, not do it? I am as capable of tremendous wickedness as most people are; for, after all, it is only the fear of our fellow-creatures that keeps most of us from outward sin. No man knows his fellow-man well enough to understand that he too has an equal share of evil in him; and therefore we are all afraid to let each other see our naked souls. But I have no such restraint; my fellow-men believe me guilty of all vice. Well, then, let me be guilty. After all, sin must give one a certain amount of pleasure, and I may as well have that, seeing I have no other."

"Alva, old boy, don't!" pleaded the other lad. He did not well know what to say, seeing he was not religious enough, or pharisaical enough, to read Alva a lecture on self-control and humility. He was a fair-haired, boyish fellow, not half so clever as Alva, but with a warm, generous heart that swelled with honest indignation at Alva's wrongs. "It's a shame! It's too bad!" he blurted out. "Alva, I've got an idea into my head. If I can carry it out, things will be changed for you a bit, old man. Be sure they will! I won't tell you it yet, though; but don't speak of going to the bad yet, until you know what I've in my mind, will you, Alva?"

"Oh, I can't promise anything. I feel in the mood to-night for any mischief, any evil, Bertie. You know, of old times, the devil occasionally entered into men and possessed them; and the men were not so much to be blamed as the devil. If you hear of anything like that happening to me, you must remember it isn't altogether my fault that I have been possessed."

"Alva, I wish you wouldn't!" said the lad, seriously. "I know you are often tried sorely, but what do you need to care for people that you would not choose as your friends anyhow? In a year or two, when you are making a great name for yourself, these very people will wish for your friendship, and you can give them the cold shoulder then. Well, I must be off, old fellow. Keep yourself cool, and remember there's a stiff exam. to-morrow."

"Good-bye, Bert. No 'Earthly Paradise' or music-hall for me to-night, I fear. Be sure you tell the Rev. Osgood and his female supporters that I was sober when you left me," said Alva, as he dismissed his visitor. Bertie was organist in the parish church, and had an engagement there that night.

* * * * * *

"I give you my solemn word, mother, I've never seen Alva Chisholm intoxicated once. As for that cock-and-bull story of his going into the servants' premises at Dalcluthan, it arose from the simple fact that the housemaid was the daughter of an old nurse of his own, but for some reason he didn't want to tell that. . . Come, mother, be your own sweet, reasonable self; don't listen to all these tattling scandal-mongers say. That poor fellow will go all to the bad, and no wonder, if some good Samaritan soul doesn't take compassion on him; and who should do it if not a sweet little woman like yourself? What's Christianity for, if not to teach us to help one another?"

Pretty Mrs. Ferrier hesitated, smiling into her boy's eager face, and looking hesitatingly at the tall, slim figure of a girl in the window-recess. Before she could answer Bertie, the figure moved towards the comfortable, homelike fireside—in which the little group of mother, son, and a fat tabby made a pleasant picture—and Anne Ferrier's clear, strong voice spoke out.

"I think Bertie is right, mother. We must ask that poor lad to see us. If he *is* going wrong, there is the more need why we should help to bring him right. If he is falsely maligned, then *we* are doing a great wrong by heeding what is said about him. I have always felt inclined to speak to him, but some foolish prejudice has kept me from doing so. But I shall now. I am afraid we have been helping to drive the poor lad into the wickedness of which he may never have been guilty, as Bertie says."

Mrs. Ferrier never thought of disputing her daughter's decisions. Anne Ferrier had ruled the little household ever since her father's death, three years ago. It was well that Anne's judgment and will were eminently wise and reasonable; for they were so.

So now her decision carried the day. Alva Chisholm would no longer be an outcast from society.

CHAPTER II.

ANNE FERRIER was six-and-twenty, a tall, handsomely moulded young woman, with that air of strength and independence which a liberal education, good health of body and mind, and the sense of being respected and relied on, give to a woman. She had not been beautiful as a young girl, but many considered her so now in her young womanhood. Perhaps it was a mistake to call her beautiful; she lacked the tints of colour and complexion, the regularity of features, which most people think necessary adjuncts of beauty; she was dark, though clear-skinned, her features were somewhat too strongly marked for a woman, and her eyebrows were almost too heavy. But she had a beautiful mouth and chin, round and full, though strong, and eyes which would have redeemed any face from plainness—very dark grey, steadfast and thoughtful, yet wonderfully soft in expression. Anne was clever; she had passed with honours in local examinations, and had taken her degree at twenty-three. Yet no one condemned her

for that; no male creature passed coarse jests on a woman's aspirations after knowledge; Anne was never stigmatised as being "mannish" or "strong-minded." The age for that is past. Besides, Anne Ferrier was, somehow, a woman whom no man could dislike simply because she happened to have an intellect equal to his own; she was so purely a woman in all other ways that she was apt to inspire more love than she altogether wanted.

To Alva Chisholm's young eyes she seemed simply the most perfect woman he had ever seen. Poor Alva had not seen many women of Anne's type, so he might be excused for his extravagant opinion. When Bertie Ferrier came shyly to him one evening after class-hours, and asked him whether he would care to call upon his mother some Thursday evening, Alva was at first incredulous, then amazed, then cynically cool, over it. The end of it was that he went. For the first time since his coming to Pentland, he was received into a pleasant, refined drawing-room, among a charming home-circle. He was stupid, and awkwardly bashful, at first; Bertie was amazed to see his brilliant class-mate stricken almost dumb, and apparently ill at ease, in the presence of his mother and sister and a few lady friends. When Alva had gone, Bertie, with great dread and trepidation, awaited Anne's contemptuous reference to his friend. To his amaze, all Anne said was to remark very quietly, at the tea-table—

"I hope your friend will come often, Bertie. I wish him to feel quite at home here, and I'm sure mother does, too. He will live down his bad reputation in time; and the friendship of one or two people will give him the confidence that he can establish a good one for himself."

And as usual, Anne Ferrier carried her point.

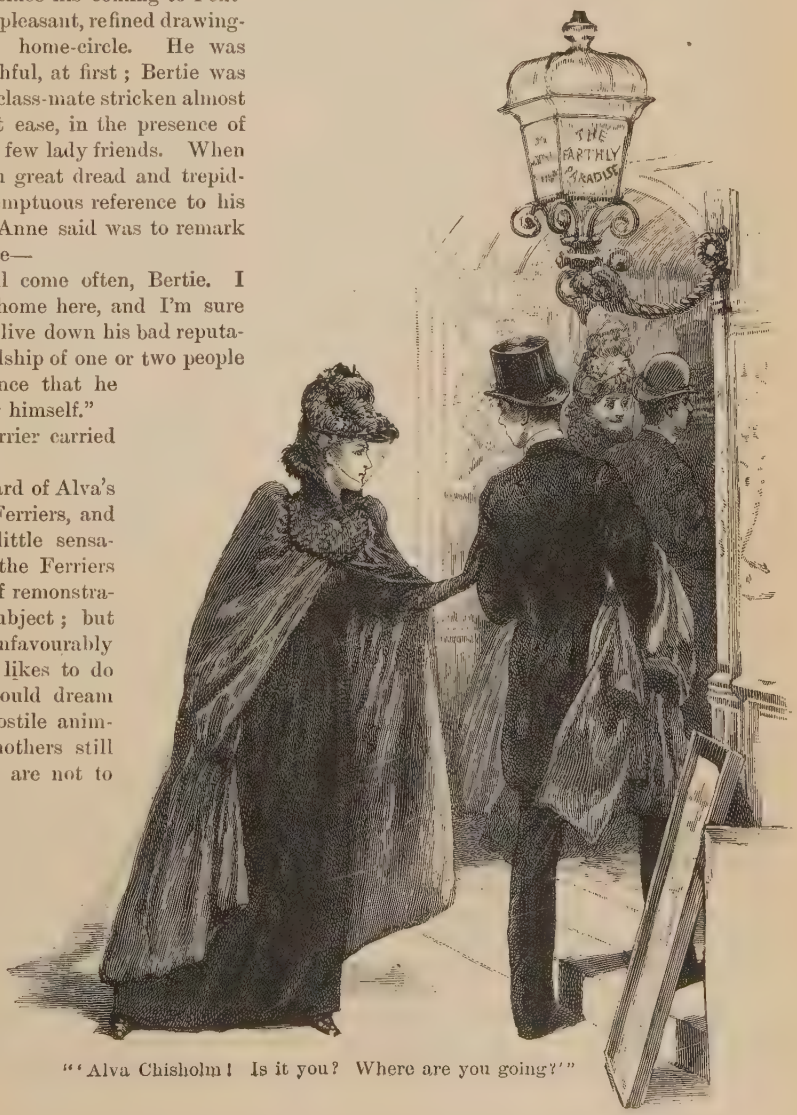
Everyone in Pentland heard of Alva's being "taken up" by the Ferriers, and the news created quite a little sensation in the circle to which the Ferriers belonged. No one dreamt of remonstrating with Anne on the subject; but her conduct was criticised unfavourably by many. "Anne Ferrier likes to do things that no one else would dream of doing," was the least hostile animadversion passed. And mothers still told their daughters, "You are not to recognise *that* Alva Chisholm in the street, even if you *do* meet him at the Ferriers'."

One evening, Anne Ferrier, hastening to catch a suburban train homewards, passed the door of the "Earthly Paradise." Anne, being an intelligent woman, knew enough of this modern Eden to understand how many ruined Adams it periodically cast out from its bosom. She merely glanced at its tempting entrance, glowing with rosy lights which showed long vistas beyond, like the entrance of an enchanted fairy palace; but just as she did so, a young man, coming along the pavement, was entering it. Anne looked sharply at him, with a sudden start. He evidently did not notice her.

She went up, and laid a very quiet hand on his arm.

"Alva Chisholm! Is it you? Where are you going?"

He looked at her without answering. Her steadfast eyes seemed to hold his. He could not look away from her, but the expression in his own dark face was something like that of a criminal caught in the act. He had gone very pale, and his lips twitched nervously.



"'Alva Chisholm! Is it you? Where are you going?'"

"I am very glad I met you," said Anne calmly. "I am just going home by the train, and it is rather late for me to be out alone. Will you come home with me, Alva? or are you going anywhere?"

Without a word, he turned and walked by her side towards the station. Anne kept talking of indifferent subjects, her companion hardly answering her. Anne had never seen him look as he did now; for the first time, she began to realise that there had been some truth in all the stories of evil told about him. The train she had meant to catch was gone, so there was nothing for them to do but to await the next one.

"We can sit in the waiting-room: it is not cold," Anne said, in her decided way. They went in together, and Anne, taking a seat, pointed Alva to one.

Then suddenly he burst out.

"Why do you ask me to sit near you?" he said hoarsely. "You know what I am now, Miss Ferrier—unworthy your friendship, unworthy your recognition! You can't think I am worth redeeming any longer. I am bad, though not so bad as others would make me; but I shall be some day. It runs in my blood. My father—you would not speak to me if you knew what he was."

"Hush, Alva! Not speak to you! Why, I would do that even if you were as bad as you make yourself out; and what have you to do with your father's shortcomings? Don't begin to believe in heredity, and all that nonsense. Wickedness is not a consumption or mania of the moral nature, it is an individual choice. Not all the Ibsens in the world would persuade me that evil can't be overcome simply because our parents transmitted it to us. Why, the thought that we were powerless victims destined to be crushed beneath the weight of hereditary sin would deprive us of all manhood or womanhood. . . . What's wrong, Alva? Don't look like that! Do you think I am going to condemn you?"

"If you do, then I am lost for ever," said the lad hoarsely. "Miss Ferrier"—he laid his hand impulsively, yet reverently, on her arm—"I don't know what possessed me to go to that place to-night; it was the devil's own tempting. I have never gone near it since—since I knew you. Before then, I used to go. Bertie never did. He had not the temptations, you see. . . . When a fellow is alone, and has no friends, and has never known what a happy home is, life looks pretty black sometimes. No one seems much to care whether he goes to the bad or not."

Anne's eyes were wonderfully soft as they looked at him now. Across her mind there flashed words written of old, and full of pathetic meaning—"No man careth for my soul"—and it seemed as if Alva had spoken them. She said softly—

"If you would like to tell me your story, Alva, I should like to hear it. Think I am your elder sister to whom you are telling it."

So, drawn out by her questions, he told it. It was not a long one, and not uncommon, though Anne would fain have thought it so. The story of a man's evil, sensual life, ruinous to his own body and soul, ruinous to the gentle woman whom he had done the injury of marrying, ruinous to the poor children who called him father, was but the story of many another. Alva's father had died, but only after his wife had sunk into a heart-broken grave; then, but years after, the elder brother had gone too, paying the debt of his own and his father's sins by an early death. Anne listened with a strange thrill of mixed pain and exultation to Alva's simple confession of his own temptations, and his one or two grievous falls. They were not many—they were no worse than those of most lads; and how tremendous had been the odds against which he was fighting—how deathly keen had sometimes been his struggle!

When he ended, and looked into Anne's face with eyes dark with the intensity of his feeling, he saw that hers were full of tears.

"Alva," she said, not turning from him, and speaking in the low, emphatic way that always marked earnestness with her, "it is very good of you to tell me all this. I think you have been—brave and—strong. You will gain the victory soon. When you do, Alva, you will come to me, won't you, and I shall crown you victor?"

He looked at her with an expression she could not quite make out, but which troubled her vaguely. She went on—

"Will you promise me two things, Alva, now? The first is this: that you will always come to us whenever you feel the—the temptation to go to a place like the 'Earthly Paradise.' The second is, that you will always remember I am like your elder sister, and tell me what you would have told her if you had one."

His dark face crimsoned all over. For a moment he seemed to hesitate; then, stooping down, he raised her two gloved hands to his lips.

"I promise," he said solemnly. "With God's help, I shall come to you a victor some day."

CHAPTER III.

SEVEN years later, Alva Chisholm, now a specialist in one of the London hospitals, returned to Pentland for a short visit. Why he came he hardly knew. A strange, dull longing, which nothing seemed to conquer, to see once more the woman to whom he owed so much, had come upon him. He knew the meeting would give him almost intolerable pain; for he had never seen her since he had received from her that letter, of which he could not think even now without an after-pang of the crushing pain it had caused—the letter in which she had said—

"And now, dear Alva, my dear friend, my almost brother, whom I love as if he were in truth my brother, I am going to tell you the secret none know yet but mother and Bert. I am going to be married very soon—in two months; and, Alva, I am very, very happy. . . You will come to the marriage, will you, to please me?"

He had not gone. She had asked him long ago to come to her and be crowned as a victor when he had conquered himself; he had clung, with all the passionate hopefulness of his youth and nature, to the belief that, when he did, she would give way to his wonderful love, and yield herself to him as his reward. And, after all, he had been contenting himself with a poor phantom hope. She had never thought of him save as a younger brother; and now he was going to see what wealth of love she *could* give to another man; she, who could never have given it to him. It seemed to him it would be as bitter as death to see it.

The first person he met at Pentland was Bertie Ferrier. Bertie had blossomed into a full-blown medical practitioner, and had started his practice in his native Edina. As Chisholm was getting off his train, Bertie emerged from another carriage. The two old friends met face to face.

"Why, Chisholm!"

"Why, Bertie!"

That was all; but hand clasped hand in a grasp that told of a friendship which never should sink into a thing of the past. Each saw great changes in the other; but perhaps that in Chisholm was the more marked.

"How are they all?" he asked, when he had answered Bertie's eager questions. "Your mother and—and sister?"

"Mother is all right, but poor Anne is having a hard time of it. You haven't heard from her lately, I suppose? I know you have been corresponding pretty regularly, but—it is her husband—poor Ralph Stenhouse; he's terribly ill—going fast, I fear. You don't know him, I think? He is one of the best fellows I know; I believe he has done as much good in the city as any single unaided man could do. And Heaven knows he will leave a blank if he goes. As for Anne—she's a brave woman, as you know, and will bear up, as I believe she would bear up under anything; but her whole heart is wrapped up in Stenhouse. Speak of married felicity being a humbug! No one seeing these two could believe that there isn't such a thing! But I'm wearying you, Chisholm, and you must be a bit tired. You will come along and dine with us to-night?"

"Thank you, I will. What is the matter with him, Bertie?"

"Diphtheria of a slow kind. He has been ill a week, and it has developed with alarming rapidity within the last few days. I have sent for Professor Wynton for a consultation this afternoon. Will you come along too, Chisholm? I know the throat is your specialty."

"I will," said Chisholm, after a moment's pause.

Within four hours he found himself in Anne's house.

Mr. Stenhouse, who was younger partner in a large manufacturing firm, had his house some miles out from Edinburgh. Bertie and Chisholm went out together, and met there the great specialist, Professor Wynton. A brief introduction and explanation were all that passed between the three men, who were then conducted in silence by the servant to the sick-room. As they entered it, a figure rose from a distant part of the darkened room, and came forward with a swift, noiseless footstep to meet them. At the first glance, Alva Chisholm knew it, changed though the face turned towards him was. Pale and tense, with the darkness of the eyes deepened and intensified, and heavy shadows round them, it was yet the sweet, noble, womanly face which long ago Alva had loved, and which, for long years, he had treasured in his memory as the type of all that was fairest and best in woman.

She recognised him at once, and, after bowing to the Professor, turned and hid her hand in his with one of the rarely beautiful smiles which were all her own.

"Alva! Forgive me for calling you that; but it seems so short a time, after all, since we first met. You are well—and prosperous? I am so glad."

It was characteristic of the woman that she spoke of his welfare and prosperity before her own trial.

"It was good of you to come," she whispered, as her eyes followed his to the bedside. "I must not keep you now; but, Alva, you will do what you can, won't you? You know my very life depends on his."

He could make her no answer, but he felt her hand slip into his as he turned away. He clasped it in a grasp which held all the pain of renunciation and parting in it, if she had but known; but she did not know. She quietly left the room, and the three doctors were alone.

* * * * * *

"There is only one resource left which we can have any hope of success in," said the great Professor sententiously.

The two younger men assented; they knew well enough what that resource was.

Alva Chisholm gave a glance backward at the bed. The patient was unconscious now, and would probably remain so until the end—if the end it was to be. He had been a stalwart man, of iron constitution; the sinews of his hands, the muscles of his arms, which had not been wasted by the disease, so rapid had its progress been, showed that. The face lying upwards on the pillow had been a fine, even a noble one; not a patrician face, with haughty curves and delicate features, but the strong, purposeful one of a man of energy and will, with the grand lines of resolution and power, of work planned and work accomplished, in it: the face of such a man, as Anne Ferrier would surely have loved. Looking at it, Alva Chisholm no longer hated the man; no longer felt the awful, devilish temptation to desire the death of Anne's husband; no longer had any more in himself to conquer.

He turned to the Professor very quietly.

"Of course, we know what you mean. Tracheotomy would mean instant death here. There is

little rallying power left, and what there is must be carefully husbanded. . . . If you wish to try another operation, I am ready to aid you."

"Consider well what it is you offer, Dr. Chisholm," said the Professor, with his usual calm dignity a little quickened, after a pause. "In an operation of this kind there is always a certain amount of risk. You *might*—there is the possibility—you might succumb; and in such a case you know how narrow is the chance of recovery."

"A professional man does not usually consider such risks," said Chisholm quickly. "Besides, it is no greater than other risks. . . . No, Bertie, you know well I am a better subject at present than you: you told me yourself you had only been convalescent this week from what threatened to be blood-poisoning."

"At least, let me tell Anne—it is right Anne should know," Bertie exclaimed; but the Professor interrupted.

"My dear Ferrier, what madness! We are professional men, and as such we must do our duty as it appears to ourselves: to consult one nearly interested in the patient would be folly indeed."

Two hours after, and all was over. The patient, with closed eyes and moist skin, breathed freely and softly. Anne, kneeling by his bedside, thanked God with streaming eyes; and Alva Chisholm, victor at last, walked quietly toward his lodgings.

CHAPTER IV.

"I WOULD not have told you, Anne. Heaven knows, you have had anxiety enough lately, and nursing enough to break any woman's constitution down; but we thought—it was better that you—that you might like to see him," stammered poor Bertie, with a choke that he vainly tried to cover.

Anne rose up slowly. She was very pale, and her lips trembled, but she gave no other sign of feeling.

"I will go now, Bertie. Ralph is quite easy now. To think," she cried, with a momentary burst, "we owe our happiness to *him*, Bertie!"

In a few minutes brother and sister were walking to the station.

"You thought he was so well—that there was no fear?" Anne said. "Oh, Bertie! is it not too sad? He has literally given his life for one who was not even his friend!"

"It came very suddenly—in the middle of the night," said Bertie slowly. "But it has been frightfully rapid; the Professor says, almost unprecedentedly so. Anne, isn't it an heroic ending, after all, for his life—his useful, brave, unselfish life? Do you remember how the Pentland folk used to blackball him, and ostracise him from society?—and how you took him up, and braved their jeers at your latest fad? He is repaying you now, Anne, fourfold! But I verily believe you made a man of him."

They talked of these old times as they neared the house in which Alva Chisholm was now, as Bertie had said, *dying!* As friends love to dwell on every past incident in the life of a dear dead one, so they dwelt fondly on all that long-dead past, in which Alva had been to them so near and dear. When they reached the house, Anne laid a hand on her brother's arm.

"Bertie, Bertie! Help me to be strong."

The young man threw a strengthening arm round her. Worn out by long nights of nursing and anxiety, Anne felt weak to meet this new trial which she had no reserve forces of long preparation and self-sacrificing love to help her to brave.

The door was opened by Alva's landlady, who shook her head in reply to Bertie's question, then in silence led the way up to that silent room in which, alone, friendless, single-handed, Pentland's social pariah was fighting his last grim battle.

Anne went forward to the bedside. A moment's long, earnest gaze into the darkened eyes, whose weirdly wistful look told her, as nothing else could, how near the end was, and Anne had fallen on her knees, and taken in her own the damp, chill hand.

For long, there was no break in that silence which might have been the beginning of the eternal silence to one soul there. Then the eyes, with that look—ah, who can forget it?—of eager seeking, of pathetic voiceless appeal, which we only see when the soul is looking its last on earthly things, rose to Anne's face, and the lips moved. Anne bent her head, and caught the whisper—

"Anne — I have come to you — to be crowned victor."

A burst of scalding tears came to her eyes.

"My brave Alva—my boy once more as in old days! Alva, say but one word more; you have been victor over self?"

A faint smile touched the feeble, chilling lips.

"Yes—now. . . Anne, kiss me."

She obeyed, her warm lips touching his cold brow in a long, pure kiss. When Anne lifted her head, his eyes were closed. She sat quietly, holding his hand still, till Bertie touched her on the shoulder.

"Come, dear," he said, in a choked voice. "You can do no more. It is all over."

Then she saw it was so indeed. He had entered "the tragical portal of Death."

An hour after, Anne came for her last look.

She bent and reverently kissed the cold face once again. In death the face seemed smiling and calm; it was as if rest had been very welcome at the last, and that the touch of the chilly fingers had been "soothing and serene."

Anne smiled also as she turned to Bertie.

"I shall not weep—I, who have crowned him victor, Bertie," she said, though her lips were tremulous.

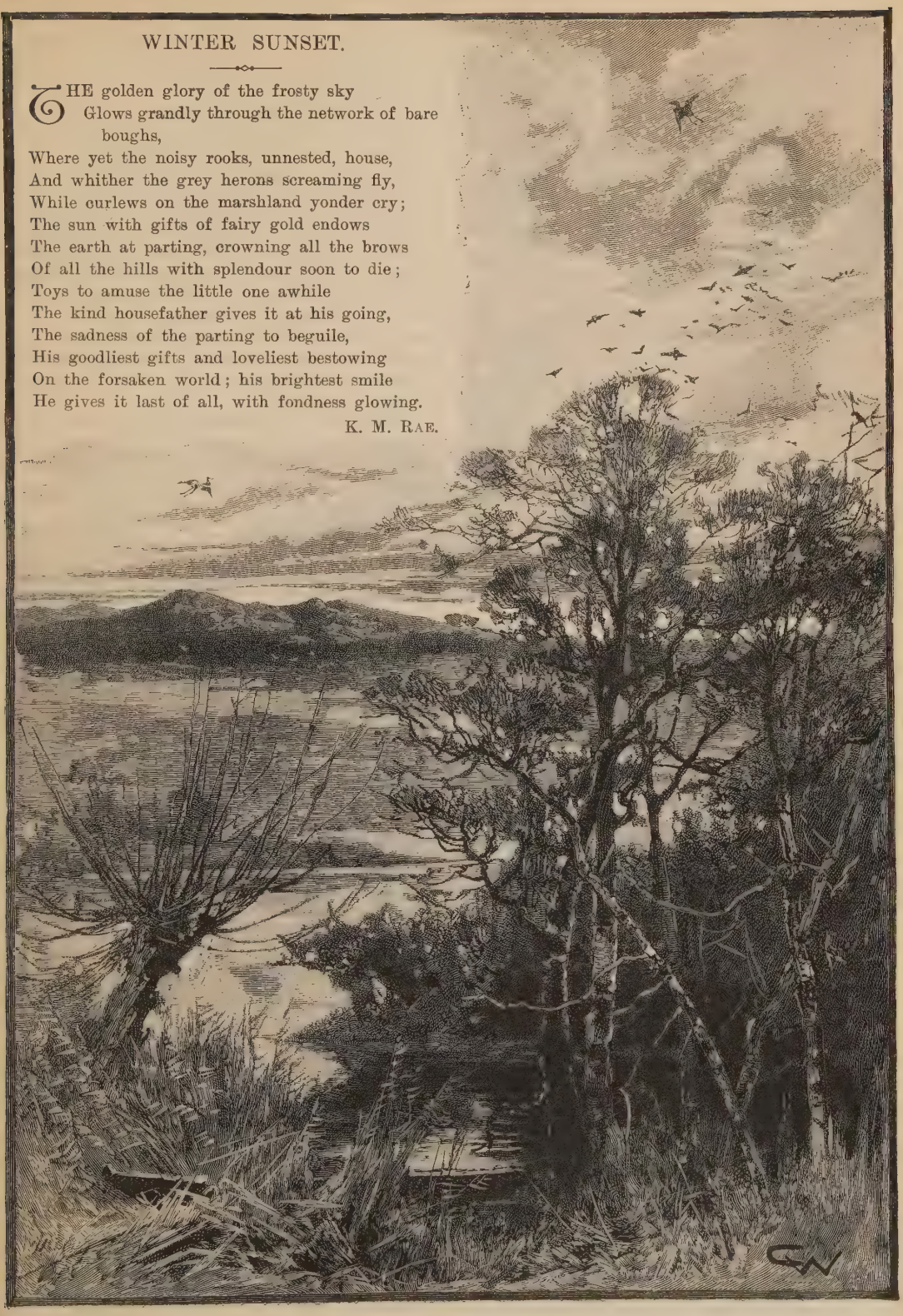
Bertie did not know what she meant. None but Anne knew how fair were the laurels with which she had crowned her boy-lover. None on earth but Anne should ever know how great a victor he had been.

H. B. MACKENZIE.

WINTER SUNSET.

THE golden glory of the frosty sky
Glows grandly through the network of bare boughs,
Where yet the noisy rooks, unnested, house,
And whither the grey herons screaming fly,
While curlews on the marshland yonder cry;
The sun with gifts of fairy gold endows
The earth at parting, crowning all the brows
Of all the hills with splendour soon to die;
Toys to amuse the little one awhile
The kind housefather gives it at his going,
The sadness of the parting to beguile,
His goodliest gifts and loveliest bestowing
On the forsaken world; his brightest smile
He gives it last of all, with fondness glowing.

K. M. RAE.



SPIRITUAL FAILURES.

I.—JACOB.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

NO feature of spiritual history is more remarkable than the failure of many to persevere to the end. But failure is not limited to these. It belongs to many who have risen again from their weariness and sin, and who bear along with them the saddening, chastening memory of going back when they ought to have pressed on, and of practically denying Christ when they ought to have been proud to own His cause and to assert His right. Failure is, therefore, of two kinds—temporary and permanent; and we shall touch upon both of them in these papers.

We must, however, adopt the brighter instance first, and see, as all good story-tellers relate, how the virtue which for a while was mantled stands forth after its trials in all its glorious personality. In this paper, then, we will speak of Jacob.

Never did any young man look forward to a life which promised happier years than his. It was in those broad expansive plains and uplands of Southern Canaan, and in their bright and exhilarating climate, that he nurtured his youth. There was a freedom of young life then which feels strange, when we think of it, to us who tread the hard pavements of towns, and live on the fee-simple of crowds and conventionalities. The wandering Arab of the present still attracts us as a figure of romance, notwithstanding all his vice and villainy. The unhedged roads, the open hill-land, the boundless desert, gave spring and force to natural growth, and the boy leaped joyously into the man.

The natural and material freedom was environed with the arbitrary and despotic laws of the patriarchal code. The head of the family was absolute king and priest and parent; he owned no greater than himself but God. He called that God by no endearing title as we do, but by the hard name of El, the Strong One. Physical might summed up his idea of Godhead. Life and property of those beneath him were therefore in his hands—himself a lesser deity of the universe. Modified and softened as these things were by paternal tenderness and love, they sometimes broke out into tempests of passionate fury and destruction. The sin of a Ham begets a curse as fierce as it is irrevocable. The jealousy of one woman suffices to drive another, homeless and friendless, into the desert to groan or to perish. Petty warfare sustained the lively interest of rival branches of the same family. Though the earth was broad, men seemed in little haste to occupy its distances. Ishmael hovers around the haunts of Isaac; Lot will separate but a little way from his generous uncle. Earth-hunger, earth-affection was strong with the best of them. The cave of Machpelah was more than a cemetery; till the present day the instincts of the race preserve it as a holy of holies. Jacob pines on his death-bed for the country round which his fancy clung; Joseph will not be tempted by princely tombs in Egypt, but demands that his bones shall go forth with the pilgrimage of his people.

Amid such ideas of liberty, of patriarchal authority, and of home, was Jacob reared. They were influences to make a true strong man; but around Jacob they lost their glory.

There were two controlling causes of his moral weakness. From boyhood he was greedy of personal gain. That was a sorry interview he had with his hungry brother when he demanded the birthright of the family for a meal. The birthright conveyed the supreme family authority, power, and precedence, and a double portion of the family wealth. Isaac was very rich. There were only the two sons: at his death his property would be divided into three portions, and the heir would receive two of these. It was a tremendous demand he made upon Esau; and while it shows the worthlessness of much in Esau, it exhibits in unearthly glare the abominable vice which had already mastered the mind and the heart of Jacob.

All his dealings with Laban are of the same character. He was successful in his methods. Never did young man rise more rapidly. He adopted strict business principles. If he were sharper than his cousin, it was only fair that his cousin should suffer. If he could buy in a cheap market, there was no law upon earth to hinder him from selling in the dearest. If a bargain was struck, and he found all the advantage on his own side, it was but reasonable that he should gather the fruits of his cleverness and enjoy them. So he prospered. He gained more than he could conveniently manage. He had much goods laid up for many years; let him bid his body and soul be merry.

The second moral ailment which affected Jacob was *deceit*. When we have written that against any man, we have said the worst that we can say. A man may be a drunkard, he may have a vile temper, he may be faulty and cowardly and mean; but if he is deceitful he is worse than any of these. The history of man has seldom, if ever, painted a sadder scene than Jacob's interview with his father when the old man wanted his favourite food that he might bless the son of his heart and die.* If it be urged that he acted upon the advice of his mother, this only proves that his mother had something of the same disease. No true man, youth, or boy would be led even by his mother to tell

* Gen. xxvii.

lies. And Jacob told them that day in abundance. The blind old man was dying, but even the solemnities of the death-bed could not protect him. He had one final purpose in life—one last message which even the savage might observe with a holy fear; but the greed of man sustained by deceit is like death itself, and is no respecter of persons. The curse of Heaven must have mingled with the uttered but unintended blessings of the father.

Thus far we see the worldly success of an ambitious man. He was determined to be rich at any cost; the cost was his soul: he paid the price; he reaped the reward.

Now let us look at the reward. The history is not a singular one, else I would not write it again. It is being enacted before our eyes every year, and in no country of Europe is the tragedy so often rehearsed as in our own. A blight fell at once upon his designs. No sooner has he deceived his father than he has to fly. No sooner has he grown fat in robbing Laban than he has to fly again. Instead of love from the family of which he has become the head, he is met with malignant hate. It is dangerous for him to remain in his old home, because his brother seeks his life. He dare not attempt, later on, to stay in the East, because he has practically outrun his character, and God in mercy bids him go hence.

He escapes from one sorrow to rush upon another. Esau is the lion in the way of his return to Palestine. At last the elder brother enjoys the opportunity of vengeance, and a fierce nature like his will hardly release the prize. Jacob is distracted at the thought of his danger. Enough agony is thrown into one night to counterbalance a decade of material prosperity. But God's good angel again intervenes: the fierceness of Esau has yielded to generosity and forgiveness, and the man he has grossly wronged falls upon his neck and kisses him.

He had created distrust and division in his father's family, and both curses fall into the midst of his own. The older sons are jealous of one of the youngest: they hate him, sneer at him, and seek to be rid of him. If Jacob deceived Isaac, his eleven sons deceive him. He told a falsehood, and so do they. He all but broke the heart of his father; they bring his head down to sorrow and the confines of the grave.

It is the universal rule, under laws invariable as those which direct the motion of the earth. A Nemesis rests upon sin. Retribution tracks the wicked till she sates herself upon his misery. He who does wrong creates a new force in the world which pursues him like Frankenstein's creation night and day. The sleuth-hound is of the same breed as his crime; lies are punished by lies; avarice by the worthlessness of wealth; greed by want and yearning and loss. And where, amid this doleful history, was God? We behold the wreck of the soul—the gallant vessel which we name *Immortality* beating itself with fell pertinacity upon the rocks of destiny, and pressing ruin upon mast, and hull, and keel. It is one Power alone—one marvellous over-watching Spirit—one matchless Providence, that dissolves the failure and re-creates the spiritual success.

We shall find in this restoration a bit of our own story: it is a prophecy eighteen hundred years before Christ of what should happen in a thousand instances eighteen hundred years after Him.

There are two elements in the treatment—affliction and God. God's great angel of discipline is a stern but judicious friend. Jacob knew him with remarkable intimacy, and the acquaintance seemed to grow with his years. He became an exile when he was nearly fourscore, and he was dependent for many years upon a shrewish relative. He felt within himself the power of a great future, but he was unable to indulge the pleasures of gratified ambition. When he achieved honour in his family by winning the birthright, the position lost its enjoyment by the displeasure and discontent of Esau. When he had amassed wealth and become a great sheikh, his property became a source of danger, and he had more trouble with it than pleasure. The darling of his life—the one being that won him in earlier days out of himself—was snatched away by death. If Benjamin was his favourite son, because of the tragedy of his birth, Joseph held the warmest corner of his heart, and that heart was torn like the coat of many colours when the false brothers showed him the stains which he took for his boy's blood. Smitten in the tenderest elements of his life, robbed of the dearest, in wife and child, he grew grey in the hard school of God. Quietly, and with that calmness which declares a deep-rooted sorrow, he spent many years. The chastisement was telling upon him. No paroxysms of joy visited his widowhood: no elevation of soul: no liberty of patriarchal pride. New forces had environed him, and he took each event as a portion of life—necessary, if disagreeable; God-sent, if unacceptable.

Then other shadows deepened. The wealth of Padan-Aram was threatened by actual want; the land of milk and honey refused its increase; famine spread her raven wings over Canaan. The inheritor of the Divine covenant becomes a trader for bread. The Egypt which had enslaved his ancestors has grown into the mart of nations; and though Joseph is discovered there, Jacob has to yield his patriarchal place and become a subject of Pharaoh, and practically the subject of his distinguished son. Claiming by virtue of a Divine decree the right to the land from the Jordan to the Mediterranean, he dies in a land that is not his. Stranger and exile, the chastened, sobered, disappointed patriarch ends the days which he can describe in no better language than this—that they have been few and evil.

This long discipline were heart-breaking did we not cherish the faith of immortality. Its worst and sorest element would be that God must under such circumstances lie outside the possibility of our belief. If there be such sore affliction in life, and if there be

no eternity for man, then neither is there any God. No man's mind could endure so many slings and arrows of outrageous fortune without the prospect of Paradise and Heaven.

On the other hand, grant that there is an immortality in Jesus, and that there is a God, then we can understand how loving that God is; and we can lay the solace to our souls that we enjoy His personal and especial care. For if we endure chastisement, God dealeth with us as with sons, that we may be partakers of His holiness. We suffer because our prospects are so bright; we are chastened because humanity is so great.

Thus, to pledge Himself to us, and to assure us of the House with the many mansions, He unveils and reveals Himself. Here is the real creating power which rebuilt the shattered fabric of Jacob's character. Bethel and Mahanaim are two places of the East; but they are repeated often in the geography of men's souls. The sleep of the weary head is changed for the sight of angels; the pilgrimage of flight and fear for the short ladder that joins earth and heaven; the loss of home and friends for the immediate and uninterrupted protection of God. This is the true restorative after repentance. There is nothing in repentance itself to work upon our character and disposition. For repentance often ends in sorrow and remorse, and it always requires faith to lead to reformation and action. Nobody has ever been made good by being called bad. The way to make the bad good is by showing to it that it can be good. We make men hopeful by revealing to their eyes possibilities in themselves that they never suspected, by convincing them that they can have power, through grace, to conquer the solicitations of wrong and sin, and to cultivate and produce a life of contentment, and joy, and virtue. It is the Gospel alone that is the power of God unto salvation. It was the *sight* of that Gospel which saved Jacob.

Years passed. Other elements had been incorporated with his being. When he flees from Laban, he is different from that man who fled from Esau. New passions and ambitions have swayed him; and the world's work has left its imprint upon countenance, and mind, and heart. There is yet a great deal of the "old man," as St. Paul calls it. He can assert his worldly will and pursue his worldly ends. His strength is his chief remaining weakness; and God would show him that other strength is requisite, and that it is more princely to strive with God and to prevail than it is to strive with men and fate. In other words, Jacob had yet to understand what thousands this day are likewise slow to learn: that spiritual power is necessary for a true man. The encounter at Mahanaim is a struggle between the body of Jacob and the might of God—between that which was worldly, carnal, and material within him and that which was spiritual and supplied from Heaven. It was St. Paul's experience too. The seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans may be read into the thirty-second chapter of Genesis. The half-converted multitudes of the Church are carrying on the same struggle. They have not yielded themselves entirely to God. They are resisting the further development of conscience, knowledge, and obedience. They are persuading themselves that they are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing. At some sudden crisis—when some Esau is before them, only over there, beyond that Jabbok of to-morrow or the next day—God meets them. There and then the issue must be and will be decided. It is one issue for eternal life or eternal death; for final spiritual success or for irrevocable failure.

We may well thank God that He smites us upon the very point of our stoutest resistance, and compels the sinew of our ill-directed power to shrink. Better is it to be crippled a hundred years upon earth than to forfeit your eternity in heaven. For there at Mahanaim Jacob's heaven began. The rest of his life takes tone and colour thenceforth from the conflict. He accepts life under its tremendous laws of unflinching morality, instead of the laws of human ambition which seek to intercept and destroy them.

He has been made an Israel—a prince of God. A new liberty dawns upon the soul. A wealth which was never expected, because it was never understood, is heaped upon him. The numbering of cattle and sheep and goats is nothing now. Jabbok is no Rubicon of uncertain destiny or possible disaster. Wife and child have been taken into the hands which are omnipotent; and the good pleasure of a brother becomes the pledge of the goodwill of God.

Thus does God, our watchful Father, transform many a life. Where we can do nothing, where opportunties have been wasted and advice been spurned, where years have passed on hopelessly towards an unlustred grave, God has been silently doing His own work. Is not this the consolation of His workers to-day? He has set some in His Church for the work of the ministry: but beyond the ministry of man, He has given His angels special charge; and the vision, and the personal conflict, and the articulate message from God Himself, have carried life home to the dying soul. No one need despair of his brother: each must pray for all: each must work as much as he can. But without our aid, and sometimes without our hope, the Jacobs of the earth are often turned into the Israels of God.

ON THE TOP OF MOUNT VESUVIUS.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR W. GARDEN BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

NAPLES AND VESUVIUS.

(From a Photograph by Sommer, Naples.)

THE usual holiday season in our country occurs at a time when, owing to the great heat, Southern Italy is practically inaccessible to tourists, and consequently its unrivalled attractions are known only to a few. No doubt the practice of taking a holiday in winter or in spring is increasing among us, and in this way Naples, Vesuvius, Pompeii, and the beautiful Neapolitan sea-coast are becoming familiar to a growing number of travellers. And sooth to say, when tourist agents undertake to convey you to Naples and back, and to many other places in Italy besides, for a sum ranging from about twelve to eighteen pounds, the enterprise is not so formidable as might be thought. Of course travellers must lay their account with spending on the lesser excursions a good deal more than is covered by the ticket-in-chief. And the ticket is but one item of the cost of travelling. Vesuvius costs just one pound extra.

The mountain has often been described; every guide-book, every geography-book, every gazetteer, every encyclopædia, has something about Vesuvius: but none of them just tell, what people at home desire to know, how the journey to the top is done, nor what are the current experiences of plain men and women that dare the enterprise.

To tell the truth, there is very little daring about it. If you give due notice at Cook's office, a carriage is sent to your hotel in the morning, and everything else is arranged without any trouble on your part. It is not every day, however, that Vesuvius may be attempted. Not that he is given to eruptions; these are reserved for very special occasions; it is now but a month or two since the last took place. And when he does erupt, he is usually good enough to give some preliminary warning. But in unsettled weather he is apt to be enveloped in a cloud, and in this state of things the ascent is hardly worth making, not only because the view from the top is cut off, but because the sulphurous vapour is so condensed that it is not easy to breathe the atmosphere. But if the night before and early in the morning you see the summit clear, and the volume of smoke coming right out from the crater, you may at once get ready your sandwiches and biscuits, and expect the carriage at the appointed hour.

Probably your hotel is situated on the height to

the north of Naples, and as you step out on the platform you cannot but feast your eyes once more with the glorious view of the city and the bay which stretches before you, bright in the morning sun—yes, in the morning sun, for without the sun, on a wet east-windy day, even the Bay of Naples can look grim enough. But, with the bright blue sea below, and that bright sky above, and the fine sweep of the spacious bay, and the town with its white walls and red roofs massed on the heights, and straggling villages smiling all round the bay, and Vesuvius, with its smoking crater, dominating the whole, it really is a goodly sight.

But now we are down among the secondary streets of Naples, and we are by no means captivated with their appearance. We pass stately mansions, no doubt; but from time immemorial the ground floor of the mansion, the entrance to which is by a spacious court, is devoted to shops of a peculiar construction. They consist of a single apartment lighted only from the large door, which in the daytime is constantly open to the street. If it be a provision shop or a green-grocery, the litter at the door is painful to look on.

And generally the disorder, and the dirt, and the unwashed look of the men and women, are fearful. Often the back part of the shop is the dwelling-place of the family, and being without chimney, or window, or ventilation, it is hardly possible to avoid hugger-mugger. Things are more orderly in the better class of streets, and occasionally we light on a marble edifice, like the new Humbert Gallery in honour of the king, that is quite superb—a very pattern of elegance.

It is morning, and we can get along but slowly through the thoroughfare, owing to the multitude of carts, cars, and carriages. The turn-out of a cart or little waggon is often wonderful. Three animals are yoked abreast—most likely a horse, a mule, and a donkey, but often for a horse you have an ox. No attempt is made at a tidy or neat adjustment; that is treated with proud contempt. The poor little donkey cuts a sorry figure at the side of the larger animals, but it pulls with a will and with a perseverance that are not to be despised. The arrangement might pass if only the drivers were kind to their animals. But they are notorious for inhumanity. What are called horses in Naples are at best but ponies, of slender build—wiry, no doubt, but not capable of pulling a heavy load with ease. And it is seldom that their loads are anything but heavy. It is often painful in the last degree to see them toiling up an acclivity at the utmost stretch of their muscles, and worse to see them belaboured with fearful blows to induce them to attempt the impossible. Happily, things are not so bad as they were. A society, in which the Queen is said to take a lively interest, has lately been formed to prevent cruelty to animals, and I am told thousands of prosecutions have taken place under it. You do not see so many poor animals with open sores as used to be visible; but scarecrow creatures, with worn skin, and bones almost sticking through, are common enough. It is the spirit of humanity that is so painfully wanting; the owner seems to have no idea but to take the utmost that by hook or by crook he can get out of his beast. The feebler the animal, the less does it seem to be cared for. A man was once reminded that it was against a well-known law to yoke a horse and an ass together. "Why so?" said he; "what harm can it do to the horse?"

The old lazzaroni of Naples—the class of robust beggars that loafed on principle and made begging their profession—have now disappeared, but the crop of beggars is large enough notwithstanding. For travellers they seem to keep an especial look-out. One feels kindly towards the decrepit old creatures that hold out a skinny hand and mutter a dolorous appeal, as well as the deformed wretches that wriggle about, sometimes on elbows and knees, and with hardly the features of humanity; but for robust men who have lost a hand, and for boys and girls who seem to think that you ought to help them just because you are bigger and richer than they, you have nothing but contempt. Unfortunately, their name is legion. Naples is, by a long way, the largest city in Italy, and as a rule, its people are the poorest. They form a kind of conglomeration of races—Italians of various provinces, Swiss, Greeks, even Moors, mixed together, and hardly amalgamated. It will take a long time to bring them abreast of the more northern provinces.

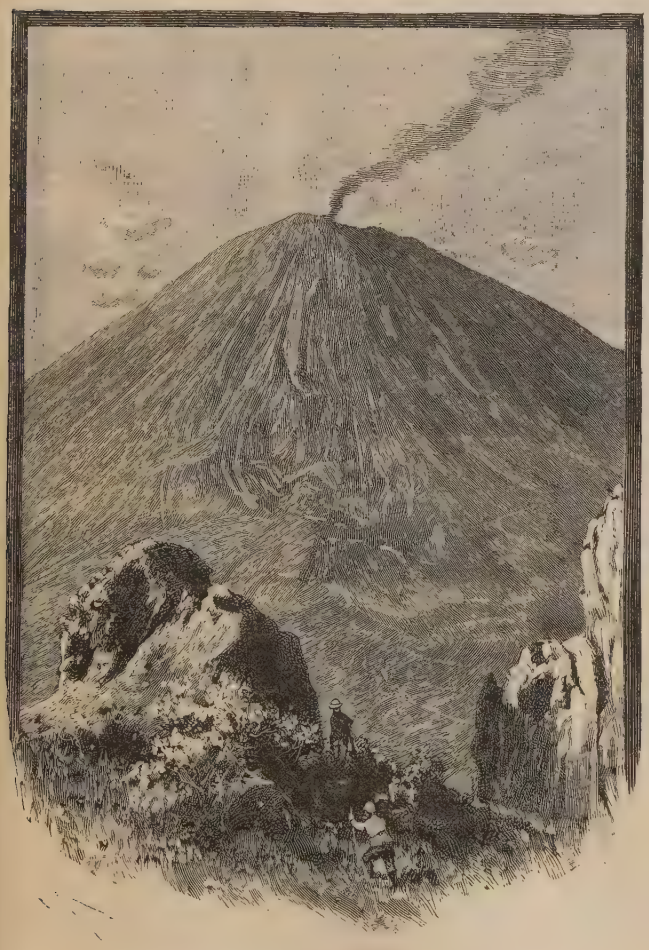
We are now out of Naples, and are traversing a little town called Resina. It is an exaggeration of the poorer streets of Naples—untidy, poor, and dirty. Observe how the side pavements are turned into open-air shops, with all their wares displayed. Here you have tables covered with vegetables, or fruit; yonder a furniture store; there a butcher's, with legs of mutton, or even a whole ox, obstructing your progress if you are on foot; while up and down, the pavement is used as a table for bleaching macaroni, and bare-footed boys are spreading it out and turning it over as if it were wheat, making you thankful that you have no prospect of having to eat macaroni in Resina. And what do you think lies under this poor, untidy village? Nothing less than the ancient city of Herculaneum! Here, in the first century of the Christian era, stood an elegant Roman city, the resort of many distinguished families. When, in the year of our Lord 79, it was overwhelmed by the eruption of Vesuvius, it fared worse than Pompeii, which lay some miles further to the south. For whereas Pompeii was buried under a shower of ashes or volcanic gravel, Herculaneum was covered to a great depth with liquid lava, which, when it cooled, became hard as rock. Over this rock a new town, Resina, was built. And when the spirit of exploration began to prevail it was found that but little could be made of Herculaneum, because the material was so hard; and if it had all been excavated the town above would have fallen in. Only two little bits of Herculaneum have been laid bare, whereas more than half the ancient Pompeii is now exposed to public view.

We now begin the serious ascent of the mountain. We hook on a third horse to our chariot, and wend our way slowly through vineyards and orchards, little farms, and clumps of trees, past an occasional little square house with blank walls, the type of Neapolitan houses for thousands of years back. But what is that

huge brown pile that now confronts us, like the mass of *débris* thrown out from a quarry or a coal-pit? It is the termination of the stream of lava that poured out of the crater of the mountain at its great eruption, in 1872, when it committed great devastation, overwhelming houses, burying some hundreds of people, and ruining no end of fields and vineyards. Fancy the feelings of the inhabitants as they looked up and saw the fiery stream, more than a hundred feet in height, moving with grim determination down upon their homes!

The road crosses the stream from time to time, and you have abundant opportunities to study it. And a strange study it is! It looks like a great conglomeration of gigantic earthworms, or serpents, twisted and convoluted in every variety of form, yet never by any chance in the likeness of a complete animal or of any symmetrical thing. One recalls Mr. Huxley's expression, "the power and potency of matter"; but the power and potency of this enormous mass of moving matter fashioned itself into nothing but an amorphous torrent of lava, and its effect on all it touched was simply destruction and desolation. Truly, if the primeval elements had not behaved a little better when the world was formed, and been guided by something better than the power and potency of matter, we should have looked on a scene very different from this beautiful and orderly cosmos.

As we proceed we see the edges of the torrent, where it poured itself into the vineyards and gardens; and strange it is to mark everything just as it was left on that fatal day—the brown stream, now hardened into rock, running in capes and headlands into the cultivated ground, while little bays of green vegetation, with their vines and other trees, remain untouched. Of course, every living thing that lay in the way of the burning stream was utterly destroyed. And not only does the lava remain as it was when it ceased to flow, but it remains in all its unmitigated desolation. Hardly a blade of grass is to be found on it: certainly nothing to modify in the slightest degree its aspect of utter desolation. Time will probably disintegrate the surface, and particles of vegetable mould mixing with it may ultimately form a home for vegetation; but nothing of that kind has taken place yet. A more terrible emblem of desolation it is hardly possible to conceive, and it is all the more striking because the country all round Vesuvius is so rich and beautiful.



MOUNT VESUVIUS.

We have now got beyond the region of farmhouses; all that is above us is the observatory, which is 2,200 feet above the level of the sea; and after the observatory the railway station. Passing the observatory, we come to a gate with the words "J. M. COOK" in conspicuous letters over it. By some arrangement with the Italian Government, Mr. Cook acquired the right to construct the road over which we are now to pass, and the "funicular" or rope railway which is to carry us up to the crater. The truth is, Mr. Cook has been constituted Lord of Vesuvius. No doubt you may scramble along the mountain and up the mountain by other ways, but if you wish to make the ascent with ease and comfort you must pay toll and tribute to Cook. Just look along the road, and see how many equipages there are bearing his image and superscription, or at least subject to his sway. We can count some twenty, from the two-horsed calèche or the three-horsed landau to the four-horsed wagonette or omnibus. It is a pretty sight, and really a singular one, so near the top of a big mountain. Most of the occupants are English-speaking, as their red guide-books plainly indicate; though red guide-books are to be found in other languages too. The day continues as bright as could be desired, and every

A VIEW ON MOUNT VESUVIUS.

glance below is a look of delight; for the bay and its sea-coast are bathed in sunshine, and the islands Ischia and Capri are now full in view.

It is now fully four hours since we left our hotel, and we have reached the railway station. The railway is a very simple affair. It runs straight as an arrow from the upper station to the lower, and is worked by an engine in the latter. Nothing is seen but two lines of rails, with a double rope on either side of each rail, and a series of wheels over which the ropes pass. A single railway carriage, with accommodation for ten persons, rests on each line of rail, and when the apparatus is in motion one carriage is always descending while the other ascends. There is no locomotive engine, as in the Righi rail, and there are no cog-wheels or grooved rails into which they fit. The brakes are so contrived as to grip with great firmness on each side the rail over which the carriage passes, so that even if any accident should befall the rope, the safety of the carriage is provided for. It does look formidable to find one's self and fellow-passengers suspended by a rope on an incline where the gradient is something like 60 in 100; but among the many passengers that performed the ascent, I did not see one hysterical person. Some seven or eight minutes is all that is needed for the trip; and when you step out on the upper platform you have risen 1,300 feet, and there is nothing now but the crater of the mountain between you and the summit.

The crater is, or was, twofold—the old and the new. A climb of ten or fifteen minutes brings you to the old, which consists of an irregular surface of rock and gravelly lava, through which jets of steam are hissing here and there. The day before our ascent was rainy, and after rain there is always an increased rush of steam. Another short but steep climb brings you to the new crater. The steam was making a tremendous fuss; in fact, it quite filled the crater, and prevented us from seeing what, in a calmer condition, is usually witnessed. Usually the walls of the crater are quite distinct, brilliantly coloured, with the hot half-liquid lava visible below, so that adventurous guides can boil or at least heat for you an egg, or bring up to you a copper coin encrusted and embedded in lava. It is dangerous for strangers in any circumstances to go down to the lava; only a few weeks ago a scientific gentleman lost his life in the attempt. For us the sight presented was—a huge caldron steaming and puffing in great excitement, and every other minute belching out a mass of stones, which rose high in the air, and were carried by the wind to the other side. It was really something to see old Vesuvius in such a rage. We got some idea how he would look if, instead of a few stones, he had an accumulated sea of lava in his cheeks, and if he were discharging it with his usual recklessness on the country below. In point of fact, this was just what he did a few weeks after our visit. The steam was highly sulphurous, and as it was puffed in one's face with no sort of ceremony, it was difficult to breathe. Coughing all round was the order of the day, and for ladies especially, of whom there were many, a short inspection was all that could be conveniently done.

And this was Vulcan's workshop of the ancients, and the old god was busy with his bellows below, and the steam and the stones were accompaniments of the process of forging thunderbolts for Jove! It was not a bad flight of the imagination in days when gods were believed or half-believed in, and when the laws and operations of nature were yet enveloped in mystery and confusion. But though we smile at these fancies of the old mythology, we seem to have come very little nearer to an intelligent understanding of this remarkable phenomenon.

What is really the cause of this activity of the mountain, and of the fearful eruptions in which he occasionally indulges? One theory is that of belts of fire inside the earth; another that the earth is still red-hot at the centre, with a few outlets here and there in the form of volcanoes. We really cannot tell. Under any theory, there is an awful mystery and uncertainty about the thing, and a suggestion of possible mischief to which it is impossible to set bounds. When Etna is active Vesuvius is usually quiet, and when the terrible earthquake took place at Ischia a few years ago Vesuvius looked on unmoved. That future eruptions will take place cannot be reasonably doubted. Yet so accustomed are people to take things as they are, that the easy tenor of the life of the neighbouring inhabitants seems to be quite undisturbed by the apprehension. It is the same in other matters. Ordinarily men are little disturbed by the apprehension of death, even though it may be hovering round them. They were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, the day before the Flood, and they will be doing the same at the end of the world. There have never been more than a few who are wise in time, or "consider their latter end."

There are contrivances at the crater for making the ascent easy. For a franc or two a guide will put a rope into your hands and pull you up, and for ten francs they will carry you. Only ladies accept the latter form of help; and when they find themselves shoulder-high on the top of four men, who cannot go up a half-perpendicular path without exposing their unhappy victim to much tossing to and fro, it is no wonder if they repent bitterly of their choice. But most ladies will give a good deal to be able to say that they have been at the very top of Vesuvius. Persons in feeble health, and especially with feeble hearts, should not attempt it; as for others, though the exertion may be considerable, it is short, and they will find it far more satisfactory to perform the operation on their own legs. At the bottom of the crater there is a refreshment-room, which many find to be the right thing in the right place.

There is little to remark about the descent, except that there is a continual feast for the eyes in the magnificent view of the Bay of Naples and the glorious sea-coast. Vesuvius is a solitary wonder, but the bay and its neighbourhood are a joy for ever. The delicious calm below is a great contrast to the furious commotion above. Is this not an emblem of life? Most of us have our stormy experiences, rapid, terrible, overwhelming; but usually life has its long stretches of calm. And those of us who measure accurately can see that its joy has greatly exceeded its sorrow.

THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE.

BY MARY HAMPDEN.

CHAPTER I.

It is summer in the garden of "Abbeylands," the great white house which crowns the highest hill near Aberstone; the June sunshine is drawing the evening mists from mile after mile of fertile pasture-land, and the landscape far and near is bathed in a golden haze. It is a typical scene of rural England. A well-kept lawn slopes down to some flowery meadows, from which it is separated by a low iron fence and a row of richly foliaged chestnuts. In the shadow of the finest tree some large-eyed cattle congregate, thrusting their heads between the bars of the gate, and impatiently awaiting the luscious cabbage or fragrant hay with which their mistress usually rewards their meek intelligence.

The house stands quite close to the meadows—a stretch of velvet turf, a flight of long stone steps meeting the carriage-drive, and then the verandah itself, embowered in roses and wisteria. Its roses are deemed the chief beauty of Abbeylands, and, indeed, the weather-worn white walls are luxuriantly clothed, the gaunt, square windows of many an untenanted room are gracefully outlined by climbing "Gloire de Dijon" and "Maréchal Niel."

The south wing only is inhabited by the present representatives of the family, a widow lady and her only daughter. The well-known name is seldom heard, except in village homes, for the county families take but little interest in the "inhospitable Weirs." Yet it is only a few years since the lofty rooms, with their arched ceilings and faded tapestries, were peopled by guests who came and went, bringing with them an atmosphere of energy and change. To-day, the only friend who ever enters Abbeylands is the Rev. Arthur Ford, the Vicar of Aberstone, and he belongs to the house by right, being the nephew of its mistress. The village is too poor to keep a curate, so all the work of the parish falls on Mr. Ford's broad shoulders.

Despite its lack of visitors, however, Abbeylands is not a dreary place; it has only ceased to be of the least importance to the outer world, although its walls shelter the life of a marriageable daughter, at once a beauty and an heiress.

Aberstone knows but little of Edith Weir; her beauty is not the object of masculine devotion, for the sufficient reason that she is not acquainted with the young men of the neighbourhood. Her wealth is not discussed by village gossips, for its extent is not known beyond the narrow circle of her own family. She is Mrs. Weir's daughter by a former marriage; but her stepfather, having no child of his own, left the whole of his property in trust for her, on condition that she assumed the old family name.

Edith has read of lovers, untiring worshippers, who figure in old romances, for whom a face, once seen, is a perpetual dream, and before whose ardent determination danger and difficulty vanish. She has followed many a history of these loyal knights, reading in breathless anxiety, sobbing over the reproaches of Edgar or the grief of Isabelle, but it has never occurred to her that such passionate scenes may be enacted in her quiet life, that her own fair face could inspire many a man to the performance of valiant deeds. Poor little Edith! She believes the world of her own day to be sadly degenerate. Her heroes of imagination figure in suits of mail, and champion their lady-loves with sword and lance. She does not realise that loyal hearts may beat beneath the modern coat, that the modern man must also face his foes, and conquer, if he be a hero.

The June sunshine is still lingering over the meadows, dappling the sides of the patient cows with changing flecks of light; it will not be night yet although the birds are flying home to roost; and the garden is sweetest at this hour, when the flowers give out their most fragrant perfume. So thinks Edith Weir. She has been watching the familiar scene from the study window, but is now crossing the lawn, carrying a huge bunch of hay wherewith to gratify her pets. There is instantly commotion amongst them, "Alderney" and "Shorthorn" each striving to be first at the gate; but the girl, laughing at their excitement, lavishes caresses equally on all.

"Edith," calls a voice from the house, "Edith; you are out rather late, my child, and the dew will soon be falling."

Mrs. Weir appears upon the steps, shading her eyes from the glow in the western sky; her tall, gaunt figure is clad in a long grey gown, which hangs in severe folds; her face, though peaceful in expression, is lined and seamed, the transparent skin showing the blue veins. There are many signs of suffering in the quiver of the gentle mouth, the languid fall of the eyelids; and yet it is the face of a happy woman—one who knows the sorrows of the world, but who has learned to be content. As Edith joins her mother, lovingly twining her arms around her, an artist would not know which to call the fairer—the girl with her fresh flush of youth, or the woman with the light of God's peace upon her brow. Both have smooth brown hair and light grey eyes, but there the likeness ceases. Edith has full red lips and a little dimpled chin; her figure is not above the medium height, and she moves with the impulsive step of girlhood.

Mother and daughter enter the house together, passing through the wide entrance-hall to the library, the room most used at Abbeylands.

"Oh, mother!" cries Edith, "you have had a letter, and Bassett did not tell me! I must give him a terrible scolding to-morrow. Is it from anyone I know? Do let me see it."

"I want to speak to you about this letter, Edith," answers Mrs. Weir, glancing with amusement at the flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes which bespeak the girl's excitement. "Bassett is not to blame, for I wished to tell you myself. Come and sit here by me, and I will read it to you. It is from your half-cousin, Lilian."

The letter was written in a bold and characteristic hand, and ran as follows:—

"3, Heathcote Gardens, London, W.

"MY DEAR AUNT,—I have come to the conclusion that it is my duty to write to you, although my news will certainly fail to give you pleasure, and you will very rightly consider that our troubles do not concern you. I do not write to you for assistance: my father, were he alive, would not wish us to accept aid from you. As soon as my brother has faced his creditors we shall leave England for Boulogne, where I trust that, with economy, we shall contrive to live. As I have never seen your daughter Edith, it would be foolish to send my love to her; but I hope, my dear aunt, that you are both enjoying good health.—Believe me to be, your sincere niece, "LILIAN BRISTOL."

"She has never seen me, and so cannot send her love. Oh, I think that is a horrid letter!" Edith's pretty face flushes crimson with disappointment.

"It is a strange letter, and I think Lilian must be a strange girl; but you must remember, dear, that she has lived a very different life from ours. Her father was a violinist by profession; but I fear he lived only for pleasure, and wandered about the world, now here and now there, taking his children into scenes which were most unsuited to their youth. I do not wish to speak ill of the dead, but he was a most peculiar man, of a bitter temper, sarcastic, and yet passionate. When my sister-in-law married him she was too young to make so important a choice, and I fancy her life was embittered by many a quarrel. Poor Margaret! Of course, I only knew her slightly many years before I married your father."

"I understand now," cries Edith impetuously. "You were thinking of sending them some of my money, and you thought I should mind. Oh, mother! how could you think so? I don't care one bit about being rich; and I have everything I want—more than I need—here at dear old Abbeylands. How much may I give them? It ought to be a good deal, ought it not, because there are two people to live upon it, and everything is so expensive in London?"

Mrs. Weir lovingly kisses the flushed bright face which is looking up at her so eagerly.

"I propose to send for them—to ask them to come here for a long visit, or, perhaps, to stay altogether. Lilian would not accept your money, dearest, and it would be wrong to offer it to her; but there will be many other ways in which you can help her. I will pay Hector's creditors, if their demands are not

too exorbitant, and you shall make your cousins welcome to Abbeylands."

"Oh!" cries Edith, springing to her feet, "we will be sisters, and Hector shall be my brother. How surprised old Bassett will be to have another 'young miss' to look after! He told me this morning that I 'almost worrited him into his grave' because I didn't let Bessie walk down Mervyn Hill; he said 'it was a mussy we wasna deposed by the roadway.' And then the poor old fellow was so much offended because I laughed at him! 'Never you mind, missie,' he said; 'many 's the time I've saved you breaking your pretty neck with my bad grammar; it's my belief as how you'd ride over a haystack if it wasna for my remonstrations'; and he didn't speak another word all the way home. Mother, will Hector ride? I suppose all men ride, don't they?"

"I do not know, Edith; but we will try our best to make Hector and his sister happy in every possible way. I feel that perhaps we have something to make up to them; they have not been treated kindly by some members of the family in bygone years, and Lilian does not seem to have forgiven the slights and hardships of her childhood. However, we must let the past be forgotten. I hope I am acting wisely; but it seems to me that we owe a duty to these poor young people."

Edith resumes her place at her mother's feet, and sits, resting her cheek upon her hand, thinking over the wonderful change which is soon to take place in her uneventful life. So far mother and daughter have been all in all to each other; now new ties are to be formed; new affection is demanded on behalf of unknown relations.

It is strange to Edith to think of comparing opinions, exchanging hopes, thoughts, and fears with anyone but this mother from whom she has never had a secret. Cousin Arthur, the Vicar, is the only other relation she has ever known, and has trained her mind, shared her pleasures, sympathised with her sorrows for as long as she can remember. These newcomers, too, are creatures of a different world; they have travelled in countries of which she, sitting at home, has only read; they are experienced in life, and probably clever; they will perhaps despise a country home. Lilian may laugh at her simple tastes; perhaps they may never be quite happy together. As Edith ponders, a whole flood of new thoughts rushes into her brain: possible quarrels, probable misunderstandings, even undefined doubts that life may not be as uniformly happy as it has been in the past. The thought of Lilian's superiority causes a throb of jealousy in the foolish little heart. But in all her forebodings Edith never once includes the image of her other cousin; she feels sure that he at least will not make things difficult: that he will be the affectionate, indulgent, chivalrous protector who is her ideal of a brother.

"I am so sorry," she says at length, lifting to her mother's face a pair of innocent grey eyes, "I 'm so sorry we cannot foresee what will happen, or what they will be like. I hope I shall get on well with Lilian, but I am sure, *quite sure*, that I shall love Hector."

CHAPTER II.

"I NEVER did hold wi' strangers, never! If you knows a person, you knows 'em, and there s a end o't; but as for new folks, why, there 's as much oncertainty aboot them as there is aboot countin' chickens afore they 're hatched. Do what you will, you never can be sure as they won't surprise you."

This oracular sentence proceeded from the lips of old Ben Bassett, the faithful retainer who fulfilled the office of coachman and general superintendent at Abbeylands; indeed, he had constituted himself universal factotum by right of long service, overlooking the work of everyone merely for the pleasure of exercising undivided sway. Even Mrs. Weir herself sometimes found it difficult to gainsay his orders or limit his alterations "aboot the place."

"You onderstand, mem," he would explain, "as *I* knows more nor any leddy; you let things bide a bit, and I 'll see to 'em. Haven't I been wi' you long enough years to guess your mind an' Miss Edith's? You don't like them scarlet geranums aginst the magenta cinnyraries? Well, now, I thinks they shows 'em off wonderful. You don't want to be lookin' at 'em both at once."

Gardening was a favourite pastime with old Bassett, who liked nothing so well as pottering about the conservatories and flower-beds, making "improvements" (?) according to his somewhat peculiar taste. When he delivered the rather bigoted remark with which this chapter opens, he was standing in the midst of a perfect forest of geraniums—red, white, and pink—choosing a dozen or so with which to decorate the verandah. He was all alone, so the remark was addressed to the birds and insects, or, more likely, to the air; having grown accustomed to the luxury of speech, the old man preferred to argue with himself rather than refrain from uttering his thoughts.

Poor old Bassett! his rheumatism was his one never-failing subject of complaint—wet or dry, June or December. No one ever inquired after his health without receiving the reply, "Well, the weather 's in my bones, sure enough." Truly the old man's eccentricities were many, yet he was a general favourite; and if he occasionally gave himself airs of undue importance and authority, his arrogance was largely due to the spoiling treatment which he received, and to the respectful deference which "Mr. Bassett's" opinions always met with among the village folk. His views were stated in language which was decidedly original, the result of his north-country origin, followed by long residence in the home-counties.

"Strangers, indeed! No; they never come to good! I 'll speak to the missus aboot it. Maybe she 'll change her mind," he muttered, hoeing away viciously at a nettle which had been impertinent enough to thrust itself among his "geranums." Ben Bassett was the last man in the world to doubt his right to "speak to the missus" upon any subject whatsoever.

That morning he had heard for the first time that Mr. and Miss Bristol were coming from London to make an indefinitely long stay at Abbeylands, and his conservative principles were greatly upset by the

proposed innovation. Coming on a visit? Then, why was there not a word to define its length? Why was the garden to be newly trimmed and, above all, why should he have been ordered to rub up the old saddles in the coach-house? Mr. Bristol was going to ride, then—to ride with Miss Edith, as likely as not!

"Ah!" said old Ben, pausing in his work to survey the landscape, "there's no knowing what'll happen. Bless her heart, she's more nor a mile too good for chaps to come a-philanderin' arter her; some great gawk o' a man, mayhap, with more length nor head-piece, to come a-scourin' the country on Black Jim, alongside o' her, talkin' nonsense, and turnin' her head with his palaver. Women is all alike; once a fine-lookin' feller comes in sight, away goes their little bit o' reason. She'll be a-gettin' in love with him, and he only too pleased, *on* course. If the missus isn't mad I dunno what she's thinkin' on; but there's one thing I *do* say"—and here he waved his right arm after the manner of a public orator—"I do say this: it's a good job as she's got me to be lookin' arter her; and as for little missie, never a man but'll find he's got to reckon with *me* afore ever he gets her! I know his games; and forewarned, forearmed, as the minister said t' other day aboot the devil!"

"Why, Bassett, what do you mean by talking about such things?"

Edith had crossed the lawn unheard by the old man, and was attracted by the sound of his last words, which, after his custom, he had delivered aloud, with the flowers for audience.

"I shall have to tell Mr. Ford that you have taken to grumbling, and persuade him to come and scold you," she said laughingly.

"Scold *me*, missie! It's my thinkin' as how the minister 'ull have plenty o' scoldin' to do afore long, with strange Lunnon folk a-comin' down to disturb the peace. Look ye round, miss—look at them fields, green and fresh as the Lord made 'em; look at the blue o' the sky, and hearken a bit to the song o' the birds! Does you think as there's aught here to please them as have made their delight in fiddlin' and gamblin'?—a Lunnon man first, and then a rover o'er the face o' th' earth, never bidin' anywhere? No, little missie, you'll be thinkin' some day on all as I says to you. Abbeylands is a sight too good for 'em, and bad 'ull come of it all, if I knows anythin'."

Edith had listened to this harangue with the greatest amazement. "A Lunnon man, fiddlin' and gamblin'." Then it must be to Hector that Bassett principally objected. She felt quite indignant with the old man for his perverse disapproval, and put on, as she rebuked him, an air of dignity which he quite failed to appreciate.

"You must never speak in that way about my cousins again, Bassett, never! I do not know what makes you so prejudiced; but I am sure that when they have come you will be very sorry for your hasty judgment, and very anxious to please them in every way. It is just because they have lived in London that they are sure to be delighted with the country. I hope, and so does mamma, that they may stay for ever!"

The old gardener laid down his hoe, and, turning to his young mistress, smiled upon her one of those pitying smiles with which an elderly person so often expresses a loving contempt for the arguments of the young. He was convinced that Edith, though nearly eighteen, was a child in mind as well as in years.

"No, little missie," he answered, with that provoking smile; "no, maybe *you* don't understand. It's not to be expected as you should know the wicked ways o' the world—you that's been brought up by your mother an' the minister; but you'll give ne'er a thought to the danger o't, and probable the missus 'ull give half a dozen in the wrong direction, but it 'ull be *me* as 'ull have to watch an' wait. No, I'll say no more—the smallest hole is the soonest patched. Don't you trouble your little head ower it all. I'll look out on 'em, an' they'll have to be awful sharp to bewitch me. Now run along, little missie, or I'll never see my work o'er this day if I stand palaverin' aboot the place."

"Indeed, you had better not say any more, Bassett," cried Edith, flushing an indignant crimson, "or I shall be obliged to complain to mamma, and she will be extremely angry. I trust that you know your duty sufficiently well not to be rude to my cousins."

"Oh, aye, missie; I'll be *awful* polite to 'em!"

And with this ominous answer Edith was forced to be content, or, at least, to desist from any further efforts to change the opinions of old Bassett; for he walked away from the flower-bed, wheeling a barrow containing the selected geraniums, and humming a hymn-tune in a lugubrious tone—a way of relieving his feelings which he frequently adopted.

Abbeylands itself was preparing a splendid welcome for the new-comers: laying out glorious tints and shades, budding and blossoming with daisy-covered fields, fresh green foliage, and many-coloured roses. June sunshine and soft summer winds were vying with each other to promote the happiness of Nature's life, and of man's less harmonious existence.

Edith's thoughts were occupied constantly with the great change which was to take place in her life. Sleeping and waking, she dreamed of these new relations; at one moment clothing them with every possible grace and beauty, at the next facing the disappointment which she would have to suffer if they were not as charming as her ideal cousins.

Poor little Edith! She was very childlike: and were not these two beings to be more to her than anyone in the world, except "mother" and "Cousin Arthur"?

"When will Wednesday come?" she sighed. "No week ever passed so slowly."

But Time, though he seems a laggard in the eyes of impatient mortals, is invariably exact; and the Wednesday for which Edith had been longing came at last, bright and unclouded, to Aberstone.

CHAPTER III.

"AT what time will they be here, mother?"

Edith was standing in the drawing-room as she anxiously put this question, and Mrs. Weir, looking worn and frail, was lying on a sofa near the open

"'Look ye round, miss—look at them fields.'"—*p. 52.*

window. It was just growing dusk, and the clock on the mantelpiece pointed not far from eight o'clock.

"You may expect them at any minute now, dear; the train must have been in the station half an hour ago. But, Edith, how often shall I have to warn you against being so impatient? You have been restless and idle all day long, and have been watching the hands of the clock for at least the last two hours. My darling, try to remember that, no matter what these two young people may be like, we are receiving them into our home because they are friendless and alone. It is not for our pleasure that they are coming, but for their own good. The more you realise that it is your *duty* to welcome them, the simpler will be the task."

"But, mother, it is such a strange event. I had no idea a few weeks ago that such a thing could possibly occur, or that home would ever be any different; and now—now it is quite impossible to tell what may happen. Oh!" cried Edith, springing to the window, and looking out eagerly through the parted curtains into the dusk beyond, "I hear wheels coming down the carriage-drive. The waiting will soon be over, for they are coming. I can see the luggage, and someone—I don't know who—in the brougham. Mother, will you go out into the hall and meet them?"

The last sentence was spoken in a lower tone of voice, as the girl turned from the window and crossed the room towards the door. She was on the very verge of making the discovery for which she had longed. In another moment the new relations would be received into the family circle, never again to be looked upon as strangers; and at the last minute Edith lost courage, feeling all the shy embarrassment of a school-girl. She wished to be ready to welcome her cousins to Abbeylands; she had thought out at

least a dozen "first words" to address to them, but at the critical moment not one sentence came to her aid; she felt awkward and diffident, and was anxious to shelter herself behind her mother. But Mrs. Weir, who had not felt sufficiently well to drive to the station, rose slowly from her sofa, and before she could reach the door it opened to admit the brother and sister. Edith had scarcely time to glance at the new-comers before her mother's voice broke the silence, saying—

"And you are Lilian? My dear, I am sorry we did not know each other earlier."

A man's voice replied—

"Thank you very much, Aunt Mary; we are delighted to accept your kind invitation. This is your daughter?—How do you do, Miss Weir?"

Edith shook hands, feeling painfully conscious that her cheeks were crimson with excitement.

"Miss Weir!" She had never thought of him as "Mr. Bristol!" He had always been "Hector," usually "Brother Hector!" This was indeed a different meeting from the one she had imagined—she standing awkwardly silent between a tall dark man and an equally tall fair girl. Where were the eager questions, the embraces, and, above all, the graceful speeches which she had expected? She remembered, at last, one of the imaginary sentences, in which she had expressed her delight at seeing her cousins at Abbeylands, and said how dearly she hoped they might be able to love each other; but how could she say such words to this man and woman?

She merely said, "I am very well, thank you;" and then, turning to Lilian, "I—I am afraid you must be very tired."

"Yes, I am a little tired; but it was not so long a journey as I thought we should find it."

"The country is looking very pretty now. Did you notice the wood you passed through up the lane? The trees are so beautiful."

Lilian looked down with some surprise, slightly smiling at Edith's shy attempt at conversation.

"No, I did not observe it. We have not lived in the country, so I have not been used to noticing such things. We passed through the village, I think, for I remember seeing some lights in cottage windows."

With some hesitation Edith began again—

"Wouldn't you like to take off your hat? Will you let me show you your room?"

"Thank you; I should be glad to do so."

The little daughter of the house opened the door, crossed the hall, and mounted the broad oak-panelled staircase, followed by the "Cousin Lilian" for whose arrival she had so longed, but at whom she had hardly ventured to look, and led the way to the front room of the west wing.

It was a bower which a queen might have envied. The blue-and-white hangings, the bowl of flowers upon the dressing-table, the water-colour drawings on the wall, all these had been Edith's work. She had re-arranged every piece of furniture at least half a dozen times: her hands had helped to deck the fire-place with ferns and geraniums; she had selected the coloured scarves tying back the curtains; had thought out the most minute decoration with loving anxiety that everything should be bright and pretty to greet this new sister—a girl not many years older than herself, who would feel strange, perhaps, when facing relations whom she had never seen.

So Edith had thought; and yet she stood timidly waiting for the stranger to speak first, stealing shy glances at the tall form and handsome face of this "sister" who was to be her intimate friend, her *confidante*, from whom she was to have no secrets, who was to share with her in everything.

Utterly unconscious of the attention and curiosity which she was exciting, Lilian Bristol stood before the cheval-glass, brushing smooth some coils of her fair hair which had got disarranged in travelling.

She was not thinking of Edith at the moment, but of a scheme which, as yet, was lying *in embryo* within her brain—a scheme with which the reader will one day be made acquainted. Her eyes, as they met their reflection in the mirror, were untroubled by any of the "strangeness" which the little cousin had imagined. They were deep blue eyes, toning in half-light to purple—eyes which seemed almost out of place in her pale face. It was difficult to believe that she could be passionate till one noticed the over-full red lips, which gave rare life to her face, or observed the nervous grasp of her fingers, and the abrupt movements of her long white neck, which rose out of a dark velvet collar as a lily rises from the sheath of its glossy leaves.

At last she caught sight of Edith waiting silently beside her, and as she turned from the glass, laid her hand on her shoulder caressingly, saying, with an imperious gesture, as of one accustomed to obedience—

"Tell me—were you very angry when you heard we were coming to Abbeylands?"

Edith was lost in astonishment at the mere suggestion, and expressed her surprise most unmistakably.

"Oh, how could you think that I should be angry? I was very pleased. I have always wanted so much to know you; and I thought," she added slowly, "I thought we might get to love each other in time. I hope you will not think me too young, Cousin Lilian."

"Young? You are a mere child, dear: but it suits your style to be young, and one does not limit one's affection to human beings who have attained maturity. I shall the more readily swear an eternal friendship owing to the difference in our ages, if that is what you mean. But are you sure we shall like each other?"

"I think we must like each other if we make up our minds to do so. I do not know why, but I have always thought that it would be easier to be fond of Hector, because I have always longed so for a brother; but then I did not expect that you would be so—so——"

"So what?" questioned Lilian, laughing lightly.

"I think I was going to say so much older than I had fancied you would be. I had imagined you as quite a girl!"

"I must say your present opinion is less flattering than your imagination."

"Oh no! It is so much better to be a woman," said Edith.

"To be a woman! At what age does one attain that honourable estate? You little goose! Do you think grey hairs admirable, and wrinkles as so many marks of excellence? Yes, I suppose. My little cousin, I begin to understand how it was that you were pleased instead of angry at the prospect of having your home invaded by a host of impoverished relations. You are sufficiently innocent of the world and its wicked ways to be fearless of rivalry—unsuspicious of the motives of your fellow-creatures—and, childlike, you are attracted by the novelty of our arrival, which, after a few short weeks, you will probably bitterly regret."

As Lilian paused she raised her eyes and glanced at the girlish face bending so eagerly near her own. There was a flush of pain, and something rather like a tear-drop on Edith's freshly tinted oval cheek, and her lips were parted in their anxiety to contradict her cousin's astounding propositions. She was indeed a fair young creature, different in style from the "Lunnon lady," to use old Bassett's words, and wanting many of the attractions of dress which made Lilian Bristol present such a perfect *ensemble*. Her brown hair rested carelessly upon her shoulder, and even in the evening was only caught back by a simple white ribbon; and yet, from the slight row of pearls which clasped her neck to the dainty slippers peeping from beneath her white skirt, there was not an ornament or a detail which could have been altered with advantage. She was a happy, sunny English girl, gifted with no ordinary degree of beauty. With a movement at once graceful and impulsive, she clasped her arms about her cousin's neck, giving her the welcoming kiss which had been long ready for her reception.

"Oh, Cousin Lilian, you must be laughing at me! You do not think, do you, that I shall be so fickle as to love you for only a few weeks? Oh, no; we must care for each other as long as we live, because, you know, we are real relations."

"Very distant relations," laughed the elder girl, returning the embrace. "It is well you should remember that we are something more than strangers, or people will be putting all kinds of suspicions into your innocent mind, little heiress of Aberstone. You will be told on all hands that we want your money, not your love."

"You have caught the name Cousin Arthur gives me for fun. Isn't it foolish? But I don't think I care much about being an heiress. You will come down soon, will you not, Lilian? I think I must go now, or mother will be wanting me. She is not strong to-day, and I must do all I can for her."

"I will follow you in a few minutes."

Edith ran merrily down-stairs into the dining-room, expecting to see her mother, but Mrs. Weir was not there. The girl glanced round in surprise, and at first thought the room unoccupied, until, looking between the *portière* curtains into the conservatory beyond, she caught sight of a hand just raised to pluck a scented oleander. Another moment and the fragile stalk was snapped. Mr. Bristol was about to place it in his button-hole when he turned and saw Edith beside him.

"Oh, Cousin Hector, let me do that for you!"

"It is very kind of you, Miss Weir."

"Please don't call me Miss Weir!" cried the girl, looking up into his face with a smile, "or I shall think you will never grow to like me. In Lilian I have found a dear sister, and you—you will be my brother, will you not? I have always longed for one!"

Hector Bristol could hardly believe that his ears had heard aright: that this child—one of his natural enemies, as he had always been accustomed to consider her—a connection by marriage of those Weirs who had owned all the family property, and had always slighted his father and himself—that this child should be looking up into his face on this the first evening of their acquaintance and pleading for his affection, was a surprise as great as it was pleasing. Could she be in earnest? Or was she in reality, from her position as mistress of Abbeylands, jealous of his claims, such as they were? He glanced at her face, and at the earnest grey eyes which met his without a thought of harm; he could not believe that she was false, even with the often-condoned falseness of "society"; he remembered that she could hardly have practised social deceptions in Aberstone, a place of such primitive simplicity. He took one of the small hands which were busy arranging the flower in his coat, and giving it an affectionate pressure, said gaily: "I am sure there is no being on earth or elsewhere who would not be flattered by your request, Edith."

"I am so glad you think so!" she answered. "You are both very good to me, and I think I ought to be very grateful to you."

"Grateful? No; it is for us to feel gratitude. I am painfully conscious of our position, and if you were not very generous you would not wish to be associated with our difficulties and misfortunes."

"How can you talk so? We were sorry when we heard you were in debt, but mother wants——" But here Edith paused, wondering whether it would be right, without Mrs. Weir's consent, to divulge their scheme for paying Hector's creditors. "Mother wants you to forget all about trouble, now that you have come home, and only to remember that all the past has gone out of your life for ever. Oh," she cried impetuously, "you don't know how good mother is! She is never different—always kind and patient; and she will be your mother too—won't she, Hector?"

"Perhaps Mrs. Weir will not be pleased to receive me as a son."

"I am sure she will. Cousin Hector, turn your face to the light. I can hardly see you where you are, and I want to look at my new brother."

Mr. Bristol obeyed her, stepping forward into a broad belt of light which fell like a golden pathway on the pavement of the conservatory. Tall, erect, with a face whose pale complexion was untinged by even the slightest flush on the cheeks; dark hair, growing, perhaps, too low upon a smooth high forehead; eyes light brown in colour, but so deeply sunken beneath well-marked brows that they appeared almost black—he was a man for whom a girl of Edith's nature could not fail to feel admiration. She delighted in beauty, and he was undeniably handsome. She revered intellect (feeling all a schoolgirl's enthusiasm for that power of mind which,

apart from purity of motive, is sometimes a gift of doubtful value); and she felt instinctively sure that her cousin was "clever" beyond most men; she could read ability in his keen eyes. This newly found brother was, indeed, her ideal. She would not have been disappointed had he been plain, or even ugly,

"It is very nice for you to be so fond of each other. I hope you will both be happy here."

"I don't think much of my time must be spent at Abbeylands, Edith. You forget that I am seeking for some means of livelihood—some occupation which will enable me to pay off my debts and make a home for

"'Cousin Hector. let me do that for you.'"—*p.* 55.

for she had heard the saying that ugly men are often born to be great; yet it was a delight to her innocent fancy that he should prove to be so good-looking.

Having completed her scrutiny, she exclaimed—

"Thank you, cousin; now I know you better. I think Lilian is wonderfully beautiful!"

"My sister? Well, I sincerely hope that you and she may be friends: that you may learn to be much to each other. I can never tell you all that Lilian has been to me. I owe her more than I can ever say."

my sister. Work is not easy to find, but I must take what I can get. You know the old saying: 'Beggars must not be choosers!'"

"I don't think mother wants you to go away, Cousin Hector. This is to be your home, if you are willing to stay. Old Bassett says that London people are never fond of the country, but I hope that is not true."

Hector refrained purposely from any further mention of the creditors who were eagerly awaiting his

return to town, partly from a feeling of delicacy in speaking of money matters to a girl whose fortune he might be supposed to envy, and partly because he doubted whether, if these relations intended to offer to pay those same creditors, it would not be easier to accept the proposal gratefully if it were made by Mrs. Weir rather than by Edith. He had no desire to refuse generosity which would free him from such annoyances as he had lately suffered, and set him up once more in life, in a position of independence; but he did not care to appear in an unfavourable light before his little cousin. Influenced by these reasons, he caught eagerly at the turn which she herself had given to the conversation, and exclaimed—

"Old Bassett! Who is old Bassett?"

"How strange it is," cried Edith, "to think that you don't know him at all! And I am sure I do not know how to describe him. Shall I tell you what he does? He looks out the flowers for the house, and oversees the gardeners. Sometimes he drives us, but not often, because he is getting old and rheumatic; and he feeds Bessie, my own horse, for fear she might be neglected. Then he goes to Marchester to buy any little things we may want, and he buys the cows and pigs and poultry, grows the grapes, comes out with me when I ride, and wheels mother in her chair when she is not strong enough to walk. Oh! there are countless little things about the place that he thinks no one can do but himself. And, last of all, having known me all my life, he lectures me whenever he likes, tells mother all she ought to do about the cottages and the rents, and grumbles incessantly about the weather. Poor old Bassett! I laugh at him often because he says such funny things and thinks so much of himself; but we should be really grieved to lose him—he is so good and true, in spite of his strange ways."

"Then I suppose he must be a kind of privileged bailiff?"

"Yes, perhaps. I must take you to see him tomorrow; you will be so much amused."

"And what made this old Bassett imagine that we town people are incapable of appreciating the country?"

"He was talking about it," answered Edith, with some hesitation. "He said that nothing beautiful in nature, neither the sky, nor the flowers, nor the birds, would please a 'Lunnon man'; that you would only like——"

"Everything bad, I suppose," said Hector, colouring angrily. "That is the worst of old servants: they usurp the right of criticism, which ought only to belong to their betters; they imagine that their low-bred remarks are wonderfully sarcastic, and are never better pleased than when they are defaming men and things which are as far above their comprehension as the moon and stars."

Edith looked up surprised, but tried to soothe her cousin's vexation by saying gently—

"I don't think poor old Bassett meant to be rude, and I am sure he would not defame anyone. You must remember, Cousin Hector, that he is quite privileged, for we should never be angry with his odd ways, knowing so well that he only speaks crossly now and then, when he is out of temper. Don't you think it is right to overlook little faults in a person who you know possesses a great many virtues?"

"Very likely you are right," said Hector. "I cannot be expected to know old Bassett's virtues."

"Oh, cousin! you are quite vexed. I am so sorry. I am afraid I must have expressed what I meant very badly. Perhaps I ought to have said that I think everyone has a right to his own opinions, even when they are criticisms."

"I suppose this old man resents our presence at Abbeylands," said Hector, moodily pulling at his moustache; "he thinks it is *his* duty to uphold the honour of the family. It is a great mistake that old traditions, which are meant to increase the nobleness of future ages, should be used for the purpose of creating narrow-minded distinctions between members of the same family—distinctions which are as unworthy as they are foolish."

"It is too bad of you to talk so, Cousin Hector. No one is thinking of the past but you. We only want you to be happy at Abbeylands—to live here all your lives, if you like; and yet you will drag out the old quarrel, and try your best to make us both miserable about it. I did not think you would be so unreasonable."

"I am afraid, Hector, that you and my little girl are quarrelling."

Mrs. Weir had approached the door of the conservatory, and was looking with surprise from one of the young people to the other. Both their faces looked flushed and eager; he was frowning slightly at his own countenance mirrored in the still water of the fountain; she was delivering her first lecture to her new cousin with a good deal of spirit, and something very like a tear was sparkling on her lashes.

"Oh no, mother, we were not quarrelling—were we, Hector?"

"No, Aunt Mary; I was only telling your daughter that I resent being looked upon as deservedly an outcast because of my father's misfortunes."

But Mrs. Weir, as peace-maker, interrupted him, laying a motherly hand upon his arm.

"My dear boy, do not commence your new life here by harbouring suspicions of our motives towards your sister and yourself. We are willing and anxious to make you all the amends in our power for any neglect in the past. I myself hope, with all my heart, that you may spend long and happy lives here."

All traces of vexation disappeared from Hector Bristol's face, and Edith's was bright with smiles.

"Mother, you always know what is best to say."

"Indeed, Aunt Mary, I did not mean to associate *you* with any idea of the old animosity: *you* are almost too kind; and as for my little cousin here, she has promised to accept me for a brother."

"Cousin Hector," said Edith, "I didn't mean to be cross. You don't think me very disagreeable, do you?"

"No, Edith; it was all a foolish mistake of mine. I feel sure that I shall bear a grudge all the days of my life against that privileged philosopher known as 'old Bassett,' for having caused the misunderstanding."

"Poor old Bassett!" laughed Edith merrily, as she

followed her cousin out of the conservatory. "I am afraid he has taken a dislike to you especially; but never mind *his* opinions; *we* will never misunderstand each other again, will we, Hector?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE first evening after the Bristols' arrival passed speedily away with mutual pleasure, for Mrs. Weir and her daughter were only anxious to like their guests, and Hector and Lilian were agreeably surprised to find that their relatives had none of the proud, overbearing ways with which they had endowed them in their thoughts. Lilian especially had been prepared to cordially dislike these people who were holding out a helping hand to her brother, thereby laying him under a lifelong obligation to be grateful for their aid. She had felt the most utter aversion to the proposed visit to Abbeylands, and yet it was impossible to resist the influence of this kind mother and daughter. She watched Edith's manner during dinner, noticing keenly the girl's innocently merry words, half expecting at every turn of the conversation to detect some of that unamiable haughtiness which she had expected to find in that last and most-favoured member of the Weir family. But as the evening went on it was visible, even to her prejudiced eye, that her little cousin was acting no part—indeed, was incapable of disguising her feelings in any matter, whether of great or little importance. Lilian observed also that it was to Hector she most frequently appealed, telling him stories, often touched with a spice of mimicry, of the old people of the village, making fun of their peculiarities, and then pausing regretfully in the middle of some more than usually laughable tale, to make little excuses for the very oddities which she was describing. Certainly her conduct was not that of a person who had an unfriendly feeling towards any inhabitant of the universe. Puzzled, and not a little bewildered, Lilian was forced to trust one whom she had expected to dislike.

And what of Hector? His suspicions also were lulled to rest. He had entered Abbeylands as a schoolboy enters the master's room when deserving a scolding; he felt himself to be more or less the black sheep of the family—the spendthrift whose follies had at last forced him into a position of humiliation. His sister had always been his friend; nay, more, his discreet ally. She was ready, he knew, to be his protector, so far as lay within her woman's power; but he had dreaded facing new relations, to whom his embarrassments were known, who were the only people in the world to whom he could apply for assistance. He had expected severe blame—had been prepared to resent fiercely any attempt at dictation on his aunt's part, and he had found her a kind-hearted, gentle woman, whom to see was almost to love. She was completely satisfied with the plea which he put forward (not without some qualms of conscience) that his debts were chiefly due to liabilities contracted in his profession.

"I was obliged to spend a great deal of money over my invention—the improvement in magazine rifles. I believe it ought to have been accepted with enthusiasm by the authorities at the War Office; but they did not think so, Aunt Mary, and so I am a good deal out of pocket by it."

This had been his explanation of the amount of debt which he had contracted, and Aunt Mary, simple woman, believed him.

There was some truth in the tale—that small amount of truth which satisfies consciences that have grown somewhat blunted by experience—for Hector would have scorned to lie; so the unsuspecting aunt and innocent cousin were more than half inclined to consider him a much-wronged hero—a genius whose worth no man had the wisdom to recognise.

This evening, therefore, which each one had dreaded for his or her particular reason, became a joy to one and all. Seated round the open window, they drank in the cool night air, chatting quietly in the moonlight, and enjoying that sense of home which is perhaps an Englishman's happiest feeling—the knowledge that care and unrest are for the moment laid aside, and that the sacred tie of kinship hallows even a glance or a sigh.

"I hope I shall not disturb you. Are you all asleep, that you did not hear my step on the gravel? Confess, Edith, that you heard a faint rustle, and thinking it one of your favourite ghosts, were too much alarmed to speak."

"Oh no, Cousin Arthur; I didn't hear anything. You must have been trying to frighten us. How good of you to come up to-night! Now you must welcome your new cousins."

Mr. Ford was only a young man, but in Aberstone his youth was not considered. His grave manner and work-worn face deceived many into the belief that grey locks would have suited him better than his own fair curls; while the country labourers, who resented his interference with their enjoyment of tap-room cheer, spoke of him often, somewhat disparagingly, as "the old minister." In spite, however, of the rebellious instincts of some among his flock, he was very happy at Aberstone, not wishing for promotion, not minding the hard work which fell to his share. He was unmarried; but he could always tell his troubles to his aunt, Mary Weir, and he loved his little cousin Edith "almost as a father," as he often said.

Indeed, this very affection had led him to doubt his aunt's wisdom in bringing the new-comers into contact with her unsophisticated little daughter: Lilian, who, to judge from her letters, entertained no friendly feeling towards her relations at Abbeylands; and, worse still, Hector, who was known to be extravagant and idle, and was the son of a spendthrift father. With every possible motive for so doing, might not this young man be tempted to make love to his little half-cousin? and might not Edith be wooed for her wealth rather than for her sweet self?

These had been the Vicar's fears; nevertheless, he smilingly entered the room and extended a hand to each cousin, with a cordiality which was not feigned, although he disapproved of their visit. To make the best of what could not be avoided, to allow no mere prejudice to influence his feelings towards a fellow-creature, these were two of Mr. Ford's favourite

maxims; and he was all the more anxious to "make the best" of the Bristols, for the very reason that he had been averse to their coming.

"I thought you would be kind enough not to look upon me as an intruder, even on this first evening of your home-coming, Miss Lilian!—And you, Mr. Bristol—do you like the prospect of exchanging town for country life?"

"Of course I am charmed to visit Abbeylands."

"But possibly you do not care for the country?"

"I do not know how I could fail to like it, in such charming company."

It was no fault of Arthur Ford's that he was unaccustomed to the light, half-bantering conversation of which his more worldly cousin had learned the value. Though a gentleman in every sense of the word, he had never mixed in "society," and that Hector, from the depths of an easy-chair, should speak with a smile and a nonchalant coldness of the kindness of Mrs. Weir and Edith seemed to him to denote that their friendliness, which ought to have been accepted as a favour, was about to be exacted as a right. Before he had time to reply, however, Edith broke in upon the conversation in her pretty, impetuous way.

"Hector is going to grow fond of the country, I am sure, Cousin Arthur. To-morrow I am going to take him to see the stables. I know gentlemen always like that. And then he will ride—won't you, Hector? You will take Lilian and me for a ride all round the county. I have never been able to go far with old Bassett, because he was so slow; but we shall be able to go anywhere we like. Oh, it will be glorious! Then we can fish in the Thorpe, and have tennis, and play and sing. I am so glad you have come!" she cried impulsively, holding out her hands to her cousins. "It used to be dull sometimes—just sometimes, you know, when mother could not come out; and the days used to be rather long in winter—but all that is over *for ever*, now that you have come home."

"Thank you, dear. It is very kind of you to say so," answered Lilian; and then a silence fell upon the little group. Each was wondering what would be the result of their meeting—whether peace and mutual liking, or discord and animosity. Lilian, too, was thinking out a special plan of her own, brooding over her own particular castle in the air, and building it tall and strong with the bricks and mortar of imagination. It was a scheme which pleased her well, which would benefit all concerned in it (so she thought), and which, above all, would be the making of her brother's life: that brother to whom she had devoted all the passionate love of which, cold and unemotional though she appeared, she was yet capable. From her corner she glanced alternately at Hector and at Edith. She was quite lost to her surroundings, unconscious of the silence, unconscious of the glint of moonlight which played across her face, until her wandering looks attracted the attention of Mr. Ford. For a moment her glance wavered beneath his, and she felt sure that he had read her thoughts, was aware of her scheme, and would thwart it if possible. Then there arose within her that all-absorbing spirit of resistance which lies dormant in the breast of every man, woman, and child, only awaiting the touch of circumstance to burst into the flood-tide of its life—that spirit which can prompt actions or words often entirely contrary to the character of the person influenced: that power which, once acknowledged, must be absolute. And Lilian's defiant impulse was not the result of mere rebellion, although her nature did not easily brook contradiction. It was the outcome of hours of anxious thought: all her endeavours to penetrate the mystery of the future had resulted in this one idea. Therefore it was that, thinking—and perhaps rightly—that Arthur Ford had guessed her secret, and would seek to hinder the fulfilment of her wishes, her love for the brother whom she sought to serve, as well as her own pride, was aroused. "No!" she cried in her heart. "These people have kind ways and pleasant faces, but we have been wronged none the less because they have chosen to smile on us at last; and in spite of their most strenuous opposition Hector shall one day be master of Abbeylands: not a poor relation, whose presence is tolerated out of charity!"

That look might have been Mr. Ford's first impression of her. He was startled to find how beautiful she was, and a sudden feeling of compassion seized him for this young girl, but a short while ago so friendless.

He leaned forward to speak to her.

"I hope we may be very good friends some day," he said, "when you know us all better."

She murmured a reply which was scarcely audible, glancing up at him with a wistful expression in her large eyes; and the Vicar, as he walked home that night down the quiet country lanes, thought long of Lilian Bristol.

(To be continued.)

THE "OTHER SIDE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE," "GLEANINGS AFTER HARVEST," ETC. ETC.

"DON'T scare the birds away." This was our text in a paper which recently appeared in these pages.

No; the birds must not be scared away. But there is something to be said for the bird-keepers. *Audi alteram partem!*

Sometimes the young people are apt to be very hard on the elders. True, it is difficult for them to understand our solicitude for them—our anxious, yearning love. That which we forbid with a wistful aching reluctance in the forbidding, seems to them a dear delight capriciously held back. That which we *must*

insist upon, though we feel more than the pain that we cause, seems to them a hardship inflicted from mere tyranny. Do they not seem sometimes to think that the elders *enjoy* inflicting disappointments?

Some parents may. I cannot conceive it. Let me recall a homely illustration. When I was *obliged* to punish, say, by cutting off the second help of pudding from the little folk, I remember that I always made the *first* help so big that no youthful capacity could have managed aught further in the way of food. They never surmised it, nor found me out. *Now* we talk of it, and they tell me how they used to crow over the thing, and say afterwards: "*We could not have eaten any more, even if we might have had another help!*"

Apropos of this, I recall an incident. A nephew of mine (now a doctor in good practice) had come under this pudding-penalty. Pudding-time came—a peculiarly desired pudding, as it fell. Then one of the best practical applications happened that I ever heard of—an application of a sermon. "*Oh, father!*" the child broke out, "*Oh, father! in your sermon on Sunday you did say, 'Until seven times seven.'*" He had the pudding.

But to resume. How the old folk *value* little attentions, little services: and how often these are, by the young, foregone. The old fellow goes down to his morning prayers, now, all by himself. The toddling feet that used to try to keep up with his stride toddle other ways now. But it would cheer him to have the sympathy of his young people in the empty church, in which yet he intercedes for the absent.

I am glad that I can recollect one small attention paid by me, when a boy, to my father. He always used to take a little turn before breakfast in the garden. He, I knew, dearly loved a companion in that walk. Often have I hastened my dressing—it may be, I hope, have risen earlier for the purpose—to join him in that perambulation: to point out this or that new flower, which otherwise he might not have noted—to be just his companion; very little said, it might be.

Verily, the old folk (if they are worth aught) are ever intently thinking upon the young, concerning their future, their present, their past, in some degree. We *ache* over them. We long for their best welfare. The careless word, the heedless act—they shudder our being.

But then, how often our solicitude only wearies them. We are "always fussing." They "wish we would be like so-and-so, not so over-particular." They do not give us credit for sensitive desire to do the best for them.

Yet, what love can compare with that of a parent? If anyone tires in this compact, it is they of us, not we of them. They marry, and ten to one, disappointment, disillusion, wait upon the venture. But there the parents are, at any rate, always with a welcome "home." Home, aye, *home!* For that is the one real home—the home which we had in our youth: the fairyland of life—the abode of all life's opening wonders, of its untried delights, of its new loves. The love of a parent has no passion in it. It does not tire. It knows not satiety. It is, from the first to the last, courtship. There is no marriage in it. It is ever a wooing love. What blandishments are used to win the small patter-toes to the study, in the morning of babe-life! How careful we have to be in the later years not to scare the birds away!

Few parents enough enjoy the child-stage of their children's life: when all you do or say is right: when you are the cleverest and best being in the whole world: when Shakespeare cannot beat your poetry, nor Millais your painting, nor Beethoven your music: when to be with you is uttermost bliss: to sit by you, say, at a concert, to hold your hand: when, on your intending a walk, to your self-complacent "*Quis?*" there is a tumultuous uni-voice of "*Ego!*"

Later on, it may be, they, if you sit between them at, say, a concert, speak across you to one another, and not to you. Or it is *pleasure*-talk to one another, only *duty*-talk to you. And you mostly go for your walk alone. Why should you complain? You do not. No; it must be so. Like to like. You are in the old world; they in the new. They know your stories by heart. Your jokes are more than twice told. In your morbid mood you jot down (unjustly) their supposed relief when you are gone:—

His silly old jokes they are over,
  His grumbling and grizzling are past;
Above him are daisies and clover,
  For his "dear ones" there 's freedom at last.

Our Sundays? We 'll e'en do as others;
  Our talk? Well, we 'll spice it with slang.
If we *do* spill some "Hang its!" and "Bothers!"
  There 's no one to suffer a pang!

There 'll be no one to worry and tell us
  Whatever we do that is bad,
Or plague when we 're selfish or jealous,
  By looking so tiresomely sad.

Thus you picture them thinking, until there comes to them the sad experience of later years. And then you imagine a change coming, too late for comfort to the kind stilled heart:—

We love to remember our father,
  Who left us some three years ago;
We gladly put by our "We 'd rather,"
  While his liking and wishes we know.

Little words, little thought of returning,
  Bear with them a pathos unique,
The meaning we 're gradually learning
  Of what to us youngsters was Greek.

Fat and lean our Great Father provides us,
  And we pick it in daintiest mood;
A voice from the past fondly chides us,
  And says: "*Eat it up; it's all good!*"

The "*Don't's*" and the "*Do's*" vexed us rather,
  But now we can see, later on,
How the tender regard of a father
  Watched above us in days that are gone.

"There 's one thing that 's needful," he told us,
  "But one worthy and adequate choice,"
If we make it, and he can behold us,
  How his tender old heart will rejoice!

In the days of our youth we 'll remember
  Our God, to our Saviour we 'll cling;
So when May has become dull November,
  Be but nearer the Infinite Spring.

Poor old father! will he know about us,
  And his eyes grow with happiness dim?
Ah! we know that even heaven without us
  Would never be heaven for him!

So you ease your heart in some bitter mood. But you left the paper carelessly on your desk; it was read, and the girls came to you with upbraiding and with flooding tears. You feel that you are a brute, a monster. They love you really more dearly than ever; but the youth and the maiden cannot be to you the same as the child. Here, also,

"The old order changeth, giving place to new."

They are no longer dependent upon you for all nourishment and delight of mind and body; they cannot but perceive your shortcomings of the ideal of their childhood. You have attained the land of Experience, which is sad; they are but entered into the land of Anticipation, which is glad. They are Optimists, utterly; to them you appear to be an unreasonable Pessimist. *Their* companion is the bright spirit, Hope; *your* attendant shade is sad-eyed Memory, sister-spirit to Regret. All the world is before *them* where to choose; but *you* are passing on to that little corner of it in which awaits you the quiet grave. *They* look forward to great deeds to do, ever-new worlds to conquer; *you* look back upon what is, or seems,

"The petty done, the undone vast,"

and upon a campaign in which the defeats were many, the victories few. They are just leaving harbour, flags flying, vessel taut, crowded bunting; you are making your way to that other port, a battered hull, "torn sails, provision short, and only not a wreck." Or they are the new saucy cruisers; you the old 'Fighting *Téméraire*,' crippled and out of date, being towed into the last harbour. It is with them the full flush of youthful Spring; it is with you Autumn's "sere and yellow leaf," with only gleanings left after harvest. And though age may be "frosty but kindly," how should it find itself always welcome in the garden of youth at blossom-time?

No, we will not be unreasonable; we will stand in the doorways or lean against the wall, and watch the young folk at their games. We will not be too obtrusive in our chaperoning as we pass them sitting out on the stairs. A bright look thrown to us now and then, a few words said on loitering heel: these will content us. A man shall leave Father and Mother, and shall cleave to his Wife, and the fair bride, with April in her bright eyes, shall leave the home bare. It is all right and *comme il faut;* well, they know that if the new loves fail the old will be faithful. Let them come back whenever they can, and let the grandparents re-commence with the grandchildren the blandishments and wooing which they lavished on their own little ones in "the days which are no more."

But let the young give deference to the old; let them be careful and particular in their graceful little attentions; let them give regard to their reasons; and even where these are not, to the young mind, convincing, let them allow to themselves the possibility that grey experience *may* be in the right and enthusiastic youth in the wrong. Let them be indulgent to our old-world notions, our antediluvian prejudices, our straitlaced ideas. Perhaps we are right, and they may think so in the later years. The young will become old some day, if they survive life's hot battle. Let them try, even when they are young, to put themselves in our place. Now, theirs is "affluence of love and time." But the day comes when they, also, shall be glad of "the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table."

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.—LESSONS ON ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

NOVEMBER 15TH. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES.

To read—St. John xvii. 1—19. *Golden Text—Heb. vii.* 25.

INTRODUCTION. Christ having finished His words of comfort and counsel to His disciples, turns from them to God, and prays—first for Himself (1—5), then for them (6—19), and lastly for the whole Church (20—26). The prayer has been called the *Prayer of the High Priest,* now about to make atonement for the sins of the people. It was spoken aloud, probably in the Temple courts, and the very words "brought to remembrance" by the Holy Spirit to the "beloved disciple" who recorded them.

I. PRAYER FOR HIMSELF. (1—5.) Often read of Christ praying—

Before His Baptism in Jordan. (St. Luke iii. 21.)

On a hill after feeding 5,000. (St. Matt. xiv. 23.)

Before choosing Apostles. (St. Luke vi. 12.)

Notice—

The Attitude. Standing, lifting up eyes to God in confidence. Not now falling on His face, as at Gethsemane. (St. Matt. xxvi. 39.)

The Cause. The hour come for completing man's redemption.

This the last crisis in Christ's work on earth.

The Prayer. That the Son may be glorified.

How had He won a right to this glory?

By making men know God and Himself. (Ver. 3.)

By finishing the work given Him to do.

Therefore prays that His glory may be restored. (Phil. ii. 9—11.)

II. PRAYER FOR DISCIPLES. Who are they?

Men called out of the world to serve God—*e.g.*.

Four called to be fishers of men. (St. Luke v. 11.)

St. Matthew left custom-house to follow Christ. (St. Matt. ix. 9.)

What has been their training?

They have learned Christ's doctrine and mission.

They have believed in Him as the Son of God.

Recall St. Peter's confession of faith. (St. Matt. xvi. 16.)

Now Christ, about to leave them, prays for them.

Address. To God as His and their Father.

Petitions. (1) That they may be kept safe.

Reason. That Christ may be glorified in them.

(2) That they may be kept in unity.

Reason. Because God and Christ are one.

(3) That they may be kept from the evil.

Reason. Because Christ no longer with them personally.

(4) That they may be sanctified.

Reason. For the glory of God and His truth.

III. LESSONS. 1. *The beauty of finished work.*

Creation completed was "very good." (Gen. i. 31.)

Redemption completed brought glory to God. (St. Luke ii. 14.)

2. *The nature of true discipleship.* It involves—

Learning to know God.

Separation from the world.

Hatred from man, joy from God.

Sanctification through God's truth.

NOVEMBER 22ND. CHRIST BETRAYED.

To read—St. John xviii. 1—13. *Golden Text—St. Mark xiv.* 41.

INTRODUCTION. Christ's prayer ended, His last work for man begins. He has proclaimed His mission, warned sinners, given signs of His authority, called disciples out of the world, trained them to carry on His work; and now He can do no more for man but suffer for him. His hour has come, and He must go forth to His bitter end. The path of sorrow, the *via dolorosa*, must be trod, and He does not shrink from it.

I. CHRIST BETRAYED. (1—11.) Now leave words for deeds.

The place. Beyond the brook Cedron, or "Wady of the Cedars"—a dark ravine—a torrent in winter—at this time empty. David had crossed this in his flight from Jerusalem. (2 Sam. xv. 23.)

Beyond this, the garden, or olive-orchard, of Gethsemane.

Here took place agony recorded in other Gospels.

Notice. Christ "went forth" voluntarily, knowing all that lay before Him. (Ver. 4.)

Also He went, not for concealment, but for prayer.

The Band. Judas, the Apostle, the leader.

Band of Roman soldiers sent to prevent tumult.

Officers of the Levitical temple-police.

Also chief priests and elders. (St. Luke xxii. 52.)

All instigated by common hatred of Jesus.

The Incidents. Jesus comes forth from the shadow of the olive-trees, under which He had been kneeling in prayer, with His three chosen disciples.

He calmly asks, "Whom seek ye?"

They fall back—overawed by His appearance.

Question again put. Answer calmly given.

He asks that the disciples may go their way.

His request granted: He lost none (xvii. 12).

St. Peter draws his sword, wounds Malchus.

Christ heals him (St. Luke xxii. 51); rebukes Peter

Notice the conduct of the different people.

The forbearance and majesty of Jesus Christ.

The loving impetuosity of St. Peter.

The malice of Judas Iscariot.

The gratified hatred of the chief priests.

II. CHRIST A PRISONER. (12, 13.) The soldiers close in.

There has been an attempt at rescue—the prisoner must be bound.

So the captain (*i.e.*, chief-officer of the Roman cohort) takes the lead, secures Christ, leads Him to Annas, chief of the priests and president of the Jewish Sanhedrim.

Christ, who came to set men free, is bound.

Judas, the traitor, has so far succeeded.

Christ's enemies seem to prevail against Him.

III. LESSONS. 1. *From Christ.* The power of love.

While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

2. *From St. Peter.* The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Christ and His servants must suffer wrong without avenging themselves.

3. *From Judas.* To beware of covetousness.

He joined Christ for what he could get. Tried to gain by his Master's fall. His end was destruction.

NOVEMBER 29TH. CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.

To read—St. John xix. 1—16. *Golden Text—Romans iv.* 25.

INTRODUCTION. Two disciples followed Christ to the high priest's palace. St. Peter, out of curiosity "to see the end" (St. Matt. xxvi. 58). Was questioned by the servants, and three times (as Christ had foretold) denied his Master. St. John, who loved much, followed now, to be near his dear Lord. Annas, after questioning Christ, sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest that year. By him and the Sanhedrim He was tried on a charge of blasphemy, "making Himself God," and was found guilty. But the Jews no longer having the power of death, He was sent to Pilate, the Roman Proconsul. But the accusation was changed. Pilate would care little for a charge of blasphemy. So the Jews brought an accusation of *treason*—that Christ had been making Himself a king, stirring up sedition, and forbidding the Jews to pay tribute to Cæsar, the Roman Emperor. Christ showed Pilate the false nature of this charge, and convinced him that His Kingdom was not of this world. He was found "Not guilty," and Pilate sought to release Him. But the chief priests clamoured for His death.

I. CHRIST SCOURGED AND MOCKED. (1—7.) Why was Christ scourged?

Pilate had found no cause of offence in Him.

He had offered to release Him in honour of the feast (xviii. 39), but the Jews refused.

He therefore scourged Him to pacify them.

But nothing but His death would suffice.

Now the soldiers add cruel insult.

They put a crown of thorns on His head.

They put on Him a cloak of royal purple.

They bow the knee in insolent homage.

They mock Him with insulting cries.

They smite him with their cruel hands.

All this goes on inside the Prætorium.

Now Jesus is led outside and shown.

He wears prominently the crown and robe.

Pilate says, "Behold." What was there to see?

A man—whose *voice* always spake words of love.

Whose *ears* were open to every cry for help.

Whose *hands* were ever lifted to bless.

A man—the Son of man—the Son of God.

Now in direst pain, yet answers not a word.

Surely the most bitter enemies will be softened.

Not so. What do they cry? "Crucify! Crucify!"

The judge finds no fault, yet seems to yield.

II. PILATE HESITATES. (8—16.) Scene changes again to the inside of the Prætorium. Christ been brought back.

Pilate fears when he hears Christ's claim to be the Son of God.

Christ now boldly proclaims His power.

Pilate wishes to release Him, but the Jews work on his fears, and threaten his political position.

This personal fear decides him at last.

Once more he exhibits Christ in public.

Once more he appeals to the Jews.

But there is no mercy or pity with them.

So he gives Christ up to His own people, that they may give Him to Roman soldiers to be crucified. His blood was indeed on them.

III. THE LESSONS. 1. Christ suffered for us that He might bring us to God.

2. The fear of man bringeth a snare.

3. Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

DECEMBER 6TH. CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

To read—St. John xix. 17—30. *Golden Text—* 1 *Peter iii.* 18.

INTRODUCTION. Have seen Christ betrayed, mocked, scourged, pronounced innocent, yet condemned. Are now to see Him die.

I. THE CRUCIFIXION. (17—22.) Notice:

The Place. North of the city, outside the Damascus gate. (Heb. xiii. 12.) Yet nigh to the city. (Ver. 20.) Called "a skull," because of its shape. "A green hill," or knoll, at the base of the wall of the old city.

The Persons. A centurion and four soldiers, who received Him from the Jews.

The Death. Crucifixion. Roman mode of execution, reserved for slaves and lowest criminals. A death slow, torturing, but sure.

The Victims. The Lamb of God—Jesus of Nazareth.

Two others—at first both reviling, one afterwards repentant and forgiven. (St. Luke xxiii. 43.)

Jesus in the midst—reigns even on the cross.

The Title. Written by Pilate in bitter irony, as appropriate to the accusation on which Christ was condemned.

II. ENEMIES AND FRIENDS. (23—26.) Four soldiers, four women.

The soldiers divide their perquisites.

But cast lots for the toga, or outer robe.

Thus unconsciously fulfilling prophecy. (Ps. xxii. 18.)

The four holy women are as follows—

His mother, Mary, by this time a widow.

His mother's sister, Salome, mother of St. John.

Mary, wife of Cleophas, mother of James the Less and Joses. (St. Mark xv. 40.)

Mary Magdalene—healed by Christ.

John, the beloved disciple and Evangelist.

What did they all there?

They came to watch and aid, if possible.

They gave loving sympathy—did what they could.

III. WORDS FROM THE CROSS. (27—30.) (1) Christ sees His mother.

Recalls all her early care for Him.

Thinks of her present friendless state.

Commits her to the care of St. John.

She finds a home, love, and friends.

(2) Next follow the awful pain and cry of thirst.

The soldiers hear it—are moved to pity.

They give Him some of their drink.

(3) Then comes last word. What was finished?

All the types and sacrifices of Jewish ritual.

All the prophecies about Him.

All the pains and sorrows of His life.

All the redemption wrought by His death.

His work, life, atonement—all finished.

Man is saved—God is glorified.

IV. LESSONS. 1. *Man a sinner.* Seen in malice of priests, injustice of Pilate, cruelty of soldiers. Sin—the world's sin—my sin—caused Christ's death.

2. *Christ a perfect Saviour.* Loved us to the end. Gave Himself as full, perfect, and complete sacrifice for sin. Shall it be in vain for us? The thief was saved because of his repentance and faith. Shall we be lost?

DECEMBER 13TH. CHRIST RISEN.

To read—St. John xx. 1—18. *Golden Text—* *Romans viii.* 34.

INTRODUCTION. The Jews asked Pilate to break the legs of those on the cross, to hasten their death, that their bodies might not hang all night. (Deut. xxi. 22.) But Christ, being dead already, His legs were not broken, thus fulfilling prophecy. (Ps. xxxiv. 20.) Then came Joseph and Nicodemus (chap. iv. 2), and took Jesus down from the cross, wrapping His

body in linen clothes with sweet spices, and laying Him in Joseph's new family sepulchre, a round stone being rolled to close the entrance. There Christ lay till the morning of the first day of the week: *i.e.*, part of three days.

I. THE TWO DISCIPLES. (1—10.) Trace the early events of Easter Day.

Picture the tomb as sealed by Pilate. (St. Matt. xxvii. 65.)

A guard of four soldiers keeps watch.

An angel descends and rolls away the stone.

Christ rises from the dead and remains near.

Mary Magdalene comes in the dark to the tomb.

Finds the tomb empty; runs to tell disciples.

Peter and John run to the sepulchre to see.

John bends to look, but goes not in.

Peter follows and enters. What does he see?

The grave-clothes carefully and neatly folded.

They see no angel nor Christ. Why?

Because of their unbelief. So they depart.

LESSONS. *From the Stone.* No work too menial for God's messengers.

From the Grave-clothes. Let all things be done decently and in order.

From the Disciples. Patient waiting will receive reward. They left hurriedly, and missed seeing Christ.

II. MARY MAGDALENE. (11—18.) Remains at the tomb.

She weeps. Where *is* Christ, her Master?

She looks. Sees two angels keeping watch.

She listens. The angel first, and then Christ, address her.

She recognises His voice, calling her by name.

She sees. It is indeed He—her beloved Master.

She worships—clinging to Him as if she could not let Him go.

She obeys. She must not try to detain Christ. He will not ascend just yet. He has work for Himself and for her to do.

She departs with joyful message to the disciples.

III. LESSONS. 1. Notice the character of Mary.

Faithful—when even disciples were unbelieving.

Loving—last at the cross, first at the grave.

Brave—not afraid of the soldiers on watch.

Obedient—at once does as she is told.

Therefore received special blessing.

2. What does the Resurrection teach?

(*a*) There is a power greater than death.

(*b*) The same power raises the dead in sin. (Eph. ii. 1.)

(*c*) Risen with Christ, seek heavenly things. (Col. iii. 1.)

FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

A CRIPPLE boy is lying on his couch by the sea-shore, listening to the restless waves, and watching the golden clouds as they sweep past, driven by the gentle summer breeze.

His companion closes the book he has been reading aloud, and rises, with the abrupt question, "Have you been listening?"

"You know I have!"

"Well, but, my dear boy, I must confess I was absolutely oblivious myself of what I was reading. Browning always is to me as difficult to decipher as a 'semi-obliterated manuscript by flashes of lightning,' as a lecturer remarked the other day on 'Sordello.'"

"Poor Browning! how those remarks have stung him. Have you never heard how irritably he replied to a friend who quoted a passage from 'Sordello and begged for its meaning?"

A shadow passes the couch, and the boy looks up with a shy blush.

"Who is that lady?" his companion asks, gazing after the retreating figure.

"I do not know."

"She smiled at you."

"She always does—perhaps she knows how much I admire her."

"Do you?"

"I think her the most beautiful woman I have ever seen," the boy replies reverently.

"It is such a wonderful face," he goes on, raising himself, and shading his eyes to watch the sun-touched waves as they splash with musical cadence at his feet; "there is such a depth of tender sweetness in it, and such a depth of pathos."

His companion makes no remark; he is idly hitting the waves with pebbles as they draw nearer and nearer, and his thoughts have strayed from the subject.

"What an argument it is!" he ejaculates. "These little waves are full of their own individual importance. Hear what they keep saying:—'I proceed from some necessary cause, I move towards some necessary end—behold, you weak mortal, the order and fitness of all things!'"

"Thornton, I am ashamed of my dreamy mind when you talk like that. I have never the desire 'Under the word to read the Thing'—the waves are only full of Divine music to me, and I do not care to know the laws that bind them."

"Be it so," Thornton answers earnestly. "Eric, dear lad, your keener vision may well be envied by a Darwin or Huxley—to the lifelong study of Science many can devote themselves, however humbly, but the contemplation of the Supernatural is granted only to the few. But I am going to take you in; it is getting chilly."

Tenderly the doctor lifts the fragile form of his young brother in his arms, and marvels afresh at its frailty. And he knows the lad's great earnest soul is sapping hourly the little strength remaining—the sweet poetic companion who has done so much to soften his own rugged nature is fast slipping from him, and it is out of his power—oh! how bitter the thought—to keep him but a little longer.

Another day breaks in glad sunshine. What an autumn it is! Thornton Winkworth is full of spirits, in spite of the shadow at his heart.

"No Browning for me to-day," he says, settling his patient on the couch, and laying his hand gently for one moment on the boy's beautiful brow.

"Oh! Thornton! *she* is coming."

Thornton looks up with some curiosity as a girlish figure approaches them, carrying a small book and a bunch of wonderfully scented violets. There is a sweet dignity about her that comes of a graceful simplicity. But no one has quite succeeded in describing the subtle fascination of her beauty. Thornton thinks it lies in the eloquent expression of her deep, luminous eyes, as she half pauses at the couch and looks down into the boy's face in a gentle pity. Then suddenly she comes quite close, and places the violets in his hands.

"Suddenly she comes quite close, and places the violets in his hands."

"Oh, thank you!" he says warmly, brushing his lips gently across them. "I love violets so much; but I am robbing you."

She shakes her head, saying playfully—"They are much happier with you. Flowers and invalids were made for each other, I always think; there is a divine sympathy between them."

"Just as one is convinced of the secret affinity between animals and children," Thornton says, taking up her broken sentence, and adding, with his brilliant smile that is so like his brother's, "You

have made my brother perfectly intoxicated with delight for the rest of the day. Only I shall be inundated with odes to violets!"

"Are you fond of poetry *too?*" she says, and a quick shadow falls in her eyes. "I beg your pardon, but you are so like—so like"—there is a little sob in her voice, and impulsively she bends down and kisses the boy's forehead, and a glistening tear falls on the violets, and silently she turns and goes.

The brothers do not speak. Eric is a little paler, and he twists the violets nervously in his fingers.

"Thornton," he says at last, "I suppose she has lost a cripple brother. Ah me! if I had had a sister like that!"

"Yes," Thornton answers, tugging his moustache. "Poor lad! I have not done the woman part with you well."

"Oh, don't!" Eric cries. "I did not mean that. *You:* why, there never was, never could be, such a brother! *You:* who have thrown up all your splendid, self-sacrificing work for me. Thornton, all my love always has been, always will be, yours."

"Dear lad!" Thornton says, with an odd catch in his voice.

"What is that?" he cries suddenly, springing to his feet, and looking with his keen eyes down the sands. Cheer after cheer rends the air, and Eric's face flushes. "Someone is being rescued: I know it," he says. "Go, Thornton, quick!"

The doctor draws the boy's plaid closer around him, and bounds away with lightning steps, and reaches the spot where crowds are gathering round some prostrate form. A woman is shrieking in wild excitement, grasping to her breast a dripping burden. "She has saved my child, God of Mercy! but she is dead herself!"

"Make way!" Thornton says authoritatively; "I am a doctor." He kneels beside the figure of a young girl lying stiff and cold, and lays his hand upon her heart. The eyelids quiver, and a slight sigh escapes her. "That is well." Thornton rises, and, lifting her in his strong arms, he bears her away. "She's Miss Roselle—lives at the Eagle House," someone tells him; he bows his head and walks swiftly on—it is not far, and already the news has reached its inmates. An old man in a loose smoking-coat is hurrying down the path.

"Christine!" he calls excitedly. "Why, what has happened?"

"I cannot exactly tell you," Thornton replies. "Let me carry her to her room—she is coming round. . . .

"Now," he says, laying her down, and directing the maids what to do, and following the old man down-stairs, "you must send at once for your doctor. Mr. Roselle, I presume?"

"Her father; yes. But I have no doctor here. Will you not kindly undertake the case? I should be very grateful—indeed, I feel I owe you too great a debt already."

"No; I have rendered her too little service. I only came on the spot to find her lying exhausted, and apparently lifeless, from a difficult swim. She has saved some child's life, as far as I can gather."

"I wish she would leave children and their pranks alone," growls the old man. "I never know what to expect next. Only last week she was up night after night with a fisherwoman. But it was worse in London—far worse. What will you take, sir? and may I inquire your name?"

"Nothing, thank you," handing him his card. "I must hurry back to my invalid brother when I have just seen Miss Roselle again, if you really desire it."

"I do—and thank you."

"Oh, Thornton!" Eric cries, with the hectic flush burning in his cheek as his brother relates the story; "you are sure she will live?"

"Of course. It is a marvellously healthy frame. I never saw anyone come round so quickly."

"Did she look very beautiful, lying there with her wet hair?"

Thornton smiles a little, but a slight colour comes into his own face as he pulls his moustache and answers teasingly, "Well, yes, I think she did look rather well as the Tragedy Queen. Her hair was certainly wet—fell all about her in wonderful, glistening masses. She is a plucky young person. Evidently there could not have been a moment's hesitation. The child was crying lustily in its mother's arms by the fire, I found, and evidently the ducking had done him no harm. He fell from the parapet at the end of the stone pier, it seems."

"Go back," Eric says anxiously.

"Very well; but I don't think she will need much of my attention."

She does not. In a few days she is about again, and as well as ever, and she and her father are making their first call on the brothers. She devotes her whole attention to Eric, and is eager to give him any diversion in her power. "Do you like Browning?" the boy asks her; "because if you really mean it, you know, I would like you to read to me better than anything. Thornton is awfully good, but he is out of sympathy with the poets; and it makes such a difference!"

"I can but try," she says. "I have read a great deal of poetry to—to my own brother. He was so like you, Eric"—she puts back his hair from his forehead and smiles into his eyes—"and it will be the greatest pleasure to me to be with you sometimes."

And thus it is, day after day, Eric, and Christine Roselle, sit side by side in complete sympathy, as she reads hour after hour from his favourite books.

Thornton seldom interrupts. Too glad of his brother's pleasure, he leaves him, and throws his mind into the new philanthropic schemes that burn in his heart to be carried out when—— Sometimes they take the shape of a Home for Incurable Cripple Lads by the sea—sometimes he thinks he will return to his old gratuitous services among the East London

poor. Once a picture, quite uncalled for and unaccountable, presents itself to his mind—a picture of married life—and instinctively his glance flashes to the pure, noble face of the woman at his brother's side.

And they, too, are talking of their destinies.

"Suppose," Eric says, as she closes her book and they drop into a deep silence—"suppose we each tell the other what the waves are preaching? Will you tell me what they say to you?"

"I will." But she covers her eyes for a minute, and her bosom heaves. "The waves are speaking to me of the countless souls yearning for love, and with none to love them—bowed down with sorrows, and with none to pity them—struggling with doubts, with none to enlighten them—souls living in the dense mass of humankind, unknown, unnoticed—and the cry of the waves calls louder and louder, 'Go make up their account—*you* are responsible!'"

Eric meets the passion in her eyes, and his own fill with tears; and Thornton, standing at the back, has heard it all.

"You will go," he says. "All impediments will be cleared. Your courage will surmount the difficulties. It is true the world is crying for you women, such as you, and I say God-speed you."

She starts at his voice, and then she holds out her hand: "*Mon ami*, you will help me?"

His hand closes over hers, and his eyes look deep, deep into her very soul: "I will."

"Eric," she says, "your brother must not rob me of your sermon. What are the waves saying to you?"

"I must start by quoting two lines from the poet," he begins:—

> "'To suffer for Thee is our work,
> To think of Thee our rest.'

Ay, great God, every soul whom Thou hast created is capable of serving Thee! For sufferers it is given to creep along by slow, difficult stages the road of Calvary, to carry as they go bright crosses of light to point the way to those who stumble at the darkness, to falter not till they reach the Crucified and lay the burden at His feet, and there to read, at last, their acceptance in His smile—which, oh my God! shall be their consummate, eternal bliss!"

"Amen," Christine whispers in a broken voice, and Thornton earnestly echoes it.

"Suffering used to be such a mystery to me," she says by-and-bye, "and now I only see it in others. I do not know what it means, that blessedness of pain."

"But I am such a coward," Eric answers, in a low voice.—Thornton, take me in now, please, and then you will walk back with Miss Roselle. I want to watch the sunset from your window."

He gazes after these two best friends of his, with new thoughts springing to his mind.

"I see," he muses, "they are made for each other, these two souls; their response, aspirations, and powers are one. But will they come closer than this? No; she will make the sacrifice—but can she do it unknown to him?"

No, she cannot. They are pausing a minute just in the bend of the cliff to watch the sudden burst of light from the setting sun that breaks through an overcast sky, and flashes blood-red across a path of sea.

"When will you begin this—your new life?" he is asking.

"It may be soon," she answers. "My father's second marriage will shortly take place, and then I shall not have a single tie to bind me."

"May I presume to ask one other question? There is no other life you would the rather live?"

She does not answer. The glow from the sun flushes her face, but it has no colour of its own—her lips tremble, and her eyes are staring blankly out at sea.

"Christine," he goes on—and the words come hotly and madly from him—"what are we doing, you and I? Why have we met? I know, I feel, I dare to say, that your heart and mine are bound irrevocably together. You cannot deny it—look at me—speak to me."

Ay, she turns to him her pale, pale face and wide, luminous eyes—she stretches out her hands, and he locks them to his breast. And then she speaks. It is a prayer. Her eyes are raised above his to the fast gathering clouds.

"Oh, God! give me strength to do the right for us both. He will work the better without me, and I—I——Go!" she cries; "leave me here, I implore you. You have a right to be answered, but oh! have pity, and ask it not."

He bends and kisses reverently and silently her troubled eyes and quivering lips, and his manly voice is full of a conquered self.

"You shall trust me. No friend shall be a truer friend to you. God bless you, *Christine, Christine!*"

He leaves her, and the sobbing waves gently creep and kiss her feet.

* * * * * *

Four years later, in a ward of St. George's Hospital, a painful operation is being performed on a cripple boy, and the first specialist of the day, Dr. Thornton Winkworth, has been called to superintend.

It is over, and nurses and doctors smile congratulations at each other. They move away, but one of the nurses is bending over the patient, and pressing a soft kiss on his brow. Dr. Winkworth has turned involuntarily, and starts at the sight. He knows her, and speak with her he will and must. She too moves away; another nurse has returned, and she is off duty. He holds out his hand as she draws near.

"I did not know you were here; I did not see you till a minute ago."

"No; but I knew we should meet soon. I am going through the training, that is all, to help me in other work."

"Can we have no conversation?"

"Yes, if you can spare time for a walk in the Park. I am going for a little air, now."

She smiles up at him as they walk side by side, and says, with her old simplicity—

"See, I am with the greatest man in London. Ah! I know how the world is ringing with your praises. Mine have been silent, *mon ami;* but they are the warmer for the keeping. And do you know what I have said to myself as each new burst of enthusiasm has reached me?—

"'We desire,
And falter and come short; lo! here is one
In whom the strength is one with the desire.'"

"Christine," he answers—and the shadow dies in his eyes—"I care nothing, absolutely nothing, for public opinion—for the public's fickle praise that would, with the smallest atom of failure on my part, condemn me to-morrow; but to stand well in *your* eyes, it is the proudest moment of my life." There is a brief pause, and then he says—

"Tell me of yourself. You went abroad with your father after—after my boy's death?"

"Yes; we were away a year. Then my father's second marriage took place, and they returned to France. I came to London, and lived with an aunt, working in the Westminster districts until I became convinced of the necessity of medical knowledge, and entered myself at St. George's."

"It is strangely wonderful we have never met. We must manage better in the future. Once, long ago, you promised to let me help you. Have you forgotten?"

"No—but how could I ask it now? Your whole time must be absorbed——"

"It is all at your service," he smiles. "I think there are many ways in which we might work together—ay, in work where I fail me for want of the woman's heart, the woman's instinct. But you are pale, Christine, and tired. I am selfish to detain you; you must go back and rest. And yet I would like you, here and now, to read the last entry in his diary. Shall we sit on this seat?"

"Yes," she says, in a low, gentle voice. "Dear Eric! the thought of him is always in my heart." She bends her head over the little worn book he has put in her hands, and she reads:—

"Thornton and Christine have just left me. I watch them till they are out of sight. A burst of crimson light falls on her beautiful face, which she has lifted to his, and the breeze is playing in her glorious hair. And he is very splendid, my grand old brother, as he looks down upon her with that strong manly gravity. It is a great crisis for them both. They will part now for a little while, and then—ah! I know God wills their union: their union of soul with soul, their two lives that shall be made complete in one. Ah! Christine—beautiful, holy Christine, thou art rightly named, my love, *my sister!*"

She lifts her streaming eyes up through the budding trees, up to the blue sky beyond, and a beautiful blush suddenly breaks over her face and throat, and her eyes are full of a new wondrous light.

"Christine," he says, and his hand falls on hers on the open page. "Christine, will you answer me *now?*"

She bends her head lower and lower, until her lips touch his hand. It is her answer, and he is satisfied.

LILIAN STREET.

THEIR EVENING HYMN.

THE fading glory of the light
That lingers, rosy-hued and bright,
Reveals two figures in a room—
One in the flush of youthful bloom,
One with bent form and eyes grown dim—
Seated to sing their evening hymn.

And to the woman, old and grey,
The quiet ending of the day
Is sweetened by the sacred strain
Recalling vanished hours again—
Hours when her closing life was young
And the same evening hymn was sung.

"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear!"—
Surely, He deigns to enter here
To bless them, as their voices rise
In supplication to the skies!
Softly the fingers wake the keys
To music meet for words like these.

I see the girlish features bent
Above the time-worn instrument—
The aged face, almost as fair,
The frail clasped hands, the silver hair—
While, resting in the twilight dim,
They sing once more their evening hymn.

J. R. EASTWOOD.

THE PRIVILEGE OF SANCTUARY.

BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

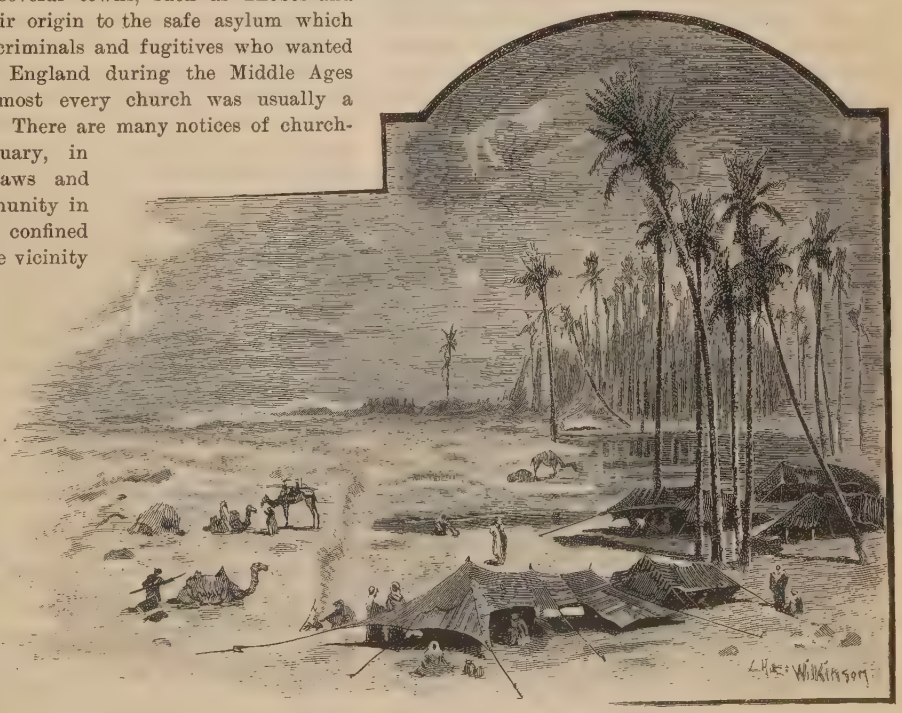
"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."—PSALM xxiii. 6.

THE SANCTUARY DOOR, DURHAM CATHEDRAL.

THE KNOCKER.

In primitive times, when men were apt to take the law into their own hands, and avenge their injuries at once upon the wrong-doer, provision was made to restrain this rude licence of punishment. Certain places, with sacred associations connected with them, were sanctuaries to which the homicide in his extremity might flee, and where he would be protected until his case should be deliberately investigated by the proper authorities. In heathen lands the temples of the gods enjoyed this privilege, which in course of time became not a mere religious sentiment, but a custom expressly defined and sanctioned by law. Several towns, such as Thebes and Rome, owed their origin to the safe asylum which they offered to criminals and fugitives who wanted protection. In England during the Middle Ages the altar of almost every church was usually a place of refuge. There are many notices of church-frith, or sanctuary, in Anglo-Saxon laws and canons; the immunity in some cases being confined to the immediate vicinity of the frith-stool, or stone chair placed near the Communion Table, and in others extended over a large area around the outside of the church. A few cathedrals, such as Ripon and Durham, had extraordinary privileges of sanctuary legally bestowed by the Sovereign. On the north door of Durham Cathedral the huge knocker may still be seen with which the breathless refugee knocked for admission; and above it are two chambers where watchmen lived for the purpose of admitting the fugitive at any hour of the day or night. In the old village of my native parish, in the Highlands of Perthshire, there is still standing one of the large upright crosses, dating as far back as the eighth or ninth century, which marked the limits of the space around the primitive church which possessed the right of sanctuary. Nothing is more remarkable than the treatment received by those who sought asylum in such churches and confessed their crime: their confession being regarded as a proof of their penitence, when they were mercifully dealt with by the ecclesiastical authorities themselves, and not handed over to the civil power to be punished.

In Palestine a similar state of things existed in Bible times. All the forty-two Levitical cities possessed the right of sanctuary. But six refuge cities conveniently situated, three on each side of the Jordan, were especially set apart in order to receive and lodge the homicide. The elders of the city to which he fled



"The still waters which he found even in the dreary wilderness." -p. 70.

were required to judge his case; and if the act of murder was proved to have been unintentional, he was allowed to remain in the place. A suitable house was provided for him; and being necessarily shut out by his circumstances from the cultivation of the soil, he had to be taught a trade by which he might earn his own living. If found at any time beyond the radius of a mile around the city, the avenger of blood might slay him; but within this limit of protection he was perfectly safe until the death of the high priest, when he might return to his own house without fear.

It is this idea of a criminal seeking sanctuary in a city of refuge from the pursuit of the avenger that is implied in the text. The word "follow" means in the original "pursue"; and so understood, it supplies the key which opens up the significance of the whole passage. The circumstances in which David was placed when he composed the Twenty-third Psalm irresistibly suggested to him the merciful provision made by the law of Moses for the manslayer. His son Absalom had risen up in revolt against him, and compelled his aged father to flee from his home and take refuge among the dreary uplands of Mahanaim. The desolate mountain scenery, in whose recesses he hid himself from his unnatural son, was an emblem of the dark wastes of sorrow over which his soul was passing at the time. Sometimes he fancied he heard upon the breeze the sounds of his approaching enemies. The shadows flitting over the distant hills seemed as if they might be messengers sent by Absalom to take him. The thought of his past sins came vividly to his mind. Many a forgotten deed of wrong and bloodshed rose up before him in its true colours. The dreadful doom pronounced by the prophet upon the crowning sin of his life came home to his heart in all its dark suggestiveness. The secret forces of retribution which he had aroused by his sins had been following on his track with feet shod with wool; and now they seem to have confronted him in all their terribleness. He felt that he was only reaping what he had sown: that even the rebellion of his son and the alienation of his subjects was only the bitter fruit of a poisonous seed which he himself had planted in his life.

But in this extremity, when his fears were greatest, a light from Heaven shone through the darkness into his soul, and showed to him that while he was compassed about with ills past reckoning, he was at the same time compassed about with songs of deliverance; that greater was He that was with him than all that could be against him. The Lord opened his eyes, and he saw, instead of avengers of blood following hard with their sword upon his track, the whole mountain round about him covered with horses and chariots of fire, and realised that goodness and mercy were following him to make reparation for his evil deeds. Mahanaim was to him what it had been to Jacob in his hour of similar trouble, when behind he was pursued by the revengeful Laban, and before he was threatened by an injured brother. It justified to the Psalmist, as it had justified to the Patriarch, the full significance of its name—the Lord's Host. It was indeed a place where the Lord's Host met him; where instead of vengeance he met mercy, and where he expected evil and found goodness.

After a violent storm in nature, at whatever season it comes, there is a soft indescribable feeling of spring in the air; and so it has often been remarked that the effect of a great sorrow is to bring back the simplicity and tenderness of childhood. Never before was the faith of David so unselfish and his trust so childlike. God gave him, in the green pastures and beside the still waters which he found even in the dreary wilderness, the years which the locusts of self-will and pride had eaten: gave him back all the freshness and fairness of his early youth. He returned from the weary toils and responsibilities of later years to the simplicity of his youthful shepherd life in Bethlehem. He breathed the atmosphere of his childhood. God's promise was fulfilled to him: "I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her; and I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there."

Let us look separately at the two elements of David's song in the house of his pilgrimage: first, "Goodness and mercy shall surely follow me"; and then, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

I. The idea of goodness and mercy following a man is exceedingly beautiful and suggestive. There is a phrase with which we are familiar in the Bible which speaks of the "preventing mercies" of God; this word "prevent" formerly meaning not to hinder, as it does now, but simply to go before—God's mercies outrunning our necessities, going before them to anticipate and provide for them. It is in this sense that we usually think of the goodness and mercy of God as going before us to prepare our way and to provide for our wants. But in our deeper moods we feel that we need quite as much goodness and mercy to follow as to precede us. Our greatest troubles are ever those which belong to our past, which come from the things that are behind us, which we are striving to forget. Our march through life is like the march of an army through a hostile region. While we are conquering and possessing the present, we are leaving unsubdued enemies, and unconquered fortresses, and old inveterate habits of sin behind us, that will assuredly rise up and trouble us again. Our past is not dead and buried; it is waiting for us in some future ambush of our life. We need God, therefore, for our yesterdays as much as for our to-morrows: to be our rearward as well as our guide and leader. We cannot move through the world, which God has made so beautiful and pronounced to be so good, without injuring its beauty and destroying its goodness. And in human society how often are our presence and work a cause of blighting instead of blessing! Our intercourse with one another is too often marred by our selfishness and covetousness. Looking back at night upon the record of a single day, do we not find in it

ON THE HILLS OF BETHLEHEM.

many tokens and traces of evil, of which we are now heartily ashamed? How many mistakes have we committed; how many obvious duties have we neglected; how many unkind words have we spoken? How many results of unwise zeal and rash impatience and imprudence have we to deplore? Even our good deeds are so often disfigured by drawbacks that they will not bear reflection. Like the snail that marks its track with its own slime, so we indicate the way we have traversed by the impress of our own sinful being which we have left upon it. And this it is that makes the retrospect of a single day often so sad. This it is that gives a terrible sting to that dark hour ere the night and the day part, when life has reached its lowest point, and the sleeper suddenly awakes from his sleep, and all his sins rush upon his recollection, and he is overwhelmed with misery and self-contempt.

David had this experience in its darkest form. There is not in all human literature a more tragic reverse of fortune and feeling than that which happened to him after his fatal fall. We see in the discord and alienation of his home, and the continual heaviness of sorrow that overwhelmed his life, what devastation a single dark deed, though deeply repented of, can make in an otherwise noble life. The once joyous shepherd who sang like the lark out of the exuberance of a free and sunny nature on the hills of Bethlehem became the careworn, heart-broken man who pursued his weary course through an avenue of darkened days to the tomb. And though we may not have sinned as David sinned, or suffered as David suffered, we all know in some form or other something of his remorse. By the grave of a dead friend or a dead pleasure, we realise, as David felt beside the grave of his dead child, the sorrow of things we ought not to have done, as well as of things we ought to have done. Death casts its dam across our love, and while we feel how suddenly deep it has become, we feel how unavailing is its depth for any practical purpose of love, and we remember with inextinguishable regret how shallow and careless had been its flow over the daily intercourse of life, and how loud its murmur over the common obstructions. We know of words that have wounded loving hearts, and deeds that have left a painful memory behind. And how earnestly do we wish that the past could be undone, that it could be buried out of sight, and not have its presence haunting us any more! But, alas! there is no Lethe from which we may drink forgetfulness of the bitter memory that comes up and seems to mock our repentance: no Jordan where we may wash away the leprous experience that clings to us like a second self, and have restored to us the serene conscience and the bright untroubled heart of the little child we once were. We are crushed by the thought that there is nothing really forgotten in this world; for the sin we have buried for ever out of sight, as we imagined, is gifted with a strange resurrection power, and at any time it may rise up in the full menace of its hateful form to confront us. The most trifling association—the smell of a flower, the music of some old song—may bring back at once the guilty past, and fill the heart with the deepest remorse.

How precious in such an experience are the words of the text, assuring us that God is following us—not as the American Indian follows upon the trail of his enemy, to slay him—not as the avenger of blood follows in his awful vendetta upon the track of the manslayer, but with goodness and mercy! He cries to us as we hasten away from Him in the sullenness and unbelief which sin produces: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out all your transgressions, and will remember them no more against you." He can cast our sins behind His back; remove them as far as east is from the west. He can follow us as Jesus followed Peter when he cut off Malchus' ear with the sword, to heal the wounds we

have inflicted, to redress the wrongs we have committed, to neutralise the consequences of our folly, ignorance, or sin. He can gather up all our woeful past in His boundless mercy, and enable us as little children to enter His Kingdom again. He can separate us from the debasing associations of our sin, give us a sense of recovered freedom and enlargement of heart, and enable us to begin anew, without the disabilities of former days clinging like fetters about our feet and impeding our steps.

In the physical world we see how Nature carries on continually in every place a beneficent ministry of healing the wounds that have been inflicted upon her. She follows the footsteps of man, and strives to obliterate the ravages he causes. The blasted rocks that have been exposed on the hillside she soon plants with her self-sown trees and shrubs, and hides their deformity. The stone wall which in its newness and rawness looks such a discordant feature in the landscape, she subdues by the grey colouring and the soft tenderness of her lichens and mosses into beautiful harmony with the surrounding scenery. The battlefield that has been trampled and disfigured by the fury of the combatants and strewn with the shattered remains of humanity, she converts into golden cornfields and smiling meadows, which look like a scene of immemorial peace. And so the goodness and mercy of our God following on our heels can transmute the very consequences of our sins into Divine forms of beauty and joy; just as Nature follows in the track of the terrible volcanic eruption, and in a short time brings beauty out of ashes—disintegrates the lava that has desolated a fair province into rich soil, out of which may spring up more luxuriant fruitfulness than before. Some time ago, on board a receiving ship in Brooklyn, New York, the sailors gave the visitor a draught from a tank that was filled for a cruise fifty years previously, and had never since been emptied. There was a time when the water was foul and evil-smelling; but it is now as sweet as if drawn only yesterday. And so through the kind chemistry of God's goodness and mercy, our memories of the past clarify themselves, all their impurities disappear, and they grow permanently clear and sweet. By the precious alchemy of grace, the *disappointments* of earth are changed to Heaven's *appointments*, the wise and loving discipline of a Father's hand. The repented sin of David gave us the priceless legacy of the fifty-first and the twenty-third Psalms; the repented sin of Peter fitted him to strengthen his brethren.

THE FLIGHT OF DAVID.

And what a wonderful significance do the goodness and mercy that follow us for this gracious purpose possess! We have had higher teaching than David had. Goodness and mercy are no mere abstract qualities, no mere Divine providence to us. They are personified, and have assumed the beautiful appearance of the self-sacrificing life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see goodness and mercy incarnate in the form of the Saviour from sin doing all the blessed work of reparation for us. Nothing else and nothing less than the atoning death of God's own Son could suffice to change the past of any one of us. No sacrifice less costly would avail. With the tears and the blood of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, are the stains of our sins effaced. Only the holy feet that were pierced and

bruised by the thorns and stones of the wilderness could stamp out the footprints of sin and folly we had impressed upon the path of life. In the old classic story of Orestes pursued by the Furies because he slew his mother to avenge the death of his father, whom she had murdered, we are told that he only found refuge from them when he fled to the temple of Apollo, the god of light. While he knelt at the altar the Furies slept on the altar steps—a beautiful picture, derived even from Pagan sources, of an accusing conscience finding rest from all its fears and torments only in God's presence, when it owns its guilt and trusts in the atonement of Jesus. There is no power but the supreme cross of our Lord that can go back and do for us what we have left undone, and obliterate or transmute the evil we have done. And we ourselves must share in the sacrifice. We too must die to sin, must be crucified with Christ, that we may live to God. We must know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and be baptised with His baptism; else instead of goodness and mercy following us to forgive and undo our evil, the avenger of blood will follow upon our track, and our doom will be sealed for ever.

II. But let us look for a little at the second part of my beautiful text. Not only goodness and mercy—these two white-robed messengers of God—are to follow us instead of the avenger of blood, but we are to dwell in the House of the Lord for ever. The manslayer who fled to one of the old cities of refuge in Palestine had not only the right of asylum there, safety from the vengeance of the friends of the murdered man, but also the right of citizenship. Though he did not by birth belong to the city to which he fled, and had no possession in it, though his crime had made him an outcast from his own city and inheritance, his very necessity constituted a title to be received as a citizen in the new dwelling-place. And by the merciful provision of the Mosaic law, his very misery and danger raised him from the condition of a stranger and a fugitive, to be an associate with the priests of God in their holiest services.

But great as were the privileges which he enjoyed in the city of refuge, they were only temporary. He was only to dwell there till his case should be investigated by the proper authorities, or at the utmost till the death of the man who happened to be high priest at the time. So with David; his place of refuge was a place of rest in sore need, but not for ever. He could not find in it all the conditions to make it the permanent home of an immortal spirit. He must some day leave the earthly house of the Lord. Death at last must separate him from it. No earthly sanctuary or city of refuge can keep out that last enemy, that final avenger of human sin. It will snatch its victims away with their hold upon the very horns of the altar. It will condemn all, innocent and guilty alike, to the same doom. And therefore, David must have looked beyond the earthly sanctuary to the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; beyond the dark valley of the shadow of death to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. There alone should he be everlastingly safe and blessed.

And all who flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel are safe for evermore. There is now no condemnation to them. On the mercy-seat of God's dwelling-place they behold sprinkled not the blood that crieth out for vengeance like the blood of Abel, but the blood that cries on the Cross, "Father, forgive them," and that cleanses from all sin. The wrath of God, against Whom they have sinned, has been appeased; the avenger of blood is satisfied with the death, in their room, of their surety and substitute. The forgiveness of God is a forgiveness that cannot be qualified or withdrawn; it is absolute and final, for it is a forgiveness based upon the most perfect knowledge of the sin. Its real nature is known to Him, its full consequences measured and comprehended; and therefore His forgiveness is the fulfilment of the very justice and holiness of God. Trusting in the finished work of Christ, God is not merely merciful and pitiful to forgive our sins, but faithful and just. The challenge can now be made to the whole Universe, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us." From the miserable condition of criminals with the sword of justice hanging over our heads, aliens and outcasts, we are raised to the dignity of fellow-citizenship with the saints, and are made kings and priests unto God and the Father.

And from this House of the Lord we shall go no more out. It will be no mere temporary refuge, but an everlasting Home. There will be gathered together all our treasures, the results of all our labour, the harvest-fruits of all our discipline. There will be cemented anew in higher form the fellowships and friendships that made the life of earth so sweet. We fled to this House of the Lord for safety in a time of sore distress; and we have found in it the true rest of life. We were driven by stress of trial and danger into it when all other refuge failed us, and we looked on our right hand and viewed, but there were none to know or help us; and now so blessed are we in it that we would not leave it if we could. No sin can accuse us there; no death can snatch us from its joy. Nothing can shake the security, nothing can mar the peace of those who dwell thus in the House of the Lord. Goodness and mercy have wiped away all the evils of our life, and converted them into good. And "neither life nor death, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Leave God to Order all Thy Ways.

Words by G. NEWMARK (1653).

Music by PHILIP ARMES, MUS.D., Oxon.
(Organist and Master of the Choristers of Durham Cathedral.)

Moderato (100 = ♩).

mf — *cres.* — *dim.*

Leave God to or - der all thy ways, And hope in Him, what - e'er be - tide;

mf — *pp* — *f* — *rit.*

Thou'lt find Him, in the e - vil days, Thine all - suf - fi - cient strength and guide.

Maestoso (60 = ♩).

ff

Who trusts in God's un - chang - ing love Builds on the rock that nought can move.

Moderato. — *p* — *pp* — *cres.*

On - ly thy rest - less heart keep still, And wait in cheer - ful hope, con - tent

cres. — *dim.* — *rit.*

To take what - e'er His gra - cious will, His all - dis - cern - ing love, hath sent:

ff *Maestoso.*

Doubt not our in - most wants are known To Him who chose us for His own. A - men.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

"IN OUR OWN TONGUE, WHEREIN WE WERE BORN."

THERE is little wonder that the multitude "were all amazed" on the Day of Pentecost, when they heard the Galilean followers of Jesus "speak the wonderful works of God" in their own tongues wherein they were born. But the fact is as suggestive as it is wonderful. No miracle of the New Testament is meaningless. The word spoken that day by the Apostles, filled with the Spirit of God, to the "devout men" then gathered in Jerusalem "out of every nation under heaven," was a word from the Father of them all. Was it not as natural as it was supernatural that the word of the Father should be intelligible to His children? A striking statement illustrative of this was recently made by the Rev. W. G. Lawes, a missionary who was once on Savage Island, and is now labouring on behalf of the natives of New Guinea. In both these spheres of labour Mr. Lawes has had the privilege of translating the New Testament into a language before unwritten, and his testimony is that the Word of God may be faithfully rendered into the language of those of God's children who have been longest lost and who are most degraded. He said: "I have not tried to translate any book of human authorship, but a small document was put into my hand, written by the judicial officer of the Government of New Guinea, and I sincerely and honestly state that I found greater difficulty in trying to translate those two or three sheets of foolscap, than in any portion of the New Testament." We need not be surprised that this experience proved to the missionary a strong confirmation of his already firm belief, "that this Bible is indeed the letter of our Father in heaven to His children on earth."

THE BEST INHERITANCE.

The best inheritance a father can leave to his children is a good name. Some prefer to bequeath money made in very questionable ways. But not so did the renowned Admiral Haddock. When he was dying, he called his son to him and said:—"Notwithstanding my rank in life, and public services so many years, I shall leave you only a small fortune; but, my dear boy, it is honestly got, and will wear well; there are no seamen's wages or provisions in it, nor is there one single penny of dirty money." Let us hope that the son carried on the same tradition; but we have known many instances where the sons of very honest parents were not scrupulous about "dirty money." These we would advise before it is too late to attend to the warning of Horace Greeley:—"The darkest hour in the history of any young man is when he sits down to study how to get money without honestly earning it."

HOW TO BE HAPPY AND CONTENTED.

At an early period of his life, Mozart the composer gave his heart to God. When he was twenty-one years of age he wrote: "I have God always before me. Whatever is according to His will is also according to mine; therefore I cannot fail to be happy and contented."

"AN OLD AGE SERENE AND BRIGHT.

A woman is said to be as old as she looks, and a man as he feels. We believe, however, that any woman as well as any man can have, if they work for it, what Wordsworth promised a young lady—

> "An old age serene and bright,
> And lovely as the Lapland night."

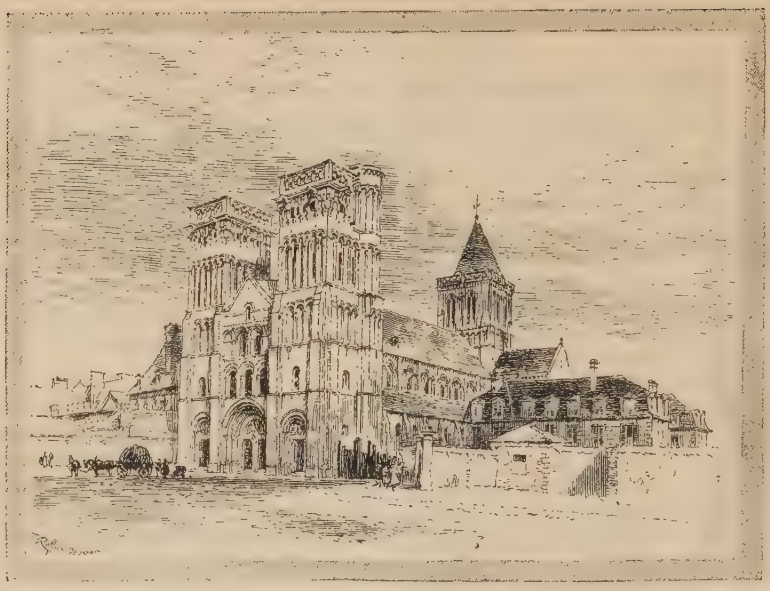
When people asked Leontinus, the master of Isocrates, who reached the age of one hundred and seven, why he tarried so long in this life, he replied, "Because I have nothing whereof I can accuse my old age." They who can say this are happy, and they are those who have built up old age from its foundations in youth by well-doing. White hairs, which have been called "the flowers of the cemetery," may not of themselves always inspire respect, but they cannot fail to do so when they point to a long life that has been well spent.

"WILL A MAN ROB GOD?"

The prophet Malachi asks this serious question. We all have to confess that we do rob Him more or less. To Him we belong—ourselves, our souls and bodies—and very little do we give Him of that which is His due.

ST. PAUL'S CONFIDENCE.

It is worth remembering that when St. Paul wrote about our Saviour Jesus Christ having abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, he was no longer young, but was "Paul the aged," a prisoner expecting no release save by the axe of the executioner—face to face, therefore, with death. He does not speak from the standpoint of youth, which knows indeed that death is inevitable, but, regarding it as far off, can speak



ABBAYE AUX DAMES, CAEN.

lightly of its terrors; nor does he speak as a man immersed in affairs, who, though he thinks it may perhaps be near, is too full of business to allow his mind to dwell upon it. Paul would doubtless be as busy as his circumstances would permit, but, allowing for the utmost occupation possible, he must be regarded as at this time leading a life of enforced inactivity; he was, as it were, "in the condemned cell," with everything calculated to depress him. Yet the messages he sends forth from that cell are full of inspiration. No words escape him complaining of his lot, no doubts as to the foundations of his confidence. He realises his position. He knows that his life is at Nero's nod; but still he can say that his Lord has abolished death and brought immortal life to light through the Gospel.

HEARD IN THE CROWD.

At a recent festival service of the Exeter Diocesan Choral Association, in the large crowd waiting outside the side door of the cathedral, which was to be opened at a certain hour to admit non-subscribers, some curious remarks might be heard. There was much pushing in order to get near the door, and one man observed, "People are not always so eager to go to church." He was right. Many who hastened that day to what they seemed to regard as a cheap musical entertainment would creep unwillingly to church if nothing were going on but the simple worship of God. Another man looking at the long procession of clergy going into the cathedral said, "Did you ever see so many parsons? There should be no more sin after this." Probably the man was speaking ironically, and knew very well that clergymen and ecclesiastical organisations cannot of themselves take away sin, and that ministers of the Gospel are only useful in so far as they are and feel themselves to be the instruments of the Lamb of God.

A CONQUEROR'S VOW.

We owe some of the finest churches to the victories of the greatest warriors. It was no uncommon thing in olden times to build an abbey, monastery, or church, to commemorate a great battle—for instance, the church of the Sainte Trinité with the Abbaye aux Dames, founded by Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror, at Caen in 1066, in fulfilment of a vow to do so if the Norman invasion of England proved successful. The church is a magnificent specimen of the earliest Gothic, grand and massive, yet perfectly simple. Within the choir is a large plain tomb, containing in a leaden box the ashes of Queen Matilda. In the present day we commemorate our victories by erecting a statue to, or by bestowing a title on, the victor. We should feel that there was a want of reverence, perhaps, in associating the building of a church with deeds of blood, and we look forward to a time—we hope not far distant—when we shall beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

RECREATION SANCTIONED BY RELIGION.

Time spent on innocent amusement is not idly spent, but, to be innocent, amusements must be free from excess, must not lead into bad company, and must not be followed by reaction or disinclination to honest work. When amusement follows work and does not precede it, when it is used

to recreate and freshen faculties that have been worn out so that they may be able to work better for the glory of God and the good of man, it may be called religious on the principle laid down by the Apostle—"Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." If it be true that the highest kind of recreation (that which creates afresh) is true religion, it is also true that the spirit of religion may be brought into play as well as into work. Francis de Sales used to take his recreation in playing chess. Once, after intense labour, when unbending himself at his favourite game, some morbid precisian who was present asked him what he would do if he knew the Lord's coming was even at hand. "Finish the game," said the Bishop boldly; "for His glory I began it." The fact that there is too much godless amusement should not make us conclude that all amusement is necessarily godless.

WITHERED LEAVES.

"Yes," said old Dr. Stolberg, "I can walk amongst you now with a different feeling towards you all from what I had when first my sorrows came upon me, and I saw with my natural eyes only. Then, I hated the very sight of you. Every uncovered branch and withered leaf spoke to me only of desolation present, and of beauty gone. The withered leaf was to me but the photograph of my withered heart, its swirl in the east wind but the pictured unrest of my soul. Now," said Dr. Stolberg, "that my eyes, the eyes of my heart and understanding, have been opened to see the invisible, and its ears to hear the inaudible, and its touch been quickened to feel the impalpable, withered leaves and naked branches, you are all my friends. Withered leaves, you have had your day, you have fulfilled your appointed time, you have wrought out your destiny. Your energy lives in the lengthened branch and larger rounded bulk of the tree on which you hung; and you yourselves, passing into earth, will live again." Nature is not more bountiful than grace. Life passes through death, to live again. The loved and lost shall live in higher life once more.

BOOKS FOR YOUNG AND OLD.

Now that the long evenings have come upon us again, when the younger members of the family have exchanged outdoor recreation for indoor amusement and instruction, we accord a hearty welcome to the "Children's Afternoon" (Elliot Stock), in which the author, the Rev. R. H. Brenan, M.A., especially addresses young readers, and in a style capable of holding their attention.—Messrs. Longman send us a compilation of devotional writings and sayings under the title of "The Inheritance of the Saints" (with a preface by Canon Scott Holland), which is valuable as containing many striking passages from the works of some of our greatest writers on religious subjects.—We have also upon our table two books of verse, one of which is inscribed to young people, and the other appeals more especially to their elders. The former is a second edition of "Poems for Little People," by our old friend and contributor, Mr. J. R. Eastwood, and is a reprint of poems which originally appeared in THE QUIVER and other magazines, and now issued in a dainty form by Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall and Co. The other, under the title of "Poems: Narrative and Descriptive," is a book of miscellaneous verse by the Rev. Edward Templeman, published by Mr. Elliot Stock. It contains some very pretty and pathetic lines which attract more because one feels they are written from the heart than on account of any special merit in the verses. In "New Every Morning" (Hodder and Stoughton), the Rev. Thomas Champness gives us, for every day in the year, a short pithy sermonette, full of beautiful thoughts. On each page we have something new and fresh, and we heartily commend the work to young and old alike, who will find it an armoury of encouragement and

"'Withered leaves, you have had your day.'"

help. We have also received from Mr. Elliot Stock "At Odd Minutes," which is intended for the same purpose, but differs in the respect that it is not original, but gives us day by day an extract from the works of standard writers. The Bishop of Argyll, in the preface, says, "Is it too much to say that the whole course of many a life has been changed by a single thought presented to the mind, perhaps under the form of some brief saying?" The same publisher has also issued a new and revised edition of "Divine Footprints in the Bible," by the Rev. William Griffiths, M.A., whose object is to put before us "plain tokens of God's approach to man in the pathway of revelation." The work has evidently been the outcome of careful study and diligent research in God's Word, and it is surprising that Mr. Griffiths, in the small volume before us, has been able to deal so thoroughly with the question from so many and diverse points of view. In "Beggars All" (Longmans), Miss L. Dougall gives us an interesting story, primarily dealing, as the title suggests, with persons in very straitened circumstances. In it are introduced some rather dangerous ideas and arguments, which are the cause of much pain and unhappiness, as must always happen where man's intellect sets up a code and standard of morals in opposition to the Divine laws.

THE EYES OF THE WISE MAN AND THE FOOL.

The tendency of to-day is to look slightingly upon methods of restriction, and to regard as obsolete the strong old words, "Thou shalt not." And the result is not altogether happy. There is doubtless a stage in the advanced education, alike of mind and spirit, in which these words become irrelevant; but all have not reached this stage, and for many the pedagogue, with his laws and limitations, is necessary to keep the faculties in a prescribed groove, and to deny them exercise in other directions, where their energies might be wasted, or worse. When the writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes said, "A wise man's eyes are in his head," he was himself mindful, and probably wished his readers to be mindful, of the sentence already written in the Book of Proverbs: "The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth." The statement as to the wise man meant more than that he used his eyes; it meant that he also controlled them. He did not let them pry into everything everywhere, whether it concerned him or not, whether it were lovely or loathsome. He showed his wisdom in keeping his eyes "in his head," knowing when to open and when to shut them. Would it not be well if there could be some restoration of the day of wise restrictions, some instruction in the art of shutting the eyes to much that a modern, and perhaps prurient, curiosity unsafely looks upon?

FIVE MINUTES AFTER DEATH.

A retired officer, who had been on much active service in India and had seen the worst of the Mutiny, was one day entertaining some friends at dinner. He related for the amusement of the company a few of his wonderful experiences, and the attention of all was riveted on him as they listened. After he had finished, and all expressed astonishment at what they had heard, the old man—he was seventy years of age—said very solemnly, "I expect to see stranger sights than these." What could he mean? He had retired from the army and from active life generally; where would he see stranger things? Observing the perplexity of his friends, the aged officer explained—"I mean that I shall see far stranger things the first five minutes after death."

FORGETTING FAILINGS.

"The worthiest persons," says Bacon, "are frequently attacked by slanders, as we generally find that to be the best fruit which the birds have been pecking at." And yet, when a person is really worthy in the main, his worthiness ought surely to be allowed to hide his faults. The great Duke of Marlborough and the first Lord Bolingbroke were in opposite political interests, and were consequently on most occasions ranged against each other. Some gentlemen, after the Duke's decease, were canvassing his character with much severity, and particularly charged him with being excessively avaricious. At length they appealed for the truth of their statements to Lord Bolingbroke, who was one of the company. This nobleman, with a generosity which did him honour, answered: "The Duke of Marlborough was so great a man that I quite forget his failings."

THE GREATEST MISFORTUNE OF ALL.

The way in which misfortune is accepted is often the greatest misfortune of all. "I have lost my health," said a woman to one who knew well that she had not used her health nobly. "Take care," he replied, "that you do not lose your sickness too."

IS NOT ENOUGH ENOUGH?

A minister preaching against the love of money, had frequently repeated that it was "the root of all evil." Walking home from the church, one old person said to another. "An' wasna the minister strang upon the money?"—"Nae doubt," said the other; and added, "Ay, but it's grand to hae the wee bit siller in your hand when ye gang an errand." We quite agree with this, and believe in the needful so far as it is needful. It's grand to have the price of food and clothes, and we are not at all averse to a little pocket-money; but after a modest sufficiency has been realised, what is the good of fretting and working for more? Is not enough enough?

"MORE LIGHT!"

Milton speaks of—

> "Storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light."

He called the dim light "religious," because it passed through church-windows, but in itself dim light is not religious. False religion that is mystified

by priestcraft is dim, but not so the religion of Him who is the true Light. And those who bear witness of that Light, ought to do so in language clear and simple, and without anything like fog, cloud, or darkness. It is their business to flash into a dark world that Word which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" It is the vain egotist who enters a pulpit rather to exhibit himself than to "evidently set forth" (or "placard," Galatians iii. 1) Christ crucified. It is the creature of routine who has never felt or understood what he is talking about. Very different are real evangelists. They are light-bearers. The common or uneducated people hear them gladly because they make everything "so plain," using homely illustrations, anecdotes, and whatever will throw light on their message. They are beautiful windows through which God does not disdain to lighten our darkness.

THE LAST WORD.

In their little disputes husbands and wives sometimes strive with each other for the last word. What, after all, is the exact value of it? After getting the last word, a husband might perhaps, as an American newspaper suggests, advertise to whistle against a locomotive, but in other respects his victory would be useless and painful. Married life should be a sweet harmonious song, and like one of Mendelssohn's *without words.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY HOME-TRAINING.

In the beginning of his second letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul puts Timothy in remembrance to stir up the gift of God which he had received through him, the Apostle. And this injunction is attached immediately on to Paul's expression of confidence that in Timothy there is the unfeigned faith which was first in his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. This is surely a lesson on the importance of early home-training, for Paul is clearly connecting the later gifts that Timothy received from him with the earlier gifts received in the home. Lois and Eunice taught the child, Paul taught the man; and but for the home-training in his childhood, Timothy might not have been capable of receiving the apostolic training in his manhood. The lessons that one can teach a young child may appear insignificantly elementary; it may seem to some that it is of little consequence what is said to a child, and how he is either gratified or disappointed, and what he thinks. Yet a child's—*i.e.*, a man's—career is likely to be as much affected for good or for evil by these seeming trifles in the early formative years, as by what in later years will be generally regarded as far more important matters.

"IT MAKES ME FEEL SOMETHING I CANNOT SAY."

"The power of language has been gradually enlarging for a great length of time, and I venture

"MORE LIGHT."

to say that the English language at the present time can express more, and is more subtle, flexible, and, at the same time, vigorous, than any of which we possess a record." So writes Richard Jefferies in one of his latest essays. But, notwithstanding all this, he recognises that we have still thoughts and feelings beyond expression. "How many have said of the sea," he exclaims, "'It makes me feel something I cannot say!'" And how much more does this feeling possess us as we commune with Him Who made the sea, and Whose wonders and works are seen in it! Words fail to express the thoughts, and thoughts themselves fail to fathom the truth. The knowledge is too wonderful for us. The pure in heart see God, indeed. His presence is revealed to them, and they feel Him near; but, as Jefferies says of the sea, they feel what they cannot tell. Communion with God must be direct and at first-hand. We cannot describe the sea, or explain to one who has not seen it the feelings it calls up. We say to such, "You must see it for yourself. You must watch it in its calms and in its storms, from the beach, from the cliff, and from the deck in mid-ocean. Then will you feel what it has made me feel; it will speak forth its own mystery." So we say of communion with God. It must, for each one, be personal, direct, till men's hearts shall burn within them, and they shall, each for himself, hear unspeakable words which it is not possible for a man to utter.

GIFT-BOOKS.

In the van of the many gift books which parents and teachers begin to look out for at this season of the year, come (from Messrs. Nisbet) two volumes

which are peculiarly adapted for prizes or birthday presents. One, entitled "Parson's Green," by G. Norway, is a tale for younger children; while of the other, "Those Three," it is enough to ensure its popularity to say that it is written by that old favourite with girls, Emma Marshall. Both these stories are brightly written and pleasantly illustrated. The same publishers send us some friendly chats with young men, under the title of "First Battles, and How to Fight Them," by Frederick Atkins, which contains excellent advice and friendly hints given in a manly, earnest tone; while in "The Redemption of Edward Strahan" (Hodder and Stoughton) the Rev. W. J. Dawson also seeks to benefit and guide young men, but in the form of "a social story," told in a manner well calculated to appeal to the class he wishes to guide and benefit.—We have also received from Messrs. Nisbet "Wafted Seeds," by Harriet G. Colville, containing quaint little sketches of life, with a healthy vein of thought running through them; and "Thomas Ellwood and Other Worthies," in which Miss Frances A. Budge devotes a chapter each to a short biography of five old-time saints, amongst whom we may mention John Richardson and Christopher Story.

"BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM."

When our Lord cast the legion of devils out of the Gadarene, He directed the man to go home to his friends and tell them how great things the Lord had done for him. And truly those with whom we live and associate are the first to discover the birth of true religion in our hearts. It was noticed in a colliery the other day that a man began to treat the horse he worked with kindness, instead of very roughly as formerly, and the explanation was that he had given his heart to the Creator of the horse. Not long after, the foreman in the same place began to be interested in religion and to attend public worship, because, as he said, he wanted to understand what that was which had changed the carter to whom we have alluded. Those who have themselves found peace and joy in believing, impart happiness to others as certainly as the sun gives forth its heat. On the other hand, "if you haven't got enough religion to make somebody else happy, it is not surprising that you are not happy yourself."

GOOD WORKS BY PROXY.

Little Edith went to church with her grandmother, and for the first time put sixpence in the plate. Leaning over, she whispered rather audibly, "That's all right, grandma! I paid for two." There are people who, if they belong to a family the members of which busy themselves in doing good, think that they are exempt from giving individual help. We cannot, however, transfer our obligations to others, or do good by proxy.

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from August 12th, 1891, up to and including September 17th, 1891. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For *"The Quiver" Waifs Fund:* Woodbridge, 1s.; M. H. R., £2; J. J. E., Govan (47th donation), 5s.; A Glasgow Mother (19th donation), 1s.

For *The Children's Country Holiday Fund:* M. J. S., 5s.; N. L. E., 10s.

For *The London Aged Christian Society:* M. J. S., 5s.; E. Garrett, Axbridge, 10s.

For *The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children:* A Friend, 5s.

For *The Boys' Seaside Camp:* A. W., 10s.

For *Dr. Barnardo's Homes:* E. B., 10s. 6d.; A. P., 7s. 6d.

For *"The Quiver" Cot, Great Ormond Street Hospital:* 3s. from B.M.

We have also been asked to acknowledge £1 for Mr. Spurgeon's Orphanage, Harwich.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

1. Which of the Evangelists sets forth Christ as the Great Intercessor for the human race?

2. What is the chief subject of Christ's intercessory prayer?

3. Quote a passage in which our Lord tells us what is the foundation of eternal life.

4. What brook did our Blessed Lord have to cross on His way from Jerusalem to the garden of Gethsemane, and with what sad incident in a king's life is this same brook associated in the Old Testament history?

5. What strange thing happened in the garden of Gethsemane when the soldiers came to take Jesus, which is mentioned only in the Gospel according to St. John?

6. What curious Jewish custom was carried out each year at the feast of the Passover?

7. Why did the Jews bring Jesus before Pilate, the Roman Governor, to be tried?

8. What was the charge upon which the Jews sought to condemn Christ?

9. What circumstance of our Lord's journey to Calvary is mentioned only by St. John?

10. For which part of our Blessed Lord's garment did the soldiers cast lots?

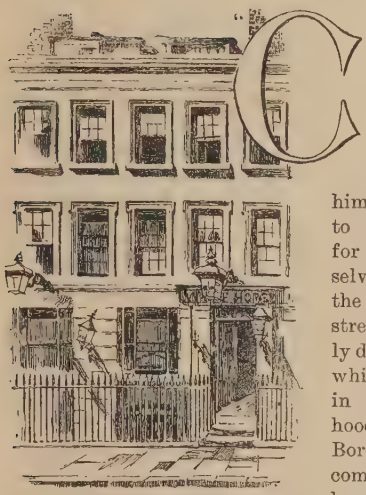
11. Why was a vessel full of vinegar set near the cross?

12. What was noticed by St. Peter and St. John at the tomb, which made them believe Jesus had risen from the dead?

[*Drawn by* F. Markham Skipworth.]

HIS ONLY DAUGHTER.

COMMON LODGING-HOUSES AND THEIR PATRONS.



THE "WHITE HORSE" LODGING-HOUSE, FETTER LANE.

"CAN you tell us where to find 'The Stable?'" The person interrogated was a policeman, and to him we were obliged to have recourse, for we had lost ourselves completely in the maze of dirty streets and partially demolished alleys which still remain in the neighbourhood of Mint Sreet, Borough. It was a common lodging-house for which we were in search, and it is known to its frequenters by a rather less polite name than that of "The Stable." There is no need, however, more closely to identify it.

One of our party was acquainted with "The Stable." He volunteered to act as our guide; and he was well qualified for that task, for in his eventful life's history he had been himself one of the 60,000 "dossers" who every night in London pay from fourpence to sixpence for their bed in a common lodging-house. An educated man, and a member of a much-respected profession, he had nevertheless fallen into the ranks of the residuum of the population, and in them he would assuredly have remained had not a helping hand been stretched out to him by the Common Lodging-House Mission to raise him from this Slough of Despond. But since this rescued man had quitted Lodging-house Land, there had been certain improvements and clearances of slums effected, so that he failed to light upon "The Stable" until we had traversed a squalid district, full of mean fried-fish shops and retailers of market produce, the waste of which had been trodden into thick mire under foot.

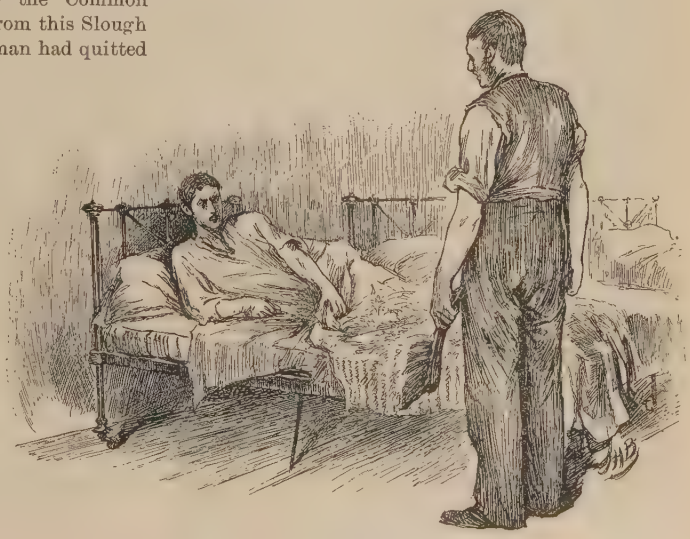
Nothing more squalid and disheartening is to be found in the most deplorable parts of all London; and although great blocks of artisans' dwellings have replaced wretched blind courts in spots, yet the tenants of these flats have not learned the value of decency and cleanliness; for as we passed between the buildings, vegetable refuse came from above, thrown from the top storeys to the ground, where it littered the pavements in decaying masses.

This "Stable" stood at the end of a court, with an entrance thereto from the main thoroughfare. That it was never built for occupation as a lodging-house its architecture showed at a glance. Originally it must have been a warehouse, several floors high, but the cranes had been removed, and the crane-doors rudely boarded up.

A tall lean man came out of the door which opened into the narrow passage, and for a moment he hesitated to give permission to inspect his premises. We were neither the County Council nor the police, and so we had no business there; but as he was busy in loading up a fish-barrow, he would not argue the point.

"Here, missus," he cried, "show 'em over."

So into the place we walked. It was Saturday afternoon, at dinner-time, an hour favourable to an insight into the ways of common lodging-house life. The swing-doors pushed inwards into the great kitchen. Two huge coke fires were burning brightly at opposite ends of the draughty, barren hall, and around these glowing ranges men and women were congregated, some of them for warmth, and others to superintend their cooking. Overhead upon ropes were strung articles of newly washed underclothing, drying. Seated at long benches in groups were more of the lodgers, a few discussing their mid-day meal. The moist clammy air of the kitchen was stale and vitiated, and the smell of the food and of the washing combined was nauseating and overpowering. Of brightness and colour, of decoration,



"Now then, No. 74, time you were up!"

THE WASHHOUSE.

of furniture even of the rudest sort, there was no sign, save the benches and tables; everything was deadly and monotonously dull.

Here at one side-table, with his head resting upon it, slumbered a youth; there in another corner prattled two little children; upon a form, rocking herself to and fro, was a dejected girl-mother with her babe; opposite to her, crouched against the wall, a bedraggled yellow-faced crone; grown men, gawky boys, flaunting women, neglected children, were all huddled together, and the only approach to comfort in the place was the blaze of the fires.

Up-stairs, reached by a straight and steep flight of steps, it was clean enough. The floors had been partitioned off, and in the dormitories thus provided were from a dozen to twenty beds, all the cots being of iron, and having counterpanes. Cubic space and all the essentials insisted upon by the police were of course not neglected, but with these regulations fully complied with, how much does there not remain to be done?

Common lodging-house proprietors there are who are themselves demonstrating the best way to reform these resorts, but they are not over-willing to give information. To a vast establishment in Tabard Street, which is registered to contain 800 beds, we were refused admission. The arrangements seemed, however, deserving all praise; and Mr. John Harvey, the Secretary of the Mission, who had on a previous occasion penetrated into the interior, confirmed this view. Standing in the hall, waiting whilst a parley with the deputy was in progress, many points were to be noted which are seldom to be seen in the older houses. The office occupied by the deputy and his "sub" was not a dingy den, resembling a marine-store dealer's shop, as in the case of "The Stable," where the portable goods and chattels of "the regulars" were untidily deposited, but, instead, the room at the entrance was a business-like bureau, fit for an hotel clerk. There were notifications that no beds would be kept after ten o'clock unless paid for; that every lodger must take his "number;" that any man claiming a fellow-lodger's number would be expelled; and that bread, milk, German sausage, etc., might be purchased at very low rates. But the most remarkable feature of all was the way in which the staircase had been protected by double turnstiles, one pair leading into and the other out of the premises. The stairs which descended into the lower regions were divided into an up and down road, and the lodgers were constantly passing in and out like bees. They were all men, and had the appearance of market porters.

It was in Tooley Street, at another set of "Chambers" in which were housed nearly six hundred men—women and children not being admitted—that an opportunity was obtained of seeing how the basements of these large dwellings are utilised as kitchens. Sometimes they may be artificially lighted by day as well as night, but in Tooley Street windows are provided having reflectors from the street level. Four great ranges are here required, and these fires are kept going night and day, consuming, as the deputy told us, six chaldrons of coke every week. Long mess-tables and benches constitute the furniture, and the ranges are fitted with a variety of culinary utensils, the frying-pans being most in request. A collection of teapots may be seen up-stairs. Here, again, cleanliness in the dormitories is the order of day, and it is with some pride that the style of bedstead, the sheets, and the blankets are indicated as not having their equal in a "fourpenny house" elsewhere.

From the foregoing brief descriptions, it will be seen that the common lodging-houses of the metropolis vary very considerably in their character. In fact, no two of them are alike. Their arrangements depend greatly upon two points: first, the suitability of the buildings tenanted; and second, the measure of responsibility assumed by the owner. As a rule, it may be taken that the premises which have been designed and erected for lodging-house requirements are comparatively few; and in the next place, especially in those cases in which the buildings are ill adapted for occupation, the landlords are generally discovered with difficulty, their *locum tenens* being the deputy.

The deputy has supreme control of the quarters; he has to receive the rents, keep the place clean,

maintain peace and quiet—if necessary by brute force—and take care that the police inspectors are satisfied upon all points which come within their province. In return, he has free quarters and a few shillings a week—not a great remuneration for a day's work which starts early in the morning and does not end until two a.m. next day, at which hour the doors are closed for a short interval, loiterers in the kitchen then being turned out to walk the streets. There are men who are driven to do this five nights every week of their lives.

With the permission of the deputies, short bright religious services are being held every Sunday in nineteen out of the seventy-three lodging-house districts which are to be found in London. The Common Lodging-house Mission in this work visits fifty-seven houses every week, and in each district local committees get together the speakers, who must have a ready tact and a rich fund of illustration to interest their curious audiences. The London City Mission and other organisations make similar visits, but Mr. John Harvey and his friends, with Lady Ashburton among the most prominent, are concerned only in obtaining entrance into those houses which have not previously been touched.

Circumstances have always led to the attention of the public being more or less concentrated upon the lodging-houses of Spitalfields, St. George's-in-the-East, and that part of London; but although Spitalfields heads the other districts, with its ninety-five houses, and there are perhaps a hundred more in the immediate vicinity of the docks, yet on the south side of the Thames they are quite as numerous, there being 200 lodging-houses between Nine Elms and Dockhead, not counting those in the suburbs. At Westminster and Vauxhall, too, fifty-two still exist, and more are located in St. Giles's, Marylebone, Holborn, Clerkenwell, and St. Luke's. These, with the houses which are scattered throughout the area within the four miles' radius, make up the grand total of 960 houses. The field, therefore, is a large one, and inasmuch as in January, 1890, it was ascertained that religious services were held in 115 only by all the societies combined, there are more than 800 licensed common lodging-houses whose occupants have still to be brought within sound of the Gospel.

Apart altogether from the difficulty of getting any sort of recognised foothold in these establishments, it must be borne in mind that the class to which the missionaries especially address themselves forms a section of the population at large whose precise needs have always puzzled the philanthropist. Methods which would be successful in one part of the metropolis would fail in another, for the reason that the districts differ in their characteristics. The East End has nothing in common with the West, but it is quite true that under the shadow of Westminster Abbey may be discovered as many ruined lives as in Spitalfields, only the victims in Westminster are younger.

Considered generally, it will be observed that in Holborn, broken-down educated professional men gather in the kitchens; in Blackfriars, the seedy, down-at-heel, out-at-elbow clerks congregate, selecting, as long as they can afford them, the sixpenny

THE KITCHEN OF A COMMON LODGING-HOUSE.

houses; in Drury Lane, Covent Garden porters take up their abode; in Marylebone, railway goods porters are predominant; in Westminster, women and children are more numerous than in any other part; and in

EMPLOYED BY THE LODGERS.

the Borough one meets, in some lodgings, perhaps the most poverty-stricken class of all, not excepting those wretched outcasts who are to be found in Spitalfields.

Varied indeed are the demands made upon the funds of the mission in meeting emergencies which arise. Sometimes an effort is possible to lift a struggling couple out of the mire, and to remove them from dangerous associations and set them up in a home of their own. It is not an easy matter to break with the lodging-house life. Men and women there are who have become reconciled to its miseries, and they pass all their lives in one or other of the lodging-houses of the metropolis. Market porters, who have to be astir betimes, say that in these establishments, open as they are almost at all hours, and having a good fire always going, they are more comfortable than they could be elsewhere. Army pensioners, too, take up their quarters in them largely; for upon tenpence or a shilling a day board and lodging is possible in them. These pensioners often add to their income by lending money at usurious rates—threepence in the shilling—to their necessitous companions. The hawkers of penny novelties, the makers of fire-stove ornaments, the builders of mouse-traps, the people who put black edges on mourning note-paper, the newsboys, and other classes who earn a livelihood more or less precarious, regularly pay their fourpence to the lodging-house. In the kitchen they get society, and necessarily they come into contact with the refuse of the population, the idlers, the thieves, and the dissolute, who find it to their interest to avoid the shelter of the casual ward.

"'T ain't our business to pry into other folks' business," observed one deputy when asked to describe the character of certain of his lodgers; but it is clear that the proprietors have not a very high opinion of the honesty of some of their patrons, for the brown blankets belonging to the beds are invariably branded with the legend, "Stolen from Briggs'"—or whatever the name of the common lodging-house may be.

Obviously it is difficult to reach the hearts of persons whose chequered careers have hardened their nature, and whose daily life renders them callous and indifferent to their future welfare. It very rarely happens, however, that the mission workers who attend the lodging-houses meet with disrespect; their ministrations, on the other hand, are eagerly welcomed by men and women whose existence knows no relief, and who are denied everything which tends to make life happy and enjoyable.

Occasionally it may chance that country people, tempted to London, and discovering too late that its streets are not paved with gold, are lured to these houses by men who design to make them their dupes. A little timely assistance restores them to their friends, and removes them from the deadly perils of the metropolis. To realise what those perils are, one has only to take a peep into even the best conducted kitchen on a Saturday or Sunday night, or, better still, on the evening of a Bank Holiday; for then the behaviour of the riotous knows no moderation. Drink is responsible for ninety-five per cent. of the misery which is to be witnessed in these dens of degradation. It is from this polluted atmosphere that the young are rescued to be placed in homes, but the proportion of the saved can be but infinitesimal until the mission possesses its own home of refuge. There are said to be as many as 12,000 women and children in common lodging-houses utterly destitute.

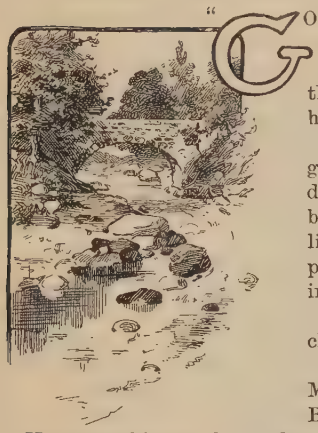
When a clerk loses his berth, exhausts his means, wearies his friends, and takes to drink, his destiny leads him often to become a wrapper writer. "Once a wrapper writer, always a wrapper writer," the men themselves say bitterly. The work is given out by middle-men, who pay the addressers of the wrappers for circulars, prospectuses, and appeals rates which may range from 1s. 9d. to 3s. per thousand. Frequently it occurs that the job is not obtained by the writer until six p.m. He then has to repair to his common lodging-house, and drive his quill without cessation until four and five a.m. the next day, in order to complete his thousand addresses, which have to be taken to the middle-men early. The money may not be forthcoming until the afternoon, and the clerk's day may be wasted in waiting for it. Then, too, a portion of his work may be rejected; so that he must consider himself fortunate if, by slaving six days a week and all the Sunday, he can earn eighteen shillings.

As many of the charitable institutions, hospitals, and societies are the means of employing these wrapper writers, who have to endure all the worst evils of the sweating system, Mr. Harvey has started a scheme by which the middle-man is displaced by the mission, with the result that the writer receives 4s. 6d. per 1,000, and he is not asked to wait for his money.

THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE.

BY MARY HAMPDEN.

CHAPTER V.



"GOOD-MORNING."

"Good-mornin', sir."

"What sort of weather are we likely to have to-day?"

"Wet and fine; a good beginnin', a middlin' arternoon, and a bad end. Night is likely to revarse the promise o' the mornin'."

"That is not a very cheerful prophecy."

The speakers were Mr. Bristol and old Bassett.

Hector, waking early on that, his first morning at Abbeylands, had strolled out into the garden before breakfast; and finding a man at work tying up carnations in a frame, had stopped to speak to him by way of killing the time, which was hanging heavily on his hands. He had not the remotest idea that he was addressing the "privileged bailiff," whose criticism of himself, as repeated by Edith, had given him such offence the evening before; but had asked a few careless questions on the Englishman's usual subject, more for the sake of speaking to someone than from a wish for information as to the prospects of sunshine or rain.

Hector did *not* like the country, and the scene around him on that June morning did not satisfy him. He had entered that part of the garden which was devoted more or less to the growth of vegetables. There were no flowers to be seen, with the exception of the young carnations which old Bassett was so carefully tending; unless, indeed, one were to count the cauliflowers and rhubarb which had run to seed, and were showing cream-coloured blossoms, or the pale mauve of the potato-flower. These did not seem to Hector worthy of the name: and neither the rank grass springing up, all sparkling with morning dew, beneath his feet, nor the damp earth around him, pleased "the Lunnon man," who heartily wished himself anywhere but in the old gardener's favourite corner of the grounds. Perhaps his face expressed his sentiments of disgust, or maybe Bassett was ready to take offence. No matter the reason, it was plain that the old man *was* offended.

"It 'll be too damp for you," he muttered, scornfully eyeing the faultless morning suit and spotless linen of his questioner. "There 'll be a fresh breeze, too, afore the day 's o'er, and you wouldn't like *that*, I 'm thinkin'."

"Why should you think I object to a gale?" laughed Hector.

"See them carnashuns," continued Ben; "they 've been brought up under glass; not a wind as they 've felt till to-day; an' now look at 'em! They 're throwin' out their leaves, long an' narrer, an' a kind o' pale blue, as though they loved the blessed air, and was rejoicin' in the sunshine. Does *they* look shivery-like—ready to drop off a-cause o' the breeze? No, they don't; but then they 've got twice as much sperrit as men have, as a rule. They 'd be ashamed to hang their heads and look half-dead; an' you 'll see 'em planted out next week, an' takin' to their noo quarters as ready as a ducklin' takes to the mother-hen. There 's no nonsense aboot flowers. That 's why I loves 'em!"

"I suppose you grow a great deal of fruit here?" inquired Hector.

"Grow a lot o' fruit? GROW it? D 'you suppose I 'm the Lord A'mighty? No, young man; it 's out o' my power (or yours either, for the matter o' that) to *grow* anything. However much we may toil an' spin, we can't make even a bit o' a lily-bud—that 's in the Bible, an' I s'pose you won't be contradictin' that, anyways! We guards the fruit fro' the birds an' insects, we prunes the tree a bit, an' feeds it, then we thins the fruit a bit, waits till it 's ripe, an' gathers it. That 's what *we* does. We don't *grow* it, 'cause we can't. Hows'ever, there 's a good bit o 't, so there is, when all 's told an' counted!"

"That was what I was asking," replied the young man, with some asperity of tone; for he resented the old servant's patronising airs. "Are you the head-gardener?"

"Head-gardener? Yes, aboot that, I reckon."

"What sort of society is there in this neighbourhood?"

"Most folks makes their own 'sersiety,' for there 's allus plenty o' sorts to choose from. There 's one man as passes by the public, an' eleven men as goes in an' sits a-drinkin' an' a-talkin' when they might be employin' theirselves useful."

"No doubt," said Hector; "but don't you have strangers here sometimes?"

"Well, there 's gen'elm comes down fro' Lunnon for the fishin,' as takes their rods an' sets theirselves down on a bank; then there 's another sort as gets theirselves up as flashy as posserble, wi' flowers in their coats, and drives aboot the place most o' the day—they 're all on 'em very spruce-like for to look at, but they never comes back a second time, on account o' the *debts* they leaves ahind 'em. Look ye there! See that dandelion a-standin' up i' the path? There 's a mighty lot o' colour aboot that weed, but it 's no partickler good, as e'er I heard. That 's the way to treat 'em!"

And old Bassett made a vigorous lunge at the plant, dragged it from the ground, and holding it aloft on the edge of his hoe, continued energetically—

"That 's all they 're good for! Hew 'em down! Strike once an' for all—don't let 'em get their roots set, or they 'll need a mighty pull for to get rid on 'em! The Lunnon gents as comes here are awful like

that. Bless you, young genel'm, when you gets to be my age you'll have learnt as it's easy, after all, to pick out the weeds o' humanity!"

"Can't you answer a direct question without morals, my good man?" said Hector. "I don't wish for the society of such men as you describe; but surely there are some good families resident about Aberstone. This is not the only estate in the county, I suppose?"

"We don't have none of 'em here," answered Bassett laconically; adding, however, under his breath: "P'raps they'll be all flockin' here directly, considerin' the increased attractions o' the place; but I don't believe nothin' till I see 'un!"

"You don't have any of them here? What, then, does no one visit Abbeylands?"

"No, sir. There's none of 'em as cares to come merely for pleasure, and there's none of 'em let to come for aught else; but I 'spect I'm aboot right in thinkin' that you're a-goin' to be the exception!"

"What do you mean? Please to keep a civil tongue in your head!"

"Beg pardon, sir," said old Bassett, stopping in his work to look up at Mr. Bristol with that simple expression which might mean either innocence or deception. "Beg your pardon humbly, sir, if I says anything that isn't up to standard. P'raps you're not the young gen'elm as was a-comin' from town for to stay indefitably?"

"Oh, I understand; your rudeness was unintentional, so we will say no more about it. You were quite right; I am Mrs. Weir's nephew."

"An' a sort o' cousin to little missie?"

"Well?" said Hector, turning sharply round towards the old man, instead of leaving him, as he had intended. "Of course I am Miss Edith's cousin by marriage. That is not a very puzzling relationship."

"Oh no, sir. I should be thinkin' as how you'd find it simple enough."

But old Ben had the wisdom to see, by Hector's lowering brow, that he had gone a little too far; so he added, with an appearance of great confidence—

"You see, sir, she's been wantin' a brother for years an' years, ever since she was a little tottling bit o' a lass; an' now she's grow'd up as pretty as a rosebud, an' with sech a fortin o' money, she's more in need o' him nor ever. Now, as though 't were a blessin' sent a-purpose, *you* turns up. Excoose my way o' puttin' it, sir: if I was you—if I may speak my mind wi'out offence—I'd just take little missie for a sister. An' that's the simplest way, surely."

"It is true that Miss Edith must often need a protector."

"She hasn't none but me," said old Bassett. "*I* allus tries to do my dooty by her, and I trusts I allus may."

If there was any deeper meaning underlying these words, Hector did not suspect it, being pleased with the old gardener's devotion to his young mistress, and satisfied that he was too ignorant to be an enemy; he therefore said with cordiality—

"I can understand that, having known her all your life, you must be very much attached to Miss Edith."

"Yes; many's the time as I've warned her agin danger. Sometimes she don't take no notice o' my words, an' then it behoves me to take all the more care of her. Will you be wantin' the saddle for Black Jim this morning, sir? or p'raps you don't ride in the country?"

"I don't know for certain; you had better have everything ready, in case I should accompany Miss Edith. But how is it—are you head-coachman and groom, as well as head-gardener?"

"Well, yes, sir, aboot that, I'm thinkin'."

Before young Bristol had time to realise that for the last quarter of an hour he had been standing talking to "old Bassett" himself—no mere manager of one department, but the virtual master of Abbeylands—a merry girlish laugh attracted his attention in the direction of the wall which surrounded that part of the garden.

From among the leafy branches of a pear-tree, and over the rough brick of the wall behind him, peeped the face of Edith Weir. He could see only the straw hat resting on her curly brown hair—the curls themselves, the smooth white brow below them, and just a glimpse of two grey eyes bright with laughter.

His little cousin waved a hand to him as a morning greeting, and flung at his feet a spray of moss-roses, crying—

"You are up early, Cousin Hector. Isn't it a beautiful morning! There are some roses for your buttonhole; I have just been gathering them from the porch."

Then Edith's pretty face peeped out again from among the leaves of the pear-tree. By the side of the wall where she was standing there lay a broken flower-pot, mounted upon which, she had the advantage of seeing the old gardener at work among his beloved carnations.

"Good-morning," she cried to him. Then, to her cousin: "So you and Bassett have been talking, Hector. Has he been telling you tales about my rash riding? I am afraid he often amuses people with accounts of my shortcomings."

"I was not aware—that is—we were talking of the weather, Miss Edith."

Mr. Bristol's manner seemed a little embarrassed. He was thinking of Bassett's remarks on "Lunnon gen'elm," and was not so sure now that the old servant's advice to him, "to be a brother to little missie," was meant for disinterested friendliness, as he had thought at first.

"I've not been sayin' aught that's much, missie; only a-tellin' him, in answer to his questions, as how it 'll be a wet evenin' arter a middlin' noon, an' as how there's not much company ever comes here: which I thinks both answers were pretty well right. The weather's in my bones, that's sartain, an' if there isna rain a-comin', may I never say aught that's true, never again!"

After a pause, he added solemnly—

"You'll find that true i' life, little missie, if you lives as long as I hopes you will—things as begins that bright more often nor not turns shady after a bit, an' then goes dark a'together. A grey day's the safest o' all others; an' likewise so's a quiet life, where nothin' rarely happens. Don't you put your faith in sunbeams, missie, till you've seen for yourself as there's no dark clouds on th' horizon."

"Oh, Bassett!" laughed the girl, "you are a dismal prophet! And I had made up my mind to have such a long ride this morning.—You would like to ride, would you not, Cousin Hector? Lilian is quite willing to come; and I want to show you the village. Aberstone is a very pretty place, you know. We can go to look at the church, and at the view from Mervyn Hill. We must make haste in to breakfast now, or we shall be late in starting. You know the nearest way back to the house, don't you, cousin? I would come and show you, only I can't venture to climb this wall!"

Hector walked quickly away, glad to escape from old Bassett's keen scrutiny. He would not have been better pleased had he heard the words which the old man muttered as he bent again over the carnations.

"Seems a cute 'un, he do. Lunnon chap or no, it 'll need a sharp eye to keep a watch o'er *him*, it will."

CHAPTER VI.

"Hector, I want so much to speak to you! Now that Edith has gone to her mother, we must have a great deal to say to each other."

"'Hush!—hush, Hector! Someone might hear us.'"—*p.* 91.

Lilian Bristol laid a hand detainingly upon her brother's sleeve. They were standing together in the hall, and he was just about to saunter out upon the terrace under the veranda.

"It is dull and wretched out of doors," she continued earnestly. "Come back to the drawing-room, where we shall be undisturbed."

"As you like, dear," he replied wearily, and followed his sister into the room. He heaved a sigh as he sank into an easy-chair by the window.

It was the afternoon of their first day at Aberstone: the day which had begun with his conversation with old Bassett. He had been riding for hours in Edith's

company over rough country roads; had passed through villages which seemed to him lonely and wretched to a degree; he had been taken to the church, and expressed a due amount of interest in its structure; had been introduced to Cousin Arthur's vicarage; and had finally been taken home to lunch, feeling thoroughly tired out by his unusual exertions, and not a little cross and dissatisfied with life as a whole. Edith had had no intention of tiring her cousins; she had only wished, in her sincere friendship, to share with them her chief pleasures and interests. That a man could feel the fatigue of a ten-mile ride never entered her imagination for a moment, for she had had no experience of the enervating influences of town life. But Hector, inexpressibly bored with the quiet, uneventful surroundings amid which he found himself, was not at that moment in a mood in which it was safe to anger him.

The room was darkened and shaded from the sun by long green blinds drawn down to the very floor. Every now and again the hot wind would shake a branch of the climbing roses against the open French windows; but for this occasional tap, and the murmuring hum of insects, no sound disturbed the stillness of the sultry summer air.

Lilian drew a chair to her brother's side, and leaning affectionately over him, parted the dark locks of hair which fell so low over his forehead.

"Dear," she murmured, "it is miserably tiring just at first. But cheer up! Remember that we are not here for pleasure, but for business."

"Pleasure! No, there is nothing so unlikely. Have we not always been unfortunate?"

"Yes; but I think our lives will be brighter for the future. What a pity it is, Hector, that you were not born in the position for which you are so well fitted!" she exclaimed. "How different a lot should have been yours!"

He laughed; not displeased at her evident admiration.

"My dear Lily, it is you who are unpractical now, not I. Will you remember that if we are in a miserable position, it is I who am to blame—I, who have spent our last penny over and over again! I am ashamed, sometimes, when I think how awfully good you are to me; but what is the use of troubling any more about it? We were not born for poverty: to be condemned to count every copper one throws to a beggar in the street: to weigh the cost of every meal we eat. We were not made for middle-class life even, and our *birth* is responsible for our extravagance."

He relapsed into silence, leaning back in his chair, with a deeply pained look upon his face. His words were true enough, as far as they went; though the fact that economy was difficult to him did not afford sufficient excuse for the reckless expenditure which had characterised their life in town. He had simply followed the example of many others with whom he was on equal terms as regards family pride, but with whose style of living it had been madness for him to attempt to compete. Hector had never viewed his father's profession in the unfavourable light in which it had appeared to the Weirs; and had always considered himself as closely allied to one of the oldest families in England—accepting the social status which that connection conferred upon him, without remembering that he was, at best, but a "poor relation."

Lilian, who had sympathised in all his troubles ever since she had been of an age to attempt comfort, sincerely forgave him for the difficulties which his conduct had brought upon them both, and had never treated his follies with the disapprobation which they deserved.

"Hector, I have been looking into the future," she said gently. "I have a plan by which I hope you may secure for yourself all that is yours by right. Is it possible that you do not know my scheme almost as well as I know it myself? Is there not a chance which it would be folly to refuse?—an opportunity which, if it be met with courage, may determine your future, may lead you far out of the old tedious path of poverty?"

Her brother looked uneasily at her questioning face.

"You are always thinking out plans of one sort or another for me, Lily. What is the latest one? Am I to prove such a docile nephew that Mrs. Weir is to devote to me a special paragraph in her will? Or am I to turn farmer, and breed pigs and cattle by way of earning a livelihood?"

"Don't laugh at me, dear. If I do make plans, it is more for your sake than my own; I would be content to vegetate at Abbeylands all my life, learn the mysteries of village existence, and doze away my tedious hours, as Aunt Mary does, if I could win a happier future for you—if you might go out into the great wide world of possibilities, to exercise your talents. No, dear; I am not anxious for you to throw away your life at Aberstone; but if you once had a stake in the country, an estate, a home, you would not need to sacrifice yourself to it: it would be merely a possession, which would have its value. Hector, you must understand me."

"Perhaps I do; but you had better explain yourself."

"Then, if I must speak plainly, why do you not win your cousin's love? It would be the simplest way out of all our difficulties, and I do not think you need dislike the means. It would be a mercenary marriage (I wish neither to shirk words nor truth, you see); but Edith is a pretty, affectionate little thing, who would make a good wife; she might——"

"In short," Hector interrupted, "your advice is exceedingly wise: I don't doubt that for a moment, Lily; but it is, at the same time, exceedingly distasteful. What would be the use of wealth and position if I did not love my wife? What good should we gain by—— But stay; I am forgetting, as I often do forget, how much I owe to you. You would not be poor either—there would be no more of those wretched shifts of economy which you have faced so bravely for my sake, while I—I fear I never tried to economise. Ah!" he added, with a groan, "if I had not been so mad—so reckless—we should not be reduced to thinking out such expedients!"

"But you do not dislike Edith?"

"Dislike Edith? No; who could? But I am not in love with her, nor with the prospect of passing years in this obscure spot on the earth's surface. Poor little girl! She is, as you say, both pretty and good; and I hate to think of doing my best, day after day, to win her affections because my debts oblige me to make love to her. Oh, Lily! you don't realise how utterly base a man must feel who cherishes such sordid motives: who is obliged to *act* that which he does not feel: who, if his efforts succeed, swears at the altar to love for a lifetime a girl who is no more to him than so many pounds, shillings, and pence!"

"Do you think, then, that I would suggest to you a dishonourable course of action? What have I ever done that you should doubt me so?"

"My dear Lily, don't be so excitable. I said, 'You do not realise the difficulties.'"

"Difficulties!" she echoed, with flashing eyes. "Difficulties! Are you the man to mock at the idea of a *mariage de convenance?* You, who have lived among people who recognise none but worldly motives: you, who have always laughed at the farce of the old saying, 'Love in a cottage,' and expressed your belief in 'sensible matches?' It may be impossible for you to fall romantically in love with this girl; but it is not the *sentiment* which is needed. Do you think that flowers and sighs, passion and promises alone, can make a man and woman able to face life side by side? No; determination to be true to each other: sincere regard, such as you may well feel for Edith: mutual obligation: necessity: any of these are far more likely to stand the test of time. Hector, you are surely making fun of me! You do not seriously mean that you could feel in any way to blame for falling in with an arrangement which is ready-made, as it were? Mrs. Weir, as a sensible woman, must have seen the chance which she is offering you, must be prepared to welcome you as a son, or she would never have asked you to Abbeylands."

"True," said Hector thoughtfully. "I am, after all, the man to whom she should most naturally turn. Lily, you are a wonderfully convincing logician, for you always argue that things which are expedient and easy ought to be done. It will not be the future which I had planned for myself; my castle-in-the-air was romantic, and this is a prosaic arrangement for making the best of evil; but then, castles are never tenantable. Yes, there *is* no help for it; I must win my little cousin for my wife!"

"Hush!—hush, Hector! Someone might hear us!"

He laughed at her alarm.

"Don't be so nervous, Lilian! That noise was only a rose tapping on the blind. Poor little soul! She has been so caged round that she ought not to be difficult to win. I will begin to make love to her to-morrow. Will that be soon enough to please you, my wise counsellor?"

"I do not think you will ever repent your decision, Hector."

They both rose, as though they felt that the conversation had come to an end, and that it would be better not to resume it. Lilian stepped towards the window, so that the breeze might cool her forehead and soothe her back to her usual quiet manner; her brother was leaving the room, when a cry from her made him look round.

"Hector," she whispered, running towards him with a look of alarm, "there was a man just outside pruning the roses: the windows were wide open: he must have heard every word we said!"

"A man! How dare the fellow——" He paused and then asked hastily: "What kind of a man, Lily?"

"An old man—a gardener, I suppose. He was standing on a ladder, quite close to the window, and he had some rose-cuttings in his hand. I didn't see him until I pulled up the blind, but he must have heard! What can we do, Hector?"

"Leave him to me; if the fellow tells tales, or shows us any impertinence, I shall know how to silence him."

Mr. Bristol strode angrily to the window, and, drawing back the curtain, found himself face to face with old Ben Bassett.

CHAPTER VII.

"Oh, Hector, how beautiful that is! I hope you are not tired; it is so good of you to read to me!"

"Tired! Why, how could I ever be tired of reading to such a charming listener? I could go on for ever, I assure you."

They were in the garden, sitting under the trees, in order to escape the bright shafts of the afternoon sun. Edith was leaning back in a low basket-chair, and Hector was lying on the grass at her feet. He had been reading aloud for the last hour the melodious stanzas of "Marmion," which had lost none of their beauty by his rendering; for, besides possessing a most finely modulated voice, he read with rare expression, even though his present task was not wholly pleasant to him.

It was the first day on which he had promised Lilian "to begin to make love to his little cousin"; and at times his better nature—his conscience—reproached him for the part he was playing. She was so innocently delighted at what she considered his "kindness," was so frankly happy when she pleased him, that he was touched by her sisterly affection, and regretted that he was forced to repay it by what was, at best, an insincere, if not a wholly dishonourable stratagem. And yet, what could he do? To what future could he look—for what could he hope—if not for the position of master of Abbeylands? His conscience was not easily stifled; it cost him no small amount of pain and shame to deceive these people who were good to him, for his pride was wounded whenever he realised the nature and character of his last ambition. But he laid the blame for all his actions at the door of "Necessity," and found some comfort in doing evil for his sister's sake rather than for his own. "Lilian cannot bear to live in poverty all her life," he would say to himself. "She is not able to face the world as I am. I will do my best to provide a home for her where she can be happy: not one where she can only struggle on, harassed by want and privation; nor yet a mere shelter, where she exists on sufferance. What if I suffer morally? Is

there not something noble in sacrificing even one's ideal conduct for another's good?" And so the battle of Right and Wrong was begun, as so many battles are, with a massing of great intellect and noble qualities on the side of the powerful, without distinction of cause. It is easier to walk down the broad road, helped forward by innumerable other pedestrians, than to climb the steep path painfully and alone, because it leads not to distinction, nor to gain of aught save virtue. But every man who turns his face determinedly from the Right is not wholly bad: many more sin in the name of Necessity than for the sake of wrong-doing.

Dreamily, Hector reopened the book, and entered once more the land of Romance; the breeze fluttered the leaves as he turned them idly; the birds sang so loudly in the trees overhead that he was sometimes obliged to raise his voice to make reading audible; and the sunny afternoon, filled with the bustle and growth of nature, passed away moment by moment—the commencement of a summer which was to be filled with momentous change for Hector and the Heiress of Aberstone.

Edith listened intently to the history which she had never heard before. She was a true lover of poetry; but perhaps her appreciation was heightened on this day by the fact that it was her newly found and adopted brother whose voice gave it life and interest.

Leaning forward, with her eyes fixed anxiously on his lips, as though she thought it possible to interpret sound by sight, she awaited the result of the Battle of Flodden Field.

> "With dying hand above his head,
> He shook the fragments of his blade
> And shouted 'Victory!'
> 'Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!'
> Were the last words of Marmion."

The reader paused; and Edith, leaning her hand lovingly on his shoulder, cried—

"Hector, tell me, *you* did not want to be a soldier?"

He started at the abrupt question.

"No; that has never been one of my ambitions. Why, little cousin? Do you blame me for it?"

"Oh no, no! Now that I have found you, I am selfish; you are so dear to me. I could not bear to lose you again."

Touched by her gentle affection and anxiety on his behalf, he raised her little hand to his lips, and kissed it with almost passionate energy. In thought, he was determining to be ever true and devoted to this girl, who was so good to him; if unable to give her a romantic love, he would at least learn to appreciate her sweet kindness of disposition.

Edith received that kiss with a smile of confidence and a little flush of pleasure; it was precious to her, as a proof of a *brother's* love.

"My dear Edith, you are a great deal too good to me. I do not know what the future may bring forth, but I have no wish to leave England if some employment should offer itself which will permit me to stay. If I could find time for the necessary study, I would try to pass the Civil Service exams."

"Your debts oblige you to work, don't they, Hector?" she asked timidly.

"Yes," he replied; "debts, many of which I ought never to have incurred."

"But, dear, if you had the money to pay them you would not have to go away from Abbeylands."

"No; but I have not the money."

"No; but *I* have it."

He looked down, hastily plucking handfuls of mossy grass, and as rapidly flinging them from him. When he spoke again it was in a low tone.

"Yes, of course you have, Edith; but there is a wide difference between us. We are only distant cousins, who are separated by family differences—by the quarrels of years."

"I wonder why the people one loves are always the most provoking?" sighed Edith, although a smile was creeping mischievously round the corners of her mouth. "I particularly want you to take me for your sister. Won't you try, Hector?"

"I will *try* anything that is likely to please you."

"Then, dear, the money ought to belong to you."

"Is that logic, Edith?"

"I don't know anything about logic. Hector, you won't let me be *very* unhappy about anything if you can help it, will you?"

"No," he replied, without hesitation; "I would give my life to serve you."

"Then you must never be offended at anything I say to you; you must always be ready to do as I wish—to share pleasures and worries, and everything you possess, with me. Will that be very hard?"

Her grey eyes were bright with laughter as she peeped down into his face.

"I do not possess anything that I would not readily give to you, little cousin. How am I to please you?"

The smile faded from her eyes, and was replaced by a wistful glance of entreaty. Would he be angry? She could fancy how he might spring to his feet and stride away, bitterly offended by her attempted aid. If this should be so, would he ever be the same to her again? Would he be able to forget the insult which she had unintentionally offered him? He was lying so peacefully on the lawn beside her chair; the sun, just glinting through the branches, threw a fleck of light on his broad low forehead, and touched one of his dark curls into golden brown. She could not see his eyes, for the lids fell over them; he was looking on the ground, and there was a reassuring smile upon his lips.

"Hector," she whispered, feeling that the time to speak had come, and that it would be mere folly to shirk the opportunity; "*dear* Hector, it would please me very much if you would let me pay——"

Her voice faltered so much that the last words were almost inaudible; but she knew instinctively that he had interpreted her meaning. His hand closed over the book with which it had been idly playing, but he neither moved nor spoke. Lying so, with his face turned from her, she could not guess how he would receive her offer. Minutes passed—periods of sixty seconds, each of which seemed an hour—and still Hector did not reply. Edith's small amount of courage had deserted her completely; she was not very old, nor was she very experienced or self-contained, poor little girl! and to

her this was a real misfortune. Hector offended—and perhaps he would never forgive her! No, she dared not speak; but a thought, accepted as a bright inspiration, flitted through her mind. Unfastening a pure white moss-rosebud which was pinned in her dress, she bent low, and laid it gently in her cousin's hand. Her ruse succeeded, for he rose, and looked her in the face with a smile. Her heart gave a great bound of joy, and she clasped him eagerly by the arm.

"You are not angry with me? Oh, Hector! I feared I had lost your friendship for ever."

"Heaven grant you may never wish to lose it, Edith," he said, speaking earnestly. "My debts are partly—no, *mainly*—due to my own follies. I cannot bear to deceive you into the belief that I am not to blame."

"Don't mind that; I am sure it was a mistake; you must have been very unhappy. Poor Hector! you will let me help you? because mamma wishes it, and because we are all proud of you. We will not talk about it any more just now; but I wish I could tell you how happy you have made me, my dear new brother! . . .

"Do say you belong to us now," she pleaded; and as he answered in the affirmative, a step was heard of some unseen person approaching them from the carriage-drive.

"Oh!" cried Edith, "here is Kate Burnside! She promised she would come to-day. We sing together in the choir, and she has come to practise the hymn for Sunday."

A figure was passing across the gravel, and coming into sight beneath the lime-branches: a tall, finely formed figure, too, for Kate was no slip of a girl, but a buxom maiden of some five-and-twenty summers. No man would have thought to call her beautiful; but her face was cast in a refined mould, her skin tinted like the rose-leaf, melting almost imperceptibly into the masses of soft flaxen hair which rippled around it; and her large, grave, kind blue eyes seemed to have caught a reflection from the summer sky.

To those who knew her, Kate Burnside showed qualities far better worthy of admiration than even her outward excellence. Truth-loving, simple, charitable: the friend of all in need: the enemy of none—she was a village heroine, who made her mark upon the fortunes of her day and world; she had never known a thought of regret for pleasures which were beyond the reach of the daughter of a poor gentleman-farmer.

Not a man, woman, or child in Aberstone who had not some good word to say for Kate, some anecdote to relate of her many acts of kindness. As Sunday-school teacher, choir-singer, or mistress of Oak-tree Farm, she was ever the same: girls might trust her with their love secrets, men could ask her advice, and profit by it, if they were wise; children never failed to coax nuts and apples from her well-ordered stores. Popular everywhere, yet always sweet and modest, she passed her days in the peace of well-doing.

Hector thought, as he glanced at her approaching form, that a man might well offer heart and hand to the village queen, and think himself a lucky fellow if she were willing to accept him; it was, indeed, rumoured that many men had been of that opinion—had wooed, but had not won.

"How do you do, Miss Weir? I should have been quite half an hour earlier, but my father wanted me. —How do you do, sir?" she added, as Edith introduced Hector. "I hope you will be very happy at Aberstone."

"Thank you, Miss Burnside. Pray sit down and rest yourself; I am sure you must be tired."

Kate accepted the chair which he offered her, and, laying aside her gloves, unfolded the music which she had brought. She made a very charming, if not a "pretty" picture, sitting there in the now fading sunlight. The dark grey cotton dress which she wore had not been worth more than a few pence a yard when new, and now showed signs of long wear and frequent washing; her hat, with its simple bow of black velvet, had not even a flower to adorn it; her hair was caught up behind in an unpretentious knot, formed of smooth golden plaits; indeed, there was not one attempt at ornament about her, with the exception of a plain gold ring, worn on the second finger of her right hand. Many a person had wondered as to the history of that ring; many a guess had been formed as to its possible donor; some had even ventured to question outright, knowing that Kate was not one to be angered by even impertinent curiosity; but no one had ever heard the tale of which that golden circle was a souvenir. "No," she had replied, "I don't think it would be right to tell you." And when Kate said, "It is not right," her determination was not to be trifled with.

So there the ring rested always, on the second finger of her long right hand—a hand well shaped and comely, in spite of the work to which it had always been accustomed; for in the bad days of agriculture Kate took upon herself many simple home-duties. Some declared that she had lost her heart years ago—had been jilted, and had never forgotten; that it was for the sake of a memory that she rejected so many offers of marriage. However that might be, true or false, she never spoke willingly of the ring which she wore so constantly.

"Perhaps," she said, looking up at Hector, "you and Miss Bristol will sing in the choir, now that you have come to Abbeylands? We are sadly in need of some strong voices."

"I!" Hector was amazed at the suggestion. "I should be of no possible use," he was beginning, when Edith put a stop to his excuses by saying merrily—

"Now, cousin dear, have you forgotten your promise already? You know you said that you would do anything in the world to please me!"

She looked so pretty, laughing out at him from beneath the wide brim of her garden-hat, that Hector could not find it in his heart to say more.

"I met Mr. Ford as I came up the lane, Miss Weir," said Kate. "He was walking with a gentleman; and he told me to give you all his love, and to tell you that he hopes to come up to Abbeylands early to-morrow morning."

"A gentleman! Oh, Kate! what sort of a gentleman?"

"You are very inquisitive, my little cousin. Is a gentleman such a rare sight in this part of the country?"

"Why, of course, Hector. There is no one whom it could have been, for Squire Dorset is ill, poor man! You don't know how wonderful it is when any stranger comes to Aberstone!"

"I begin to understand why you were so kind to me."

"You naughty, teasing cousin!—Kate, was he anyone you know?"

"Not by sight, Miss Weir, but the Vicar kindly introduced him to me; he is a young gentleman, not more than five-and-twenty, I should think; and very tall."

"Do you think Cousin Arthur will bring him tomorrow?"

"I believe he means to do so, for he said to the gentleman, 'I hope to show you Abbeylands tomorrow, Henry.' I think he meant me to hear that, Miss Weir, as no doubt he wished you to know."

"Oh, how delightful!—Did you hear, Hector? Cousin Arthur is going to bring a stranger to see us! Won't you be pleased? You and he will be sure to have so much to say to each other!"

"Have two men who meet for the first time usually so many topics of conversation?" asked Hector coldly. He did not like the idea of the new-comer; what did Mr. Ford mean, he wondered, by bringing any "stranger" to Abbeylands? What right had he to throw any young man in Edith's way?

"Yes," continued Edith, "there will be a great deal for you to talk about—hunting, shooting, politics, ambitions. Oh! I don't remember half the things you can consult about!—Kate," she added, turning towards that maiden, and questioning her in a playfully imperative manner, "Kate, what is the gentleman's name? Who is he? And where does he come from?"

"He comes from Italy," answered the girl, laughing. "But his home would be at Saxby Court, I suppose, for he is Lord Saxby's brother; and his name is Lord Henry Wynn."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Mr. Ford, a few days earlier, had received a letter from Lord Henry Wynn, in which the writer proposed running down to Aberstone to renew the Vicar's acquaintance, and to take a week or two's holiday, "Cousin Arthur" had hailed the proposition with enthusiasm. He had known Lord Saxby's brother some years before as a promising young fellow, just attaining his majority. It is seldom that a naturally quiet and retiring man—however well intentioned—contrives to impress his acquaintances with any great degree of favour; but in Mr. Ford, Lord Henry found a critic to whose keen insight the most self-concentrated mind was intelligible. Thus a friendship sprang up between the two men: interrupted, to their mutual regret, by the travels of the younger; but Mr. Ford, during the years which had parted them, had heard only good of Henry Wynn. He was spoken of as one of the rising men of the time. An eager politician, he devoted his energies to bettering the condition of the poor; and though not yet universally popular, he was what is perhaps more enviable—universally respected. Much of his time was absorbed by the care of his brother, whose ill-health rendered it probable that, at no distant date, Lord Henry would find himself the head of the family.

Saxby Court was situated about ten miles from Aberstone, but the young man had written to his friend—

"I have no fancy for all the mouldy misery of a deserted house. Will you take me in, and forgive the audacity of the request, for the sake of our old friendship?"

"Come at once," Mr. Ford had telegraphed; and the two men found themselves again face to face, after an interval of four years.

Mr. Ford had not altered in the least, unless, indeed, care and hard work had added a few lines to his brow. Lord Henry had changed only so much as a young man must change with years. His boyish diffidence was still noticeable, but was more firmly held in check than of old.

The friends were seated at table—lingering over a sociable breakfast in a quaint little parlour, whose walls were nearly covered by books. Through the open window the eye rested gratefully on the old-fashioned flowers growing in glorious profusion in the vicarage garden: larkspur and hollyhock, roses and lilies, and clumps of many-coloured phlox; while on the window-ledge, Peggy, the Vicar's old half-blind spaniel, lay basking in the sun, and occasionally barking in her dreams, as she lived over again the days of her youth—the wild rat-hunts by the banks of the Thorpe, and the happy hours of rabbit-chasing in the Warren.

"I want you to make a very good impression at Abbeylands, Henry. My relations are out of the world, and have been so for years, therefore they are easily influenced by first impressions. My aunt has carefully kept her daughter from such companionship as the village affords; indeed, until now she has never mixed with any of her own age and rank, so you must expect to find her unversed in the society airs and graces to which you may be accustomed; but you must promise to recognise the *natural* charms which make my little Edith so lovable."

"Why do you think my opinion of so much importance? and why expect or wish me to make 'a favourable impression'? The mere idea of attempting such a thing is enough to take away all one's courage."

"Why?—Ah!" mused Mr. Ford, in a low tone, delivering his thoughts almost unintentionally. "It would be better, perhaps, to take you in without ceremony, as I always go myself; then you would see them at their best, and there would be none of the fuss which you dislike. You ask me why I want you to make a favourable impression," he continued, rousing himself from his reverie: "because you are my friend, a man whom I rightly esteem; and Edith

is my pet, whom I love as I might love a daughter; whom I have taught and scolded, and who has coaxed and teased *me*, for fifteen or sixteen years at least. I am fond of both of you, and I should like—— Ah me!" he added, rising from his chair, and beginning to pace the room, as was his custom when at all excited. "I am going on too fast, and saying more than I ought to say. I was thinking of trying to get up a match between you and Edith."

Lord Henry's face clouded slightly with a look of anxiety. Leaning back in his chair, so as to be able to look into and read his friend's face, he said hesitatingly—

"You think it is my duty to marry, Ford?"

"Undoubtedly. Think of the position which you must expect shortly to assume; remember the description you yourself gave me of the forlorn condition of Saxby Court. My dear Henry, I think it most decidedly your duty to find a partner in life; and when a thing has to be done, why delay about it?"

"But supposing I should be so blind as not to fall in love with Edith Weir? Would you be very much disappointed?"

"I am convinced," cried the Vicar, "that no one could help falling in love with her."

Lord Henry was silent for some moments, not being able to assail Mr. Ford's conviction. He reviewed the matter in his own mind, and was surprised to find how very little anxious he was to be introduced to the young lady who was selected to be his wife. Occupying himself with stroking Peggy's glossy coat and playing with her drooping ears, he hoped that the subject of conversation was about to be changed; but Mr. Ford continued—

"Edith's cousins have just come to Abbeylands."

"Her cousins! Male or female?"

"One of each—step-cousins, rather," answered the Vicar laconically. "I fancy *the* cousin, Hector Bristol (who, by-the-bye, is sadly in debt, and without an income worth mentioning), has some idea of making Abbeylands his home. I may be wrong; but I think he has determined to try and win my little Edith's love. You will consider me very prejudiced, I dare say; but I cannot believe it would be for her happiness if she put her trust in this man. I have nothing to say against him personally; he has good manners, and is a gentleman, in spite of his father's faults; but I do not like him. There, I did not mean to give you the impression that my aunt is a careless mother; she is nothing of the sort—only a little too confiding and innocent. As for me, I take a great deal upon myself, I know, being only her nephew; but I should like to see Mr. Bristol sent to earn his own living. Work should be no hardship for a young man blessed with excellent health."

"And so you want me, not only to do my best to win this little cousin of yours, but also to cut the ground from under the feet of a rival. Oh, Ford! what a terrible man you are!"

"You will forgive me when you see what a dear little girl she is."

"But what is to become of me if I lose my heart to the other cousin? She is young and pretty as well, I suppose?"

Mr. Ford's brow puckered a little; but he answered in a tone which sounded most decisive—

"Oh, there is not the least likelihood of such an unfortunate complication. Yes, Lilian Bristol is young and—well, I should call her handsome. But you will not fall in love with her."

The young man laughed.

"I don't feel like falling in love with anyone. This is such a startlingly sudden proposition of yours."

"If you have done breakfast, shall we set out on our walk, Henry? I am determined that you shall enter the house unannounced, if I can manage it."

And Mr. Ford did manage it. Taking his friend round to the side of the house, he walked unhesitatingly into a room on the ground floor which had an exit into the garden. There were sounds of merry laughter from within, blended with strains of music; but the Vicar, fearlessly interrupting the melody, pulled his friend through the door into the midst of the group which was gathered round the old piano.

Edith was standing up to sing, leaning both her hands lightly upon Hector's shoulders, as he sat playing her accompaniment. Her plain white dress was finished at the throat by falling ruffles of lace, from which her slender neck rose gracefully, and over which floated the soft curls of her warm brown hair. Her attention was totally absorbed by her song; she did not even notice the sound made by the opening door. Leaning on the other side of the piano, facing the performers, stood Lilian Bristol, whose attentive eyes were regarding with interest the Vicar and his friend; and seated at the table, busy with pen and ink, sat Kate Burnside. She, too, had observed the entrance of the gentlemen, and was looking up with a smile of amusement, to see when Edith would become aware of their presence. She had not long to wait.

"Oh, Cousin Arthur—how good of you to come so early!"

"I have brought a friend, Edith." And Mr. Ford introduced Lord Henry.

Of all the party, perhaps Lilian was most displeased at the interruption, noticing the unaffected pleasure with which Edith was talking to Lord Henry, whose attentions she at once determined to engage herself, so as to leave a clear field for Hector.

"How do you do, Miss Burnside?" said Mr. Ford's friend presently, reaching a hand to her across the table. "I hope your father is better this morning?"

"Yes, thank you, my lord."

"May I ride across and see him to-morrow?"

"I am sure he will be delighted."

Mr. Ford felt sure, in his own mind, that their morning visit to Abbeylands would be a success; still, he was not as pleasurably satisfied when he walked back to the vicarage with Lord Henry Wynn.

"My dear boy," he began, "how do you like her?"

"Very much indeed; who could help it?"

"No; that was what I thought: she is so young and frank."

"Indeed, she is all that you described her to be. The other cousin is a very fine girl."

"Yes," said Mr. Ford, somewhat uneasily. "Oh

"A step was heard of some unseen person approaching."—*p.* 93.

yes; but *as a rule* her manner is very cold and reserved. She speaks little to anyone, and does not seem anxious to please."

"She was not at all like that to-day."

"No," cried the Vicar, with sudden heat. "No; I wish she had been. I did not understand her manner to-day at all. She surprised me, and I regret it. I am *afraid* she was trying to captivate you, Henry."

"Oh, she was only very gay, and a little inclined to flirt; so many girls see no harm in flirting just for fun."

The Vicar sighed. Lilian flirting "just for fun!" He did not believe it, nor did he like the idea.

"How old should you take Miss Burnside to be?" continued his friend.

"Good gracious, my dear fellow! How much interest you seem to take in her! Kate is five-and-twenty."

"Five-and-twenty!—she is a very charming girl!" said Lord Henry, with an air of conviction.

* * * * * *

The next day was Sunday: the Bristols' first Sunday at Abbeylands.

The morning walk to the church was the pleasantest part of the day, Hector thought: down the long quiet lanes, shaded from the sun by the boughs of the lime-trees which interlaced overhead; through the primitively silent streets of the little village, whose cottage-doors, swinging open in the breeze, gave passing glimpses of home-life within.

Then followed an hour and a half of service, during which many members of the congregation glanced round at the organ-loft, wondering at the improvement in the singing; assuredly such melody had never before been heard in Aberstone parish.

Edith and Hector were well pleased to join their voices, and Lord Henry was quite satisfied to assist Kate Burnside. Lilian, who had refused to sing, was seated at the organ, listlessly playing the accompanying chords; but her heart was far away from the task, and, except at intervals, when she had time to watch Edith and Hector, as they stood side by side, she had no interest whatever in the proceedings.

It was Mr. Ford's custom to dine on Sundays with his relations at Abbeylands, and the invitation had on this occasion been extended to his friend.

Mrs. Weir, owing to a bad headache, had been unable to accompany the young people to church that morning. Lilian tried her best to secure Lord Henry as her own cavalier for the homeward walk; but as both he and Hector were talking to Edith, she found her efforts unavailing, and resigned herself to a *tête-à-tête* with the Vicar—an ordeal which she would

willingly have shirked, for she was convinced that he was aware of her plans for her brother's future, and disapproved equally of her and of them. However, it was her rule to be prepared for every circumstance, no matter how awkward it might be; she therefore determined that no cross-questioning, no well-directed hint, should put her off her guard.

Unfortunately, she had not yet been able to believe that her relations were not her natural enemies, who were only seeking the opportunity to thwart her wishes in every way. Mr. Ford, certainly, was not a very alarming member of the family; but her prejudice coloured even his kindness with an objectionable hue. "He is jealous!" she thought. "If Lord Henry Wynn should fail in winning Edith, he is capable of trying himself, rather than see the old quarrel ended—rather than that Hector should enjoy his rights!" Nothing could have been farther from poor Mr. Ford's ideas: his love for Edith was as a father's love; but injustice is not careful in its choice of weapons, and Lilian believed in the possibility which her own thoughts alone had created.

"I hope playing the organ has not tired you," the Vicar began gently, as soon as they entered the quiet lane, where conversation was no longer interrupted by the salutations of his parishioners. "It is rather hard work for anyone who is not accustomed to it. But perhaps you have acted as organist before, Miss Bristol?"

"No, not in church. I very seldom go there at all," answered the girl, with assumed carelessness.

Mr. Ford sighed.

"I saw the old women crying most happily over 'There is a green hill far away,'" he said. "Poor old souls! The Sunday music is a great treat to them, and I am most thankful to you all for improving it so materially. Now that you have come home for good, may I hope that the improvement may be continued?"

"Perhaps it may be, Mr. Ford; but I really do not know how long I shall stay at Abbeylands; that will, of course, depend upon my brother's movements."

"Not stay at Abbeylands?" said Mr. Ford, ignoring her rudeness. "My dear Miss Lilian, I should hope that the day is very far distant when you will leave us. If your brother should have to go to London, for instance, if he should enter some profession which should take him abroad, surely *your* home is here?"

"I shall never consent to leave Hector while he needs me, Mr. Ford."

"You are greatly devoted to your brother?"

"Yes; Hector has had too few friends in his life to wish to throw over his sister for the sake of strangers. Those who have forced us all these years to depend so utterly upon each other must blame themselves for having made us inclined to doubt their somewhat tardy kindness!"

Lilian had not intended to say so much; but her temper, which had been threatening to break forth all the morning, forced the words from her, as it were, against her maturer judgment. No sooner were they uttered than she would have given much to recall them; but such power of revocation is not given to man or woman; an angry word, once spoken, can no more be recalled than a pebble thrown out into the waves can be rescued from the depths of the ocean.

The Vicar pitied the confusion and regret which were made visible by her heightened colour and downcast eyes.

"My dear," he said, laying a hand kindly upon her arm, "I am sorry you should have had such feelings in your heart against us; but I do not wish to blame you. You are determined to make enemies of us; but you cannot prevent my wish to be your friend. Some day, perhaps, you will learn better; you may, in the future, have difficulties and sorrows (may God keep you from them!)—but if you ever need help which I can give, you need not be afraid to trust me."

(To be continued.)

THE FIRST WORK FOR GOD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH MARRIED," "THE FIVE TALENTS OF WOMEN," ETC. ETC.

THE time in which we live is honourably distinguished by a widespread desire on the part of those who have money and leisure to work for man and therefore for God. Every day we hear of some new and often very ingenious scheme of philanthropy that would have astonished our grandparents. No doubt all too many pass by on the other side instead of assisting their wounded brethren; but these people must sometimes feel that they are out of touch with their generation and rather behind the times. And even amongst do-nothings there are not a few who would work for God if they only knew how to begin.

In doing good, as in everything else, well begun is half done. It is the first step that costs. Some people seem almost incapable of organising any work. They can follow but they cannot lead. So they stand idle in the market-place until someone hires them and puts them to work. Yet there is work for God which everyone can do, even those who are most deficient in organising power; and it is work which each person must do for himself. This work, too, is the necessary antecedent of all good work. What is the work to which I allude? It is the

giving up of self to God. Until we have given ourselves to Him to be employed as He thinks best, we shall work neither usefully, hopefully, nor happily.

St. Paul, knowing that one good example is worth a thousand commands, when he desired to stir up the Corinthians to contribute for the poor saints at Jerusalem, asked them to consider how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of the joy of the Macedonians and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. "For to their power," he says, "I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord." God does not stand in need of the money, time, or work of any man, but these He graciously accepts as tokens of his loyalty, if first the man has given himself to Him. Our Heavenly Father does not ask us for our energy, our talents, or anything else except our hearts. "My son, give me thine heart." Properly speaking, indeed, it is not in our power to withhold this gift of ourselves, for whether we are willing or not willing to give ourselves, we are the Lord's. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." Surely if God created us and Christ purchased us, we cannot for one moment claim ourselves as our own property. Indeed, we cannot say that we have a vested interest in, and right to, any one thing. Some of us no doubt fancy that we ought to be happy, and grumble if we are not so. And yet what right have we to be happy? We have a right to nothing, not even to existence itself. Every thing that we talk of as "having" is God's—all our money, time, and talents are only lent to us by Him in order that with them we may do His work on earth. "Occupy till I come," He says to each of us; and of our stewardship we must all give account.

Still, though we belong to God, and in one sense cannot give ourselves, in another sense we can do so. We can give ourselves in the sense of being willing that He, in carrying on the scheme of things which we call the universe, should do with us and work through us whatever seems to His all-knowing mind most expedient. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." "Here am I: send me."

Until we have taken this first step of giving ourselves to God, we can do no good work for either Him or man. Before we do this, the shadow of self darkens everything. We pick and choose our work. We are jealous of other workers. If we do not see immediate results, we grow weary and hopeless—

> "Thus we are never men, self's wretched swathing
> Not letting virtue swell;
> Thus is our whole life numbed, for ever bathing
> Within this frozen well."

When a man has given himself to God and taken this first step as a worker for Him, he sees everything in a new light. He does not care how humble and apparently unimportant the work is to which he is put, for he knows that "all service is the same with God—with God, whose puppets, best and worst, are we." He would rather be a door-keeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of ungodliness. He is never proud or self-righteous about any work he may have been enabled to do, for he feels that without God's inspiration and assistance he could not have done it. He gave himself to his Heavenly Father, and He used him as an instrument—that is his simple explanation. William Wykeham being appointed by King Edward to build a stately church, wrote in the windows, "This work made William Wykeham." When charged by the King for assuming the honour of that work to himself as the author, whereas he was only the overseer, he answered that he meant not that he made the work, but that the work made him, having before been very poor, and then in great credit. So it is that any work God enables us to do, makes us rather than we it. And when it is said that we are to work out our own salvation, what is meant is not that our salvation should be the effect of our work, but our work the evidence of our salvation. We give ourselves to God, and He works in us both to will and to do.

Perhaps there is nothing which so much retards and cripples work for God and man as the jealousy, suspicion, and want of union that prevail amongst the workers. Is not selfishness the root of this trouble? If workers would honestly and once for all give themselves to God, jealousy could not exist amongst them. All their concern would be that God's work should be done, and whether it were done by themselves or by others would seem of little or no importance. When some of those who opposed St. Paul took the opportunity of his imprisonment to preach Christ, the Apostle was so far from being annoyed, that he rejoiced that Christ should be preached at all. What cared he for any little personal slight, so long as the Saviour was made known to a perishing world? Like St. John, he was ever ready to say in reference to his Master, "He must increase, but I must decrease." At his conversion he gave his "I" to God, and his happy experience and the inspiration of his work ever afterwards were, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." He had got rid of self, that "dreadful usurpation of God's exclusive right."

Another advantage the worker has who has first given himself to God is, that he does not waste energy in fretting about the result of his work. He does his best, and leaves results to God. An American clergyman was so much discouraged by the spiritual harvest where he had laboured hard in sowing the seed of the Word, that he thought of changing his field of employment. He was deterred from doing so by a dream. He dreamed that he was a poor man seeking work, and that at last he found an employer, who gave him a sledge-hammer, and showed him an immense rock, as large as the largest church, and told him to hammer upon the rock until he had split it in pieces. After hammering away for some time, he at last remonstrated that the work given him to do was impossible. His employer replied: "That is nothing to you; I shall pay you for doing the work—whether you succeed or not is no concern of yours; you have only to do the work." Upon this he redoubled his blows, but was on the point several times of laying

down his hammer. Still the employer said—"Keep to your work. Smite the rock! Smite the rock!" He continued to smite, though the task seemed quite hopeless, when all at once the rock burst asunder, and he awoke from his dream. This dream gave so much courage and zeal to the clergyman, that without changing his sphere of labour, he had not long to wait before he did see results.

When Moses was about to lead the Israelites into Canaan, he said to God, who had threatened to withdraw from the stiffnecked people, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." And when the leadership fell to Joshua, he derived strength and courage from the thought that he would only be carrying out the orders of the Highest. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

General Gordon attributed his wonderful influencing power and successful work generally to the felt fact that it was God who worked in him both to will and to do. Without Him, he said, he would be no stronger than an empty sack bumping upon a camel's back. Nor is it only by the worker who has given himself to God that the power derived from doing so is felt and recognised. Men take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus.

And if even men do in the long run discover the hollow ring of self-seeking work, surely nothing but the genuine metal can be of any value in the eyes of Him from Whom no secrets are hid. A minstrel played before a certain king on the occasion of a great festival. He woke the strings of his harp to sweetest melody, but the hymn was to his own glory alone. It celebrated the exploits of song which the bard had himself performed, telling how he had excelled high-born Hoel's harp, and emulated soft Llewellyn's lay. When the feast was over, the harper said to the monarch, "O king, give me thy guerdon; let the minstrel's meed be paid." Then the monarch replied, "Thou hast sung unto thyself—pay thyself; thine own praises were thy theme." The harper cried, "Did I not sing sweetly? O king, give me gold!" But the king answered, "Thou didst lavish sweetness upon thyself. Get thee gone; thou shalt not serve in my train." So it is that all our doings without charity or love to God and man are nothing worth, and shall receive no recompense of reward.

When Æschines said to Socrates, "I am a poor man, and have nothing else, but I give you myself;" "Do you not," the latter replied, "perceive that you are giving me what is of the greatest value?" Let us give ourselves to God, and He will consider the gift of the greatest value. This is the first step towards real success in any philanthropical work. Having taken this first step, God will show us the second, and the third, and all the steps up to Heaven for ourselves and those whom we shall be enabled to bring along with us.

BELOW THE SEA-LEVEL.

"A LAND that rides at anchor and is moored—In which they do not live, but go aboard," is Butler's humorous description of Holland. The arms of the United Provinces represent a lion swimming, with the motto, "*Luctor et emergo*" (I strive and keep my head above water). Zealand, as the name signifies, is land rescued from the sea—land that is twenty to thirty feet below high-water mark.

No country in the world is like the home of the Dutchman. "In no other country do the keels of the ships float above the chimneys of the houses; and nowhere else does the frog, croaking from among the bulrushes, look down upon the swallow on the housetop." Nor does this hardly-won, jealously-guarded land of Mynheer alone excite wonder. It is peopled by a patriotic race, that, single-handed, shook off the yoke of Spain, banished for ever the horrid Inquisition, and kept inviolate the Protestant faith. For a century Holland was the centre of the world's commerce; she was supreme upon the sea; she was foremost in maritime discovery; she excelled in the culture of flowers; in manufactures and in painting she occupied the

A DUTCH CANAL

front rank. Above all, she has handed down to posterity the memory of her gallant sons, men of stainless reputation and honest worth, such as John Barneveldt and William, Prince of Orange.

A typical Dutch town is Middleburg, the capital of Zealand, in the island of Walcheren. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, it did a large trade as the centre for French wines, with a population of 25,000. It has since shrunk to some 15,000 souls. Many of its houses are now uninhabited, and many of its warehouses are empty and unused.

Above the square where an old abbey formerly stood, of which few vestiges remain, rises a lofty tower that goes by the name of Long John. It is well worth climbing the two hundred and fifty steep stairs that lead to the belfry in order to enjoy the fine view. From such a height the plan of the town is at once apparent. It is protected by a circular line of fortifications, and has ornamental lakes with pretty serpentine walks beneath the shade of overhanging trees. Here one would be greatly tempted to wander and linger, were it not for the evil odours arising from the stagnant water. The houses are built in circles, clustering more thickly around the tower as a centre. Close by is the town-hall, a very fine old building, adorned with statues of the Counts of Flanders. A branch canal penetrates the town, and almost at one's feet lies a big barque, her bowsprit stretching over the street; beyond are more vessels and bridges, and farther still the broad canal connecting the East and West Scheldt. The remote prospect is extensive, and embraces the tower of Antwerp Cathedral, and the belfry of Bruges. North-west is the long line of dunes or sandhills, and the enormous Kappel dyke, the largest in Holland.

As flat as a pancake is Zealand, with here and there a straight road, miles long, leading one wonders whither. The landscape is saved from painful monotony by the high state of cultivation to which it has been brought, and the roads, though straight and level, are bordered by rows of trees—mainly willows—that, planted at regular intervals, cast a refreshing shade.

Middleburg is a model of cleanliness; and no wonder, for its inhabitants have a perfect mania for cleaning. The busy housewives are perpetually scouring and mopping, with a whole paraphernalia of buckets, pails, and pump-engines. Boards are scrubbed to a spotless whiteness; floors are so spick and span that shoes are left at the door before crossing the immaculate threshold. The cobble-stone streets, the side-walks that re-echo the clatter of sabots, the very gutters, are all in keeping. Turf being used as fuel in the houses, there are no unsightly smuts to combat. The cottages are very much alike in appearance; the windows and doors are painted in an obtrusively crude green, the rest of the building being white-washed; and not a wall or fence is allowed to fall into disrepair.

Very fond of Holland is the long-legged stork, and very fond of the long-legged stork is the Dutchman, a little superstitious veneration being mingled with the feeling. Lest it should build in his chimney and make a litter, he places on his roof a large cart-wheel, or some such contrivance, as a proper foundation for its nest. And what an odd, funny look these outside tenants give to the Dutchman's home!

Another strange sight is the large number of windmills—Holland contains nine thousand. Some are so large that a single sail will measure one hundred and twenty feet in length. They are used as much for pumping water as for grinding corn, for the polders—as the fields are called that have been rescued from the sea and dyked—need to be kept free of water. The Dutchman is unceasingly vigilant against his natural enemy. A special corps of engineers called Waterstaat has been organised, whose duty it is to watch the state of the waters. Along the dykes there are frequent posts of observation, with appliances for adding to the height of the embankments should the sea suddenly rise. During the storms of winter it is sometimes a race between the sea and the dyke builders.

But Holland is menaced by a greater danger even than the ocean. In the spring, should the ice in the German rivers melt before the Dutch rivers are free, the country is threatened with an inundation. The Rhine has been known to rise as much as seven feet in one hour, and when such an event happens, and the obstruction at last breaks, ice and icebergs sweep away in their devastating career houses, cattle, land, and human beings.

Besides the watchmen of the waters there are the town watchmen, who at night make a great clatter with wooden clappers as they prowl about the streets, to warn off thieves. In the daytime you may frequently meet a gentleman dressed in black and wearing a black hatband; he carries a sheet of paper in his hand. This is the Aanspruker (announcer), whose business it is to go round to the relatives of a deceased person and announce to them his death. With us, when anyone of importance is ill, a daily bulletin of the invalid's health, certified by the doctor, is published. In Holland this practice is common to all classes, the notice being placed on the front door.

Slow and cautious by nature in all his ways, the Dutchman does not enter lightly into the holy estate of matrimony. Engagements are long, and a three years' courtship is the rule. When a Friesland youth has screwed his courage to the sticking point, he visits the "beloved object" in her parents' house in the evening.

GOING TO CHURCH.

His mission is understood, and one by one the household retire, leaving at last the couple to themselves. Yet the lover does not speak of love; he talks on indifferent subjects, all the while eagerly watching for a favourable sign. Should the girl let the fire go down, he soon makes an excuse, and ruefully takes his departure; should she, on the contrary, pile on more fuel and increase the blaze, he knows that the offer of his hand and heart will probably be accepted.

A great resort for lovers are the periodical fairs called Kermis; they are much patronised by servant-girls and their sweethearts; but should a girl have no

A WINDMILL SCENE IN HOLLAND.

"follower" she can, for a small sum, hire one for the occasion.

The Dutchman's wife is a treasure to be greatly prized. She rules her house with diligence and frugal care. "Yea, it is a general observation in this country," says an old writer, "that when the women have the direction of the purse and trade, the husbands seldom prove bankrupts, it being the property of a true-born Holland wife, presently after marriage to apply herself wholly to her business."

One of the chief comforts of a Dutch lady is the *vuur stoof*, a square box with an opening at the side to hold an earthen pan of hot embers. The box is perforated at the top so as to allow the heat to ascend and warm the feet: it serves too as a footstool; a servant carries it after the lady when she goes out; and these boxes may be seen piled up in the churches to a great height.

In the neighbourhood of Middleburg, and reached by one of the long, straight roads before mentioned, is Veera. It is one of those decayed or dead towns whose glory has long since departed; its streets are silent, and a line of unused warehouses overlooks its empty quays. It contains a huge church, one-third part of which is portioned off for the spiritual needs of the inhabitants, and is amply sufficient for their requirements. Like most of the Dutch churches, it has an ugly exterior, and a plain, whitewashed interior. Whatever architectural beauty it may have possessed was stripped from it at the Reformation. To reach it forms a pleasant walk for Sunday afternoon.

Sunday gives a good opportunity, too, for seeing the national dress, as nearly everyone goes to church; and to a stranger such an assembly presents a curious sight. The headgear of the women consists of a white cap with a large crown, and on a level with the eyes are tabs, from which hang gilt ornaments. The dress has short sleeves, and, as no gloves are worn, bare arms are universal; the skirt is distended at the hips by an immense hoop. In this costume (and the costume varies with the district), the little girls look like miniature old women. The men wear tall hats, higher and rougher than ours, or more generally peaked caps, and keep their heads covered during the service. Their coats are short-waisted, much braided, and are fastened with enormous buttons; their trousers are very wide and thick, and are held in place by a coloured belt, wherein a dirk is stuck. They are fond of earrings, and filigree ornaments secure the collar and cravat. Many of the youths stand about inside the doorway as if too shy to venture farther. All have grave, attentive faces, and follow earnestly the service. As usual in Lutheran churches, the numbers of the hymns and tunes are displayed on a black-board; the congregation sit during the singing, which is more noisy than musical, and stand to pray. The minister has a ruff round his neck, and wears a short black cloak reaching to the knees. After the sermon, which is announced beforehand by placards, there follows a collection, to which all present contribute; and, the service ended, the congregation breaks up into picturesque groups of neighbours and friends, who wend their way homewards in the glow of the Sabbath sunset.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.—LESSONS ON ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

DECEMBER 20TH. THE RISEN CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES.

To read—St. John xxi. 1—14. *Golden Text—Col. iii.* 1.

INTRODUCTION. This chapter tells of Christ's third appearance to His disciples, and the one miracle recorded after His resurrection.

I. THE MIRACLE. (1—14.) Notice these points:—

The place. Sea of Tiberias (or Galilee). Connected with three events in St. Peter's life.

His first call by Christ to follow Him. (St. Matt. iv. 18.)

His second call after the draught of fishes. (St. Luke v. 11.)

His walking on the sea, and faith failing. (St. Matt. xiv. 29, 30.)

Now to be the scene of his full forgiveness.

The persons. Peter, and Thomas Didymus (*twin*). Nathanael, elsewhere called Bartholomew.

The sons of Zebedee and Salome—James and John.

Two other disciples—seven in all.

Simon Peter, as so often, takes the lead. (Ver. 3.)

The events. An ordinary night's fishing cruise.

As before (St. Luke v. 5), toil all night in vain.

In misty daybreak a figure seen on shore.

His form unrecognised, though so well known.

His voice bids them cast on right side of ship.

(Has He seen a shoal approaching?)

They obey at once, and have a large haul.

St. John's great *love* recognises the Lord.

St. Peter's *eagerness* makes him hasten to Him.

The other disciples bring the boat and fishes.

Christ has provided all things ready for a meal.

He now invites them all to come and dine.

They come, recognise Him, and are fed.

II. THE LESSONS. 1. *Christ ever the same.*

His death and resurrection could not alter Him.

As *man*, He sympathised with their failure.

As *God*, He helped them and relieved them.

He has the same care still for His people.

2. *Man's extremity God's opportunity.*

Night of failure without Christ, followed by morn of blessing with Him.

Therefore His blessing to be sought in all things.

3. *Christ's blessings know no stint.* A hundred and fifty-three fishes!

But He must be known, trusted, sought.

They that fear Him shall lack nothing.

December 27th. Review of the Quarter's Lessons.

Golden Text—"Truly this Man was the Son of God." (*St. Mark xv.* 39.)

Introduction. Twelve lessons on last part of Christ's life on earth. All teach the truth in Golden Text. All point to His divinity, and show how we may have life through Him.

I. Christ Raising Lazarus. (xi. 21—44.) Death, man's last great enemy, has to yield to Christ's power. So, too, with the soul. Christ can quicken a soul dead in sin to life eternal.

Lesson. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ."

II. Christ Foretelling His Death. (xii. 20—36.) Christ's death to have world-wide results. His "lifting up" will draw all men to him. The preaching of the Cross, the example of Christlike lives and deeds, will show the reality of Christianity. Men will admire, believe, obey the Saviour.

Lesson. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved."

III. Washing the Disciples' Feet. (xiii. 1—17.) A parable of Christ's life and work. He left His Father's throne, stooped to man's estate, did God's will by serving others, left His whole life of service as example. Taught also St. Peter and all to render entire submission. Salvation must be effected in God's way, not ours. Shall understand the meaning of it all hereafter.

Lesson. "Wash me, I shall be whiter than snow."

IV. Christ Comforting His Disciples. (xiv. 1—3, 15—27.) Christ, equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, prepares a Home for His people. Meanwhile He prepares them for that Home by the Comforter. They must expect hatred from the world, but must live in love with one another. Love and peace here the best preparation for home of peace hereafter.

Lesson. "Seek those things which are above."

V. Christ the True Vine. (xv. 1—16.) A parable of union. Christ is "the Life" of His people. They only live while joined to Him. The object of their life is fruit to His glory. Discipline may be necessary to make them bring forth more fruit. If no fruit, the end is destruction.

Lesson. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

VI. The Work of the Holy Spirit. (xvi. 1—15.) He will take Christ's place in the world and in the Church. He will show sinners their sin and reveal the coming judgment, and He will guide, strengthen, and teach His people. Thus He will act for and glorify Christ.

Lesson. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

VII. Christ's Prayer for His Disciples. (xvii. 1—19.) He has finished His life's work for men. He prays that His life *in* them may be perfected also. Three things He desires—that they may be kept from evil, may be sanctified, and kept in unity. Then will God be glorified.

Lesson. "Abide in Me, and I in you."

VIII. Christ Betrayed. (xviii. 1 — 13.) Treachery among friends one of the bitterest trials of life. Christ drank this cup of pain to the very dregs. Yet Divine compassion shone forth in the absence of reproach, healing His wounded enemy, submitting to being bound and led away to die.

Lesson. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

IX. Christ Before Pilate. (xix. 1—16.) A Royal Prisoner! Suffers as man, foretells as God. He wears the robe and wreath of a conqueror, and by His patience and dignity conquers His judge. He puts him to silence, and claims a power greater than his. One day their positions will be reversed. He will be Judge and Pilate the criminal.

Lesson. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

X. Christ Crucified. (xix. 17—30.) Note different actors. Mocking chief priests reject Him; callous soldiers crucify Him; loving women believe in Him; the patient Saviour, dying to save all.

Lesson. "What think ye of Christ?"

XI. Christ Risen. (xx. 1—18.) The grave cannot hold, death has no power over Christ. By His own Almighty power rising from the dead He declares Himself the Son of God. He lives Who was dead, and holds the keys of death.

Lesson. "Because I live ye shall live also."

XII. The Risen Christ and the Disciples. (xxi. 1—14.) Jesus Christ ever the same—the God-man—caring for His people, providing for their wants, cheering by His presence, forgiving their sins. As such He reigns in heaven, God over all.

Lesson. "Mighty to save."

January 3rd, 1892. The Kingdom of Christ.

To read—Isaiah xi. 1—10. *Golden Text—Psalm lxxii.* 8.

Introduction. A new course of lessons from Old Testament prophecies. Old Latin proverb says "the New Testament lies hid in the Old." Isaiah, more than any prophet, was Divinely inspired to reveal truths concerning the office and work of Jesus Christ, hence called the Evangelical (or Gospel) Prophet. The prophecy in chapter xi. really begins at x. 5, and describes the march of the Assyrian King, Sennacherib, upon Jerusalem in the reign of good King Hezekiah; his fall, and the glory of David's House culminating in the Messiah. Sennacherib falls like a cedar of Lebanon, cut down "by a mighty one" (x. 34). But suddenly the prophecy bounds on into futurity. Two fallen kingdoms lie side by side, Assyria and Judah. The former perishes for ever,

but from the latter springs a sucker, and, instead of an earthly reign, the prophet foretells a Kingdom of universal peace (xi. 10). This, the subject of the first lesson, to be read and explained verse by verse.

I. CHRIST'S CHARACTER. (Read 1—3.)

1. *A rod* or shoot growing from the stump left in the ground after the tree has been cut down.

A branch or sucker springing from the roots.

Both words show the contrast between the downfall of Assyrian army, like a cedar of Lebanon felled by an axe, to rise no more (x. 34), and the stem of Jesse, prostrate for a time, yet retaining vitality, sending up a sucker destined to attain to everlasting empire. This branch is Christ.

2. *The Spirit* of Jehovah rests on Christ, not only as the Prophet Who teaches, but as the Ruler of His people. Six gifts of the Spirit, in pairs :—

"Wisdom and understanding" refer to the mind.

"Counsel and might" refer to practical life—prudence in counsel and strength in action.

"Knowledge and fear" refer to the power of religion on the intellect and action.

3. *Quick understanding.* Rather "his scent shall be in the fear of God"—*i.e.*, He shall take pleasure in the piety of His people.

II. CHRIST'S REIGN. (4—10.) Like His character.

4. *With righteousness.* He is a just Ruler.

For the godly there is righteousness.

For the wicked, just punishment.

5. *Girdle.* Dress must be girded for activity.

Christ's attributes will be in constant use.

6—9. *The wolf, etc.* A second Paradise described.

Ferocious animals to live in peace.

So in Christ's Kingdom all to be in mutual love.

Strong and weak, oppressor and oppressed, all in peace.

9. *Mountain.* Christ's Church—a city set on hill.

Full of the knowledge of the Lord.

True religion deep, broad, irresistible as the sea.

10. *Root of Jesse.* The sucker shows life in the root.

The centre of union for all men. (St. John xv. 4.)

To the Jews—a rallying point.

To Gentiles—object of desire.

To all—a place of glorious rest.

III. LESSONS. 1. As Christ, so must His people be.

The same Spirit gives the same character.

His from eternity—by man to be gained by search.

2. Man must work with God in developing this new Paradise.

All must pray and work for coming of this King.

JANUARY 10. A SONG OF SALVATION.

To read—Isaiah xxvi. 1—10. *Golden Text—ver.* 4.

INTRODUCTION. The prophet has been telling of the judgments which came on the Jews successively from the Assyrians, Chaldæans, and Romans, followed by the bright prospect of the Messiah's advent. In chapter xxv. he has praised God for His watchful care of His people, exemplified when Cyrus took Babylon, and the Jews in exile there were protected. In to-day's lesson there is another call to praise God for His mercies, and to put fresh trust in Him.

I. THE STRONG CITY. (1—3.) Abode of peace.

1. *That day.* First reference to return of Jews from exile in Babylon to their own land after seventy years, by which were restored to their place as God's covenant people. Type of entrance to heaven, the home of all God's people after exile in this world.

Strong city. Jerusalem, rebuilt under Ezra, with fresh walls and bulwarks, after many battles with her enemies. (Neh. iv. 18.) Type of the Church, whose weapons are spiritual, and against which no foe can prevail. (St. Matt. xvi. 18.)

2. *Open ye the gates.* Now Judah, which at Babylon put away idolatry for ever, and has become a *righteous nation*, re-enters her own city, Zion. So shall God's true Israel, honouring Him by righteousness and true holiness, enter heaven at last, whose gate is one pearl. (Rev. xxi. 21.)

3. *Perfect peace.* None for the wicked, perfect for the righteous. Its source, forgiveness of sin (Rom v. 1), perfect trust in the fatherly love of God.

Example. St. Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi, singing hymns of praise.

II. THE STRONG LORD. (4—10.) Dealing mercy and judgment.

4. *Trust for ever.* Why? Because the Lord Jehovah—the great "I AM" (Ex. iii. 14)—is the everlasting "Rock of Ages" (margin). Shelter from storm of troubles, refuge from heat of temptation (1 Cor. x. 13), all to be found in Him.

5. *The lofty city.* Babylon at the height of her power taken by Darius the Mede (Dan. v. 31), and the city afterwards razed to the ground.

6. *The feet of the poor.* Sometimes the most despised are used to carry out God's purposes.

Example. David the shepherd-boy became the mighty king, ancestor of Christ.

III. THE STRONG PEOPLE. (7—10.) Waiting upon God.

7. *Weigh the path.* Make equal or straight. Common metaphor of a good man's life. Like a straight path, turning not aside to vanities, keeping straight on towards God and heaven.

8. *Thy judgments.* The Jews, in Babylon for their sins, turned with longing to God. So David before he was afflicted went astray, but afterwards kept God's Word. (Ps. cxix. 67.)

9. *In the night.* Darkness a time of danger; sometimes sent as a punishment—*e.g.*, the ninth plague in Egypt (Ex. x. 23)—sometimes as warning, as at Christ's crucifixion. (St. Matt. xxvii. 45.) Type of affliction—special time for seeking God.

10. *Favour to the wicked.* God's mercies sent to wicked as well as righteous. If despised, then judgments follow.

IV. LESSONS. 1. *A lesson of praise.* All these mercies and more are ours. How have they been used? Shall not His goodness lead to praise Him?

2. *A lesson of trust.* "This God our God for ever. What time I am afraid I will put my trust in God."

"A GIGANTIC FRAUD."

THE STORY OF THREE DAYS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TUNE ST. ELWYN'S," ETC. ETC.

"'One and ninepence-halfpenny, and sixpence, and ninepence-farthing.'"—*p.* 106.

TUESDAY, *October* 10*th*.

"TWO and threepence-halfpenny from four and a penny leaves—leaves one and eightpence-halfpenny, doesn't it? No; I'm wrong! It leaves one and ninepence-halfpenny. And then I borrowed sixpence of you, didn't I, for the collection on Sunday? but I paid your railway fare along with mine to Richmond; and besides that I took ninepence-farthing of yours off the mantelpiece on Friday evening. Oh, I shall get it right presently, mother dear! and I believe I shall find I have enough left then to get Maudie that dear little crocodile bag for her birthday."

The speaker was a young girl, who sat on a low stool, with her arms clasped round her knees, and various small piles of silver and bronze coins arranged in a semicircle on the floor in front of her. Not a particularly æsthetic attitude, nor a very business-like way of settling one's accounts. Yet Irene Chalfont was in humble fashion an artist by profession, earning a nice little income for herself by designing Christmas cards and illustrated booklets. And although she generally accomplished her reckonings in a truly feminine style, she nearly always found at the end that

there was something to spare out of the not too frequent cheque, to buy some small present or otherwise unattainable luxury for her widowed mother or younger sister—a result to which the far superior masculine mind might not so readily have attained.

"One and ninepence-halfpenny, and sixpence, and ninepence-farthing, from which subtract one and fivepence. There's Mr. West" (as a tap was heard at the door). "I shall get him to help me."

Skipping lightly over the magic ring of money, Irene ran to admit the visitor, a tall, brown-bearded man, who entered with the gentle air habitual to the blind; and the girl's soft helpful hand instinctively touched his to guide him past a small table that stood rather in the way.

With a swift sunny smile, and a look of supreme content, Philip West settled himself in his accustomed seat by the open window, and though his sightless, finely chiselled face was turned to meet the soft breeze from the garden, every sense was concentrated into the perception of Irene.

To him her voice and her hand were her whole known personality: those tones, bright, clear, yet tender and full of feeling; that touch, with a firmness in its softness that afforded no misleading indication of a character in which the inexpressible gentleness of a true woman never degenerated into weakness. For the rest, he knew not whether her hair were of sable or golden hue, her eyes blue or black; save that he intuitively guessed that so rich a voice would scarcely match a blonde complexion so well as a brunette. And in this he was right. Irene was no beauty, but her limpid eyes were of velvety brown, and her hair of the deepest chestnut shade. Philip West loved Irene with his whole great manly heart; but never, he told himself, must he think of linking her free young soul to so fettered a life as his.

The money complications, naïvely submitted to the blind man for solution, were soon disposed of; then Irene, as her custom was, opened the evening paper which Mr. West had brought with him, and proceeded to regale her mother and the visitor with the news.

It was an institution which had grown, none of them knew how, for the Chalfonts' afflicted fellow-lodger from the flat above to come down to them thus every day, after tea. But I think it was Irene who had chiefly contributed to bring it about, in her sweet compassion, untainted by the least self-consciousness, for the stately, courteous gentleman who bore his great deprivation with such dignified patience.

"He works so hard, too, poor man," she had observed to her mother. "Whenever I pass his door I hear the 'chip-chopping' sound of that frame he writes with. I used to think it was a type-writer, or something of that sort. But Mrs. Proddow says it is an arrangement for printing by means of a style, and that he copies embossed books for the Blind Association."

Since then, however, Irene had become well acquainted with the "Braille" writing, and even learned the alphabet herself; Mr. West's constant industry and personal economy meanwhile confirming her in the pitying assumption that he was poor and friendless, and that his earnings were very small.

Hence, as I hinted above, she treated him with franker cordiality and greater kindness than she would have dreamed of according to one of the opposite sex under any ordinary circumstances. And Mrs. Chalfont, though occasionally uneasy on their visitor's behalf, could not bring herself to brush the bloom of lovely self-oblivion from her child's heart by suggestions of reserve and caution. This is where, perhaps, she failed in her duty to them both.

On the particular evening of which I write, Irene was in the midst of an interesting account of the opening of a new Institute for Women, when Mrs. Chalfont was called out of the room to interview the laundress, and the other two were left alone.

"I will read something else, if you don't mind, until mamma comes back," Irene said. "I know she will like to hear what the Duchess said about female education. What will you have? Politics, election news, a fatal explosion, or foreign telegrams?"

"Anything you please," answered Mr. West, with a smile that made the simple words sound like a delicate compliment.

"Oh, do choose!" begged Irene. "I like people to have their choice."

"Well, then, foreign telegrams, please!"

"Yes; I had them just now. Oh, here they are. 'Severe fighting at Buddapore. British officer killed,'" began the girl, in the half-careless tone in which even the most sympathetic of us are apt to read of disasters that seem so far away. Then, in startled awakening, she repeated, "'Buddapore'! Why, that is—— Oh no, no—it cannot be!"

These broken phrases burst from Irene's lips with intervals of breathless silence. Her eye had fallen upon a name which she could not mistake. It stood out from the commonplace sheet as though in letters of fire.

"Oh, mother!" she gasped. Then the room grew terribly still: the only sound being the rustle of the paper as it slipped from her relaxing grasp.

The horrible suspense lasted less than a minute, but to Philip it seemed an age.

"Irene! Darling! What is it? What can I do for you?"

He hardly knew that he was uttering such words, though his heart seemed burning with them. They reached the girl as if from beyond a surging sea, and she roused herself. Philip's hands had already found and clasped her own.

"I am not fainting," she murmured. "I never do go right off. It was very stupid of me; but it was such a shock! No; please don't call mamma! I must break it to her."

And the girl burst into tears, which she heroically tried to suppress.

"Let me do something for you!" entreated Philip, in great distress. "Oh, to think I am so useless! Poor child—poor dear child! What can I do?"

"Sit down again, please, and don't let mamma see that anything has happened," said Irene, the colour coming back to her pale cheeks in a rush, as she felt his trembling touch upon her hair. "Do, please, sit down; I am all right now. I hear mamma coming."

"You have found bad news?"

"Yes. It says—he was killed," answered Irene, forcing herself to be composed. "But I must read it again."

She picked up the fallen sheet, and sought that fatal paragraph of Indian news.

But the familiar name, the sight of which had struck her like a blow, was repeated a few lines lower down—

"Later advices contradict the assertion of Captain Graham's death," the postscript ran. "It is stated upon good authority that he received only a slight wound in the shoulder, and that no serious consequences are feared."

"Thank God, it is not true, then!" murmured Irene, with a deep breath of relief. "How stupid to go on printing the false news after they know the truth!"

"Yes; it causes unnecessary alarm," rejoined Mr. West, with conscious tameness. "Captain Graham is an especial friend of your family, I suppose?" he added, after a pause.

"Oh yes! He is—hush! Here's mother! I wouldn't have her guess it for the world—not even that he is hurt. Her heart, you know——"

And when Mrs. Chalfont re-entered the room, Irene was entertaining Mr. West with the price of pig-iron and the fluctuations of the meat-market; while he, his hand shading his face, listened with apparently the most absorbed attention and complete content.

WEDNESDAY, *October 11th.*

A WINDOW, hitherto unsuspected, had been flung open in Irene's heart, and a flood of Heaven's own sunshine was pouring in.

It was the reaction, she told herself, of knowing Captain Graham safe after the shock of reading of his supposed death. It could be nothing else, of course. But how lovely everything seemed!—the soft mist of the October morning lying like a bridal veil over the gardens, the crimson garlands of the five-leaved creeper hung with many a jewelled spider-wheel, the tenderest azure sky overhead, growing broader and bluer every moment as the mellow gold of the autumn sun glowed warmer on the dewy lawn.

"I can't think why people say October is sad," she murmured to herself, fastening a spray of scarlet rowan-berries under her soft little chin before she went out. "*I* think it is one of the sweetest months of the year."

Of last night's episode, especially as concerned Mr. West's share in it, she would not allow herself to think. Certain memories were constantly presenting themselves to her mind, it is true, and thrilling her with a feeling she did not choose to define. But she instantly drew a curtain over the pictured scene, and turned away. It was the curtain, however, that protects a treasure too sacred and precious for frequent view, rather than the screen that hides an ugly nook. And the girl was spirit-glad as, in all her twenty years of life, she had never been before.

She always went, on Wednesday mornings, to her painting class; for although, as I have said, already fairly successful as a designer, she was still wisely studying some of the higher branches of art, with a view to greater perfection.

She went tripping down the stairs, portfolio in hand, and paused, after closing the front door, to re-button her glove.

When she looked up, she was surprised to see Philip West's tall figure standing near the gate, as though he had been waiting for her; and her heart gave a leap of nervous expectancy. "How absurd I am!" was her mental comment.

"Good-morning," she said demurely. "How pleasant it is!"

"Very pleasant," was the grave reply. "May I walk a little way with you?"

"Certainly," said Irene, thankful for once that her companion could not detect the preposterous redness of her face. What *was* there to be turning red about? "Do you want to cross the high road?" she added hastily. "I am going that way."

"Thank you very much, but I have no particular business in that direction just now. I only wanted an opportunity of asking you to pardon my—my—impertinence last evening."

"Your impertinence!" repeated Irene, rather stupidly.

"I was unnerved, I think, by fancying you were going to faint," continued Mr. West, with painful embarrassment. "Please forgive me, and try and forget everything! Don't let it make any difference to—to our pleasant friendship, if you can help."

Something inside Irene seemed to die as he spoke, and the day turned grey and cold.

"Pray don't mention it," she said stiffly. "I ought to have had more self-control than to make such an exhibition of myself. I don't know what I was thinking of."

"Your agitation was quite natural," rejoined Mr. West. "I am truly glad that it was unfounded."

"I am so thankful mamma did not come across that false report," said Irene, seizing an opportunity to lead the conversation into a less personal groove. "She cares as much for Captain Graham as though he were her own son."

"He must be a happy man!" sighed solitary Philip West. "Though unknown to me, I sincerely congratulate him."

"You may be able to tell him so before long," said Irene, thinking her companion's manner rather strange. "He is sure to get leave after this. Mind—mind, Mr. West! That horse!"

They were crossing a road usually quiet as she spoke, but a butcher's light cart came dashing suddenly round the corner, and it was by almost a miracle that the blind man, who was slightly in advance of his companion, escaped being knocked down. Irene, in fact, impulsively seizing his sleeve, had pulled him out of harm's way.

"I seem doomed to have shocks," she said, laughing rather hysterically. "I thought it was all over then. Those horrid little carts!"

"It would not have mattered much if it had been all over with me," said Philip, with unusual gloom. "I am little comfort to anyone, and nobody would have cared."

"Oh yes, they would!" answered the girl quickly. "I should, dreadfully! I mean," she added, in hurried effort to cover this slip, "you must have many friends."

"I have none that I really care to call a friend but your mother and you," returned Mr. West. "You have been most truly good. But there will be an end to it all when Captain Graham comes."

"Indeed there won't. There shall not be!" Irene protested.

"But he may not like it."

"I don't care a scrap what Captain Graham does or does not like!" cried the girl, forgetting all caution in her warmth. "He is nothing to me."

"*Nothing?*"

"Nothing but an acquaintance—a sort of uncle, as any half-brother of mamma's might be. Mamma brought him up, you know," she went on, with burning cheeks, and speaking very fast—for the situation was becoming clear to her. "He is many years younger than she, and though he is only her brother by marriage, she is so very fond of him that I do believe that if anything happened to him it would kill her."

The din of the high road was in their ears, and under cover of it Philip, bending close to his companion, whispered, "You don't care what he likes? and you would not let him send me away? He is a dashing young hero; I am a poor, useless, blind man—a burden——"

"You are worth a dozen of that conceited fellow," the girl broke in.

"I dare not think I am worthy of you," said Philip, feeling himself carried whither he had resolved never to venture, by forces over which he had no control. "No, never! never! What am I saying? It would be selfish and cruel to chain you down to such a life as mine."

"I would *love* to help you, to comfort you, beyond everything," faltered Irene. "Don't call it a chain."

* * * * * *

"I did—I did *encourage* him just a little," Irene confessed to her mother in the "confidential" they had in the twilight after tea. "But being blind, and so poor, and—and somehow I couldn't help it."

"It seems to me, Irene," said Mrs. Chalfont, half-pleased and half-vexed at the girl's unworldliness, "that his poverty and affliction are paramount attractions in your eyes."

Irene laughed softly. "I think I am rather glad, in a way, though it is a very sad sort of gladness, to think he will need so much from me. I could not bear to be the one to receive all. I want to serve as well. You are not opposed to it, are you, mamma?" she added anxiously, as her mother remained silent.

"Your happiness is all I care for, my darling," was the mother-like reply. "But I confess that I had indulged dreams of my gifted child making a somewhat better match than this, though I like Mr. West extremely."

"What better could it be?" cried Irene. "He is just as good, and noble, and patient as ever anyone could be, and so lonely, and has to work so hard; and here am I, getting on better, and earning more every year, and some day, perhaps, shall be quite rich."

"I hope he doesn't think of that," suggested Mrs. Chalfont mildly. "Has he said anything about his ability to support a wife?"

"Oh, mamma, please don't!" begged Irene. "Of *course* he hasn't. And I'm sure he doesn't think of my earnings for one moment. Only it will be such a joy to me to help him. And oh, mamma, it *is* good of God to make me so happy. I would rather have *him*, just as he is, than the most brilliant match in the world."

Later on, as Irene stood in a dream of bliss by the moon-flooded window of her own room, she thought to herself: "Two days running I have had a small shock, and each time the shock has brought about something rather nice. They say that what happens twice is sure to happen three times. I wonder if the third will occur to-morrow, and what will come of it? I hope nothing may. The wonderful event of to-day seems enough to last me to the end of my life. I want no more happenings for years now. The best has come to me, and I desire no more."

Was it a presentiment? The girl certainly shrank, almost superstitiously, from that possible third alarm awaiting her on the morrow.

THURSDAY, *October 12th.*

WHEN, once in a score of times, and by a mere coincidence, events follow the rule laid down in some old wives' saw, the circumstance is carefully noted and quoted; the nineteen occasions when it fails are allowed to pass into oblivion: by which means the said old saw is kept alive.

"Here 's a letter for you, mother, from uncle," Irene observed, glancing at the postmark of an envelope that lay waiting on the breakfast-table. "It must be something unusual to cause him to write."

"It is business, of course—news about the 'Sans Souci,' no doubt."

"Perhaps they have struck a new vein of ore, yielding about half its weight in gold——"

"To send me to Girton with," finished Maud, a bright young girl in her earlier teens. "Well done, Sans Souci!"

But Mrs. Chalfont's cheek was pale with apprehension. She had never felt quite comfortable about the South African gold-mine in which her husband's friend had persuaded her to invest her little fortune; and although, so far, dividends had been paid with fair regularity, the sight of Mr. Measom's handwriting always thrilled her with the fear of bad news.

And at last the blow had fallen.

In a letter full of sincere but unavailing regret was conveyed to the poor widow the crushing information, already withheld from her as long as it had been possible, that the "Sans Souci" had turned out a complete delusion, and that the affairs of the company were about to be wound up.

"I knew something would happen—I knew it would!" cried Irene; while Maud's face was the picture of dumb dismay, and Mrs. Chalfont seemed bewildered with the realisation of their overwhelming loss; though she had often dwelt in imagination upon such a catastrophe, its extent almost paralysed her when it became a fact.

"Children, we are paupers! We have nothing, absolutely nothing," she moaned. "Oh, mad—mad that I was to trust to such a broken reed! I have beggared you both."

"Renie is all right," answered Maud, with half-jealous gloom. "She is independent at any moment."

At these words, Irene, who had for the time lost that her head dropped upon her breast, and her very blood grew cold.

Neither of the others noticed the change that had come over her; or if they did, they attributed it to their mutual calamity. For Maud had not heard of her sister's newly made engagement, and Mrs. Chalfont had temporarily forgotten it.

"Philip West came straight over to where she stood, and clasped her in his arms."—*p.* 110.

sight of the difference between her self-supporting position and that of her sister and mother, felt her heart rise with one great bound to the region of sunshine and joy. Utter selfishness, instinctive in the best of us, carried her thus, for the moment, far above the troubles of those who were really so near and dear to her.

But only for the moment. Recollection at once brought her down to the dreary earth again, and duty suddenly appeared before her with a mien so austere,

As soon as possible, Irene escaped to her tiny studio—a box-room adjoining—and there passed the most terrible, yet, strange as it may seem, the most solemnly grand and glorious hour she had ever known.

Her path lay plain before her. There was no possibility of doubt about that. To pray for guidance would have been hypocrisy, with her duty so clear. But oh, the depths of darkness into which the path led! Yet, with the assurance that this *via dolorosa*

was marked out for her by God, and that there was no possibility of escape—nay, more, that being His ordering, it must be the only blessed way for her to go—came a sense of wondrous uplifting. Irene had often heard of spiritual joy, and its marvellous triumphs over sorrow and pain, but such experiences had seemed almost too wonderful to be true. Henceforth, these would be incredible no more.

It was just as though she heard God saying to her, "My child, the road thou hast to tread is very dark, therefore I will be with thee all the way; it is very drear, so thou must be the more tenderly enfolded in my love; and where the stones are too rough for thy feet, I will surely carry thee as a lamb in my arms."

And even while her tears flowed like rain at the thought of Philip and his loneliness, she felt a real, a supernal joy in leaving him to the comforting of the One who loved him best. Never until we turn to God in utter need can we know the riches of His power to uphold and bless. For the revelation of that memorable morning Irene thanked Him all her life through.

She heard Philip come down-stairs and go out, and by-and-bye she recognised the landlady's brisk tread, as she busied herself in tidying his sitting-room overhead.

Then she took the opportunity of running up, and with Mrs. Proddow's assistance, borrowed the Braille writing-frame. With trembling hand, but unfaltering purpose, our heroine forthwith indited this brief message:—

"I am so sorry, but we must both of us, please, forget all that passed between us yesterday. My mother has lost her whole support, and I must devote myself entirely to doing what I can for her and Maud. They have now no one to look to but me; so everything is altered. My life, which was to have been yours, must be given up to them. There is no other way. I know God will do something good for you—better than I could have done—and help us both. I shall never, never love anyone else. God bless you! Good-bye."

This note Irene rolled up and tucked into one of Mr. West's slippers, where it would be sure to attract his attention as soon as he came in.

Then she came quietly back and sat down to her easel.

It seemed like a dream, the romance that had begun and ended—the love-blossom that had budded and fallen in three short days; but she knew that life would never be the same for her again. She wondered dully, as the brief glory of a convolvulus wreath grew beneath her touch, why it had ever been permitted; then wondered more at her own calmness in being able thus to reflect. Would it last, this strange deep peace? Was it of God, or was she stunned or stoical?

Not stoical; for a footstep, a well-known step, upon the stairs, thrilled her to her finger-tips. It paused, and someone tapped at the door.

"Come in!" Irene gasped, springing to her feet, and overturning, unheeded, a tin of water among the choicest contents of her portfolio.

By instinct, Philip West came straight over to where she stood, and clasped her in his arms.

"Didn't you find it—what I wrote to you?" she questioned, struggling in vain to elude the embrace.

"Yes; and this is my answer. Never will I give you up. I can't spare you, my darling!"

"But you must—oh, you must!" sobbed the girl. "Don't make it harder for me! I *must* stay with mother, and work for her. She has no son to take care of her, you know."

"But she will soon, if she will have him," returned Philip. "I am not much use in the world, but, thank God, I am amply blessed with means!"

"You—*you* are!" cried Irene, in amazement, rubbing away her tears to look up into his face. "I thought you were very poor!"

"Not as regards this world's goods, Irene. I am rich enough to keep my wife, and her mother and sister too, and should feel doubly, trebly enriched by being allowed to do it."

"But—but you live so plainly, and work so hard! I felt sure that you were very, very poor, and that I should have to help you with my earnings!"

"What a cruel disappointment!" answered Philip, with a tender smile. "I prefer plain living, and my writing I love. It is the only way I have of employing my time, and being of some little use to my fellows. I am very sorry to have won your love, my treasure, under false pretences; but I am innocent of any such intent."

"Such sudden changes!" Irene incoherently murmured. "They bewilder me. I feel dazed. But I know mamma will never consent to such a thing; never!"

"Mamma," however, was interviewed by her prospective son-in-law, who, when he had ascertained the exact state of affairs, put before her so strongly his great need of Irene, and the impossibility of his taking her from her family unless permitted, in some slight degree, to make up to them for the deprivation, that the objections raised by Mrs. Chalfont's sense of independence were eventually overcome. She consented to receive assistance from Mr. West until she could "turn herself round," and Maud should be earning her own living.

"I was never so deluded in my life!" Irene protested, with a make-believe frown. "I thought I was going to have love in a cottage and the privilege of working for my own living, and now I seem condemned to sit in the lap of luxury all my days, and my family with me. Philip, you are a gigantic fraud!"

Yet while she spoke her heart was swelling with thankfulness, her eyes dim with deep-sprung tears. On her knees, alone in the little room that had witnessed her sharpest conflict, the only words her lips could frame were, "*God is good!*"

THE REVELATION IN THE WHIRLWIND

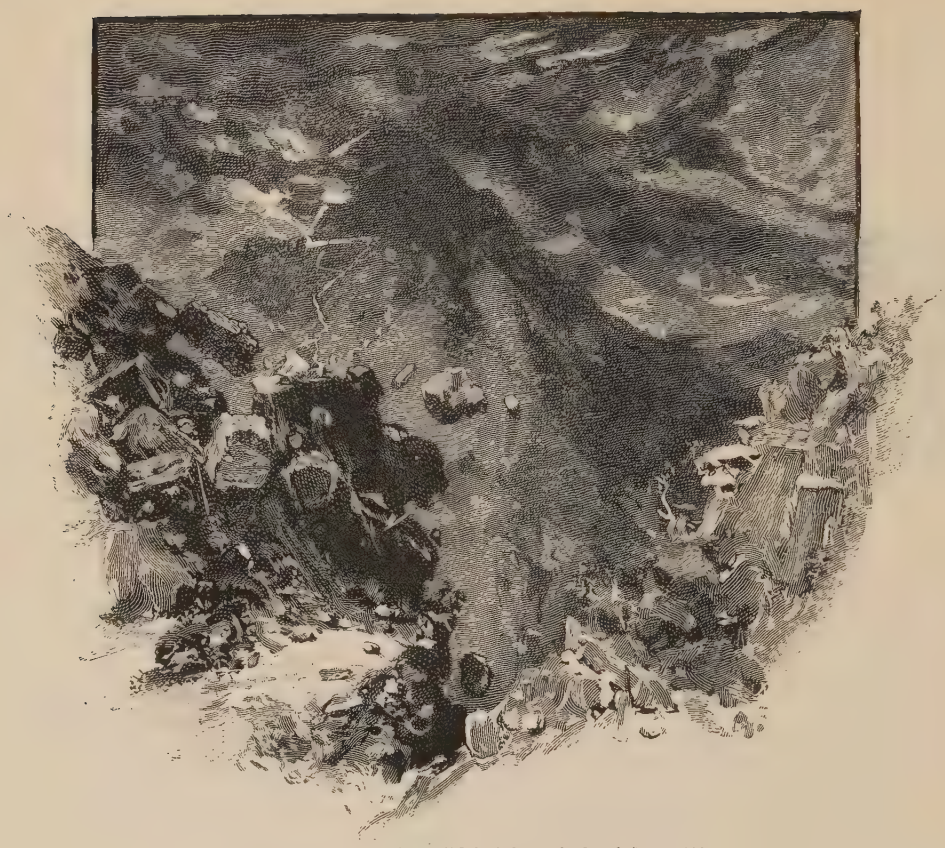
BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind."—JOB xxxviii. 1.

We are reminded by these words of the similar experience of Elijah when, in the midst of the grandest manifestations of Nature, he was brought into direct contact with God. There were points of resemblance between the circumstances of Elijah and those of Job in this crisis of their lives. Elijah was fleeing from the vengeance of Jezebel, a lonely wayfarer amid the desolate rocks of Horeb; Job was isolated from the society of his false comforters, and was meditating in the dreary desert lying on the borders between Idumea and Arabia. Both were in a state of deep despondency; one saddened by the failure of all his patriotic hopes and efforts, regarding his want of success as the Divine rebuke upon his sins, and asking God to take away his life, for he was not better than his fathers; the other utterly weary and worn-out by the dreadful misfortunes of his life and the mystery of God's apparently cruel dealings with him. Both were exposed to a tempest. Inexpressibly sublime must have been the storm on the wild heights of Horeb; the crash of the thunder reverberating from peak to peak, the lightning rending the granite rocks, and the hurricane driving the dark clouds in giant masses across the sky and bending the trees and bushes of the desert with a roar like that of the ocean surf. Equally grand must have been the storm in the Idumean wilderness, covering the whole heavens with a dark pall of billowy clouds, out of which the vivid lightnings flashed, and sweeping up the sand into gigantic pillars of crimson fire, which rushed past with terrific force, destroying everything before them. But here the similarity ends. We are told distinctly that in the one case God was not in the whirlwind, and there was no articulate voice from the midst of the awful convulsions of Nature; whereas in the other case we are expressly informed that God was in the whirlwind, and spoke out of it. The Divine revelation, so far as its outward form was concerned, was the same to Elijah and Job, but the purport and design of it were different in the two cases. What was the reason of this difference of treatment?

The Lord, we are told, was not in the mighty wind that passed before Elijah on Horeb. He did not choose the whirlwind as the symbol of Himself; because what Elijah required was not the display of God's power, but the revelation of His love—not the stormy, but the gentle, side of God's nature. He himself was a tempestuous spirit, an incarnate whirlwind. The work which he performed in Israel was that of a storm, dissipating the foul and deadly miasma of idolatry which had gathered over the land, and purifying the air of religious, social, and domestic life. With the suddenness and violence of an Eastern tempest, he came and went from his lonely mountain haunts, marking his path with stern denunciation and terrible doom. The transcendent scene on Carmel when he called down fire from heaven, which licked up the water in the trenches, and reduced the sacrifice and the wood and the altar to a heap of white ashes; the awful tragedy when the waters of the Kishon ran red with the blood of the slaughtered priests of Baal; the sublime breaking-up of the long drought when the heavens were blackened with thunder-clouds and the swollen torrents filled all the land with the roar of their floods, and the excited prophet kept pace with the horses in the chariot of Ahab, as they fled before the tempest to the gates of Jezreel; all these wild scenes were in complete harmony with the vehement zeal of Elijah's soul.

To such a stormy nature a lesson came to teach him the secret of his failure, and to show him that there were greater powers than those which he had employed, and a better spirit than that which he had displayed. God prepared him to receive this lesson by a humbling discipline, by the reaction of fear that came to him after the terrible scene at the Kishon, and by the lonely flight through the desert, when, in utter weariness and despair, he lay down under a juniper-tree to die. In this brokenness of spirit, believing that his course was ended without any result, he took refuge in a cave on Horeb, the same cave, perhaps, where the Lord had revealed Himself to Moses in a similar experience and taught him the same lesson. And then "the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." The earthquake, the whirlwind, and the fire were the symbols of Elijah's method of carrying on his prophetic mission to Israel. He believed that the most effective way of freeing the land from its idolatry was by threatening and judgment. He appealed to the fears of men,



"The storm on the wild heights of Horeb."—*p.* 111.

and brought before their senses and imaginations a God of vengeance, who took pleasure in the death of the transgressor. But God, by an experiment upon himself, showed to him how greatly he had erred. In his own person he was made to feel the difference between the power of terror and the power of gentleness. His emotional nature was profoundly stirred by the wild elemental forces let loose before him, but his spiritual nature was altogether untouched. He gazed upon the fierce tumult around; but while his face blanched with fear, his heart remained cold and hard. There was nothing in the fury of the tempest to awaken the deeper sensibilities of his soul—to melt him to contrition and humility. But when the storm ceased, and the still small voice followed the dying echo of the thunder, and seemed to fill the heavens with a blessed sense of peace, his heart was thrilled to the core; his conscience awoke, and he felt, with deepest self-abasement, that he was in the presence of the Holy God.

And like the impression produced upon himself by the awful sounds and sights of Nature at Horeb, was the impression which his own miracles of destruction had produced upon Israel. The people were filled with fear when the long-continued drought dried up all their streams and wells and wasted all their food. They were awe-stricken when the fire of heaven consumed the sacrifice of Carmel, and they cried out, "The Lord He is God—the Lord He is God." The evil of idolatry was forced upon their minds by the massacre of the Baal priests at the Kishon, and they resolved to abandon it. Elijah expected that by these severe measures the worship of Baal would be extirpated, and the worship of Jehovah restored to its rightful supremacy in Israel. But the bow that was thus forcibly bent, returned, when the pressure was removed, to its former laxity. The senses of the fickle multitude were agitated by the terrible portents they had witnessed, but their spirits were unmoved; and therefore they basely forsook the prophet of the Lord, and returned to their wallowing in the mire of idolatry. There was nothing in these judgments to appeal to their better nature—to convince them of their sin and to rouse them to a sense of duty; and the Baal-worship, which they were compelled by fear to renounce for a day, resumed its old spell over them when the storm subsided and the sky became once more serene. But as the still small voice powerfully affected Elijah and caused him to do what

the terrors that preceded had failed to do, so the gentle teaching and loving ministry of Elisha, that followed his own terror-inspiring career, would do more for the religious reformation of the land than all his fierce displays of human passion. He learned that in the spiritual as in the physical world the destructive forces are the weakest—that the storms which strew their path with ruins are utterly feeble compared to the still small forces that uniformly sustain the order and beauty of the universe. He learned that quietness is equally the source and the expression of strength; and he wrapped his face in his mantle before the gentleness of God.

But not thus did God reveal Himself to Job. God did not act capriciously in regard to His servants. He showed Himself to them in a manner suited to their condition. He revealed Himself in the still small voice to Elijah, because there was too much of the whirlwind in his own character and in his work of reformation for Israel, and he needed to be taught the greater power of gentleness and love. He revealed Himself in the whirlwind to Job because there was too much of the still small voice in his own disposition and in his circumstances, and he needed to be stirred up by trials and troubles that would shake his life to the very centre. The lot of Job was at first extraordinarily prosperous. He was the favourite of fortune; he lived on the calm, assured level of life, guarded from all adverse winds and exposed to all the beneficent influences of heaven and earth. His nature became like his circumstances; his soul was at ease; he lived upon the surface of his being; he was contented with himself and with the world. This selfish peace and tranquil satisfaction were unwholesome. They confined his sympathies to his own things; they bounded his horizon within the narrow circle of his own interests. Because he had no changes he did not indeed forget God, but there was much of self-complacency mingling with his acknowledgment of Him, as if his own merits had been the cause of his prosperity. We see this feeling plainly cropping up in his first recorded act of worship, when, on the occasion of a memorable feast, he offered burnt offerings for each of his sons, lest they might have sinned and cursed God in their hearts, and so exposed themselves to His judgment. We are expressly told that this he did continually; that this was the manner and the spirit of his religious worship. The selfishness of it is but too apparent. It was like Jacob's vow at Bethel, that if God would prosper him, then he would love and serve Him. Job's worship was practically a similar bargain of faith. He would offer sacrifice to God as a preventive of worldly evil and as the safeguard of his prosperity. It was not the guilt of the sins which his sons were tempted to commit that affected him, but the risk connected with them that they might induce God to withhold His favour, and so endanger the peaceful, successful monotony of life that had grown so dear to him.

We know what happens in Nature after a long continuance of sunshine and calm. It needs a storm to agitate the stagnant waters, and fill the foaming waves with vital air for the good of the creatures of the sea. It needs a tempest to set the particles of the close, impure atmosphere that has been long at rest into violent motion, and thus impart to them those vital influences which the plants and animals of the land require for their health and well-being. And so the man whose prosperous life settles down upon the lees of his nature and partakes of their sordidness requires the storm of trial to purify the atmosphere of his soul, to rouse him from his selfishness, to brace up his energies, and to make him a blessing to others and a grander and truer man in

"His property was swept away, his home was left desolate."—*p.* 114.

himself. It was for this reason that the overwhelming troubles that came upon Job were sent. He was inclined to rest satisfied with his worldly success, and to say, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years—eat, drink, and be merry." But He whom, in spite of all his shortcomings, he truly served, had greater things in store for His servant than mere worldly success, and therefore would not allow this ignoble contentment to continue. God sent a terrible tempest, which overshadowed and disabled his life and left it a woeful wreck. His property was swept away, his home was left unto him desolate, and his own person was brought to the brink of the grave by a loathsome disease.

"The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." That Divine speech was entirely different from the arguments of Elihu and Zophar, Bildad and Eliphaz. There were no upbraidings in it; no replies to specious sophistries and short-sighted charges. It seemed to ignore altogether the questions at issue; it appealed not to the intellect, but to the heart; it taught man not through the evidence of the senses, but through the surer and broader instinct by which God makes himself felt in the human soul. Job was brought out from the confined walls of human observation and reasoning into the open air, as it were, where he might have a wider outlook of the universe. He was placed where Elijah was placed, in the presence of God, and all God's glory in creation was made to pass before him. The earthquake, the whirlwind, and the fire exhausted their sublime fury, and the awe-struck spectator was made to feel that if he could not comprehend the ordinary phenomena of Nature, he could not expect to understand God's moral government and the mysteries connected with it.

God's answer out of the storm-cloud was an answer similar to that given by Jesus to Thomas, when He showed him His hands and His side, and the doubting apostle, carried away by the spiritual rapture of His Lord's presence, required not the evidence of his senses, needed not to touch the hands of the Crucified with his fingers, in order to produce conviction. And so Job's soul was flooded by the exaltation of a fuller sense of, and a deeper joy in, the Lord, beneath whose immortal tide all the perplexities which human reason could not solve were buried altogether out of sight. Instead of having had his difficulties explained, he was lifted above the clouds that rise from the earth into a serener region where these difficulties did not exist. The sight of the majesty and glory of God was enough for Job; and thrilled to the heart by God's wonderful method of rebuke, he covered his face with his mantle and cried, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Thus under the shadow of the storm-cloud, which was the shadow of God's wings, Job learned the lesson which was not to be learned anywhere else.

Last August, in an afternoon walk on the shore of Loch Awe, I saw an aspen tree that reminded me of the burning bush of the desert. Its foliage was one blaze of the most vivid scarlet. I never saw such a wonderful display of colour. The leaves were not withered and dead like the usual sere leaves of autumn; they were, on the contrary, quite fresh and full of life. I drew nearer to see the cause of this strange transformation, why the bush burned and was not consumed, and I found that the tree grew on a little mound, from which the waters of a rill that existed only in rainy weather had washed away the soil, leaving the roots to a large extent exposed. The conditions of its life were thus unfavourable; but instead of being made less beautiful, it became more beautiful in consequence. The poverty of its soil had changed the ordinary dull green of its leaves into the most brilliant red, as if each separate leaf were a flame in the heart of a furnace. The same cause that transfigures the ordinary green foliage of a plant into the richly coloured blossom—viz., an ungenial season or clime, or poor soil—had transfigured each green leaf of the tree into the semblance of a gorgeous petal. A soft breeze of evening whispered through the trembling fiery tongues of the transfigured aspen, and in my awe-stricken soul I heard the still small voice as of old from the burning bush, telling me that thus it is with the human life, from which the stream of circumstances washes away all its worldly good things in which it trusted, leaving its roots bare and exposed. God's breath kindles in it a beauty unknown before, which no mere prosperous worldly condition could have developed; and the poverty and sorrowfulness of its state, which worldly men pity, only makes it glow with the light of heaven, and its cross becomes its crown.

So was it with Job. What was so grievous to flesh and blood was beneficial to his soul. The tempest that stripped him of all the fair leaves and fruits of his prosperity caused the roots of his being to strike deeper into the eternal soil, and strengthened the fibres of his spiritual nature. It brought out higher elements in him that were before latent or unknown; it tested the strength of his principles, and revealed to him the grounds of his belief and the ends for which he was living; it showed him that he had much less faith and endurance than he had imagined; and the personal integrity upon which he prided himself was found insufficient to sustain him in the hour of trial. He grew wiser the more he suffered; and the storm that purified his soul gave him a deeper insight into the mysteries of Divine Providence, so that he could rise superior to the doubts of his own heart and vindicate the ways of God to man against all the dishonouring arguments of his false friends. As a candle within a transparency, so the fire of pain illumined the truth of God to him, and made plain what before had been dark. He had lost everything which men of the world value, but he had found what was more than a compensation. His humbling experience had given him a supreme love to God, which was the basis of a trust and hope that could never more be

shaken, and a pure, unselfish love to his fellow-creatures, which made him patient with their infirmities and charitable to their faults, and which enlarged and enriched his own being. He learned from the love of God the love of man; and love held for him the key of all the mysteries of life. How different was his first prayer, for his own family only, and only in their case for their temporal gain, and his last prayer for his friends, those unworthy friends who had used him so cruelly when he was brought low and poured vinegar instead of oil into his wounds! When he had reached this point of self-forgetfulness and devotion to the interests of others, of forgiving and loving even his enemies—the Spirit which the Son of Man Himself breathed on the cross when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and which is the highest moral achievement a man can make—then he showed that he had thoroughly learned the lesson which God had set him. The ends of the discipline of the whirlwind were completely served. God turned again his captivity. The penitent patriarch was restored to more than his former prosperity when he had learned to make a right use of the advantages of prosperity; and the storm-cloud which seemed big with vengeance burst in blessings on his head.

We have thus seen how God spoke to Elijah, not in the tempest, but in the still small voice—and to Job, not in the still small voice, but in the tempest; and we have seen how suitable was the mode to each case. And so God deals with us still. He speaks to different persons in different ways; to one who is self-sufficient because of his prosperity by the loud roar of the whirlwind; to another who is despondent and depressed because of failure and blighted hopes arising from wrong methods of doing good, He speaks in the still small voice, and assures him that fury is not in Him. One is allowed to prosper, and only gentle and favourable things come to him; another is afflicted, tempest-tossed, and not comforted. Even the same person passes through these opposite and contrasting experiences. At one time, he is prosperous; at another, everything seems to go against him. Now God speaks to him in the still small voice, and then He answers him out of the whirlwind.

The Divine method is *ever* by the still small voice. God would prefer to deal with us in gentle, loving, quiet ways. Judgment is His strange work. He has no pleasure in afflicting the sons of men. His work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. But human waywardness and wilfulness compel Him to use stern and terrible methods. For the self-wrapt life of each prosperous man is virtually a prayer to God to send something that may arrest him on the downward course and bring him to repentance. As the stagnant, pestilential earth requires the storm to purify it, so does the soul of man, becoming stagnant and pestilential in its worldly success and ease, require the storm of suffering to purify it. God's gracious dealings with us too often harden our hearts, make us forgetful of God and unsympathetic towards man; and therefore He must visit us with grievous dealings to bring us to a right state of mind. The widow of Zarephath had the miracle of the multiplication of the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil per-

"On the shore of Loch Awe."—*p.* 114.

formed day by day in her home, but it did not open her eyes to recognise the true character of the prophet of God and the true nature of her own sin, and therefore it was necessary that her son should die, in order that, calling up her sin to her remembrance by the angel of His discipline, God might purify and save her. The disciples did not understand the meaning of the miracle of the loaves and fishes that was performed for them, nor the nature of their Lord who had wrought it. It only made them more selfish and worldly minded. It needed, therefore, that they should be sent over the Sea of Galilee alone, and that a sudden storm should arise and imperil their lives. Their self-confidence was thus broken down; and just when their hearts were softened by the extremity of their danger, they beheld the form of their Master coming to them, walking on the water. He rebuked the winds and the waves, and they were greatly astonished. They came and worshipped Him, saying, "Of a truth, Thou art the Son of God." Thus what the miracle of the loaves failed to do, the miracle of deliverance from danger on the deep accomplished. The tempest was needed to effect what the still small voice was powerless to do.

And so it often is. God's continued goodness to us too often leaves us careless and godless. The still small voice speaking to us in the blessings of life with which day after day our cup is filled is unheeded, and God requires to send His whirlwind to speak to us in such a way that we shall be compelled to hear. The whirlwind of trial is God's own voice, rising in the distance into loudness and harshness as we recede from Him and go on in our own selfish, sinful way: "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" Alas! how persistent in the most advanced Christian life is the savage instinct which recognises God only in what is strange and appalling—in the flash of lightning and the loud reverberating roar of the thunder—but fails to see His face in the wayside flower or to hear His voice in the murmur of the stream. And yet there is more electric force required to round the dewdrop that lies in the eye of the daisy than is displayed in the wildest thunderstorm that ever shook the heavens. The light, whose rippling sea ebbs and flows over the world, is the cause of all its force and motion, its life and beauty, and yet there is no ear fine enough to hear the music of its waves. But for one who will hear God speaking in the still small voice of the dew and the sunbeam, there are thousands who will hear Him only in the thunder-peal and the elemental strife. They do not realise that God has no delight in terrifying us. The fear which He wishes to inspire is the fear of devotion—the fear of filial love that shrinks from offending Him, that tries to please Him. His Gospel is not a fire, consuming everything before it, but a light, illumining and beautifying everything upon which it falls. His Son came not to destroy the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets; and not in wrath, but in love, He chastens us. Happy are we if, instead of saying of every afflictive dispensation, "It thunders," so passing it by heedlessly as a mere natural occurrence without any significance, we feel that it is the voice of God come for our sakes, and saying to us, "To-day, if ye will hear My voice, harden not your hearts!"

BEGIN WHERE YOU ARE.

MANY bright resolutions are made void in the sequel because of a feeling that they must depend on circumstance. The conditions of the hour are not favourable, and it seems necessary to wait for a change. We say: "If the chain of events brings opportunity, then we will set to work in earnest, then we will strike a blow for fame, then we hope to become plodding students, then we shall get the better of the follies which we see to be ruinous faults."

But the intention withers if it does not pass into action: the wish will fade if it is not permitted at once to form and fix the will. There are few sadder sights than the frequent one of the man or woman of brave word but feeble effort, of soaring aspiration but temporising daily policy, of good purpose but delaying mood.

It pays to be immediate, and to begin where you are. And the coming scholar, or inventor, or millionaire is generally shown by a timely start, even in the midst of unpromising surroundings. William Smith, who has been called "the father of English geology," was a farmer's son, taught at a village school, and looking towards the plough for his means of subsistence. But the determination to know more than his companions was early formed. The boy read, and thought, and trained his powers of observation while hemmed in on every side by discouragements. He was rebuked and remonstrated with at home as an idler and an eccentric. Doubtless with a sad heart often, he stuck to his quest for facts which had no interest to the folk in the rural homestead. The closed path opened before him. He earned a distinguished name, and vindicated his youthful choice of a strange hobby. It will always be said to William Smith's honour in the annals of science that he constructed the first geological map of his native land. But if he had waited until the conditions of study were easy, his feet would never have reached the heights of fame.

Sir Samuel Cunard has recently passed away. His early years were not a triumphal march to distinction. He had to work for mean wages in obscure situations. But ideas were floating in his brain, and he began at once to bend his energies on the task of making these fancies facts. His tools were few and simple, but with them he turned out some remarkable models; and by-and-bye a great firm of Northern shipowners wanted a new design for fast ocean-going boats. Young Cunard's models came under notice. He was commissioned to perfect another design, and this was accepted; and from it a great line of mail-steamers came into existence. It had seemed a poor and all but hopeless beginning, but time proved that there was bound up in it success as an inventor.

A touch of the humorous clings to a story of the boyhood of the great merchant and philanthropist George Moore; but it also shows aptitude cherished from the first. At school Moore was a fine player of marbles, and his talents put him into possession of pocket-money. Not by gambling. The opposite to the spirit of hanging gains or losses on the scales of

chance determined the lad's success. He played with such combined care and brilliancy—the features of his future career—that a superstition was set up amongst his fellow-scholars. They could not understand his continued victories, and placed them to the credit of the little stone balls rather than to the fingers that wielded them and the brain behind. So high prices were paid for George Moore's marbles, and he did a busy trade. He cleared profits at the rate of a thousand per cent. It was the shadow cast before of notable mercantile prosperity.

To begin where you are is not an easy thing, perhaps. The odds may seem heavy against achieving anything that shall be a sufficient reward for labour and anxiety; but the man is made not in touching success, but in striving towards it. Moreover, despair is dim-sighted, and fails sometimes to see a track up the Hill Difficulty when there is one, and it may be followed. If there is room to take a single forward and upward step it is wiser, as a rule, to venture than to let "I dare not" wait upon "I would." Cæsar's road was hidden in obscurity; he only knew that he had sharp warfare to wage and wily foes to discomfit. But the brave Roman had made up his mind, and he crossed the Rubicon. To initiate a familiar enterprise just where we are stationed in "the world's labour-house vast" may be a venturesome proceeding, and yet a wise one. The promise of triumph may strictly depend on speedy effort. Romance after romance of biography, stories of men who have mounted to the highest place, instances of eminent workers once penniless and friendless, but never powerless—these all persuade us that the right place to begin to better our faculties, and to make our fond ambitions facts, is where we happen to be to-day, and not in a possible environment of to-morrow.

Jean François Millet was a peasant youth, trained to draw the furrow on French fields, shut in by narrow means and rustic conservatism. He scarcely thought to leave his father's house; but he was not without stirrings of the strange unrest of genius. Coming back one memorable day from mass, he met a bowed, weary old labourer. The thought came that perhaps he could sketch or paint. He went indoors and took a lump of charcoal, and from memory limned the old man. The portrait was lifelike; and when Jean François, half diffident, showed it to his parents, they recognised the features and the form. It is one of the wonder-tales of perseverance how Millet went out into the world and learned to paint, as he himself says, "without a master, without a model, without a guide." A long, hard travail; many sorrows and much opposition filled his lot. But he conquered; and the world of art holds few nineteenth century names in higher esteem. Looking back, his success appears to have risen on the horizon of possibility in the hour when he began where he was.

It would be hard to find a living inventor to put in serious rivalry for first honours with Thomas Alva Edison. And one of the striking lessons of Mr. Edison's marvellous career is this of starting anywhere and anyhow—but STARTING. He did not have two months of regular, unbroken schooling. At the age of twelve he was a train-boy on the Grand Trunk Railroad of Canada and Central Michigan. But in the midst of unpromising conditions young Edison began the business of his life. At ten he was a prodigious reader, devouring books like the "Penny Encyclopædia" and Gibbon's "Rome." In the trains he set to work mastering the rudiments of chemistry—getting a grip of the science of mechanics, and inquiring eagerly into the secrets of electricity. He was soon running a newspaper, printed by himself—*The Grand Trunk Herald.* In every direction he was seeking knowledge, and he turned every fact that went into the treasure-house of his memory to use. Very soon he was inventing. No matter what Edison's environment might have been, he would have begun there to build up a reputation.

Of woman's work the law holds good—that the warrant of victory over obstacles is bought by instant undelaying effort. America may supply a ready example of the fact. Margaret Foley was born in New Hampshire, in circles where an art career for a girl was scarcely feasible—at least, a faint-hearted aspirant might have thought it useless to commence. But Margaret Foley left the issues of her fight to be declared in the future, and simply began where she was placed. She went steadfastly, courageously, and zealously to work. Her means were scanty, and she had to pick up technical instruction as best she could. She was entirely self-taught. In a humble, tentative, yet patient fashion, she carved small figures in wood, and went on to model busts and small designs in chalk. Later she was at Boston carving portraits and producing heads in cameo. She made progress, and at last was able to go to Rome, and study the art of the City of the Seven Hills. Fame came to her; and that which may have seemed to her friends at home a strange and presumptuous departure from a commonplace career indicated by all Margaret Foley's circumstances—the daring beginning—was justified in the years of praise.

Noah Webster, in 1783, was struck by the want in the schools of his State of good elementary reading-books. The question came to him, Could he do anything to supply the lack? There was little to encourage him. He could only obtain favour for such a project from two amongst all his acquaintances. But he began in the midst of a thicket of difficulties and a chorus of objectors. He published at his own risk; and fifteen million copies of the work were sold in a comparatively short space of time. And he went on to compile the dictionary that bears his name and will long preserve his memory. Great consequences frequently follow on beginning where you are, in spite of sneers, and frowns, and prophecies of failure.

There is a profession or calling which probably more than most gives its prizes to those who—fired by ambition, and being prepared to undergo drill and endure hardship—begin to fulfil their own dreams quickly. It is journalism. The men on our great papers are made by pluck, and will, and work, combined for the venture perhaps where all things seem against success. Many of the most noted special correspondents have gained their position by establishing, in some propitious hour, the fitness fashioned by

strenuous application in the face of unpropitious circumstances. It is the same in other departments of literature. Bayard Taylor, the Western singer, whose themes were so often of the dreamy East, began writing verses when only a printer's boy, and daringly published a little book—"Ximena"—at a venture, hoping to earn thereby money with which to tramp over Europe. Mr. W. D. Howells, one of the most famous of the new order of Transatlantic writers of fiction, also began in the spare minutes—few, and always exposed to interruption—of a probation time spent in a printer's office. Elihu Burritt began at the forge, and Hugh Miller in the leisure of a stonemason's life.

Returning to the annals of art for further illustrations of our arguments, the instances of the great Spanish painter, Fortuny, and of Mr. George Tinworth, the eminent English sculptor of Bible themes, may be quoted. Mariano Fortuny spent his early days in the company of a grandsire who was a wandering showman. He had to manage and keep in repair the puppets of a mean theatre of marionettes. It did not look as if there were scope for improvement in this strange, wild boyhood. How could the lad even begin to make good his possible aspirations after higher things? Young Fortuny answered that question. In spite of all hampering conditions, he took firm steps on the road that led him to notable art triumphs. He started by rude essays in colouring his grandfather's puppets and stage. He made the brush a magic power in his fingers from the first. And in this way he convinced the old showman that he had gifts which might possibly yield a reward for exploitation; and he was sent to an academy at Reus, in North-east Spain. Fortuny had won his opportunity to advance by beginning where he was.

The story of Mr. Tinworth's early life is one of interest and romance, and its lesson is written large in the title of this paper. All the lad's surroundings seemed to forbid any such fond fancy as that greatness could be won in a difficult and exalted profession. But, paying no heed to omens, he put his hands to his chosen work of self-tuition and self-training; and the narrative of his fight and his victory is full of inspiration and instruction. George Tinworth began to make himself artist, sculptor, and interpreter of majestic ideals when he was earning his bread by the sweat of his brow as a wheelwright. He did not wait for openings to advance in knowledge, experience, and technical skill. He made them day by day, laboriously battling for proficiency; and by-and-bye he was enabled to enter the Lambeth potteries of Messrs. Doulton, and the corner of hardship was safely turned. Good fortune is apt to come to the men who help themselves. It is well to aim high. As George Herbert has it—

> "Who aimeth at the sky
> Shoots higher much than he that means a tree."

But the complement of this is—begin where you are. Something can be done to fulfil a noble ambition in any circumstances. The effort may be hard and costly, but it is worth the making. The conditions of winning success in life are only in part exterior to the aspirant. They are chiefly wrapped up in his own power of purpose and readiness to face and master obstacles. The schools can do much, but not everything. They turn out many failures. The heights of fame are frequently scaled by those whose advantages of education on received patterns have been small. There have been many great writers, scientists, merchants, inventors, and even statesmen, without college training. Andrew Johnson, the seventeenth President of the United States, who succeeded to office on the assassination of Lincoln, is reported to have taught himself to read without having a day's schooling in his life. He began as a tailor's apprentice; but he reached first rank in the great Republic.

The modern day is especially rich in examples of men—and women, too—who have marked the running page of political or social history in virtue of a will that would not wait for a set of favouring conditions before getting to their chosen life-work. And with wider spheres and quickened zest for progress the phenomena will be more abundant. The masters of to-morrow will be those who begin where they are.

THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS.

BY FAY AXTENS.

CHAPTER V.

"WELL, little one, I hope your curiosity is satisfied. What a favourite you must be of Dame Fortune's to be allowed a close inspection of the human monster in less than a day. It is a relief to think that your anxious suspense should actually be ended before Sunday!"

"It's all very well to laugh at me, father," said Felicia, pretending to be teased, "but a human monster does not come this way every day. What a shame, though, to call him a monster!"

"Ah! I see. You are taken with his handsome face—his classic features—his magnificent eyes—his princely mien—his—dear me, my eulogistic vocabulary has grown very rusty, I'm afraid." And the Rector puckered his brows into a puzzled frown and rubbed his chin very hard.

"Not handsome, father," said Felicia, laughing, and putting her arm through his as they walked together. "But, seriously, he has a very nice face—don't you think so?"

"Are you beginning to envy Miss Wylde, Felicia?"

"I hope," replied Felicia gravely, "that she is a nice girl."

"So do I, little one," said the Rector, dropping his tone of banter, "I like what I've seen of him very

much. There is a directness and sincerity about him which pleases me. By the way, what was the matter with Lawley? He hardly spoke at lunch: you have not been quarrelling with him, have you?"

"Oh, no, father; but you know Will is rather easily put out. He wanted a game of tennis, and we were just going to get up the net when Lady Lawley came, which of course put an end to it. I think that was all."

Felicia spoke at the moment with absolute truth, but just then she remembered that when they had first heard the carriage wheels, Will was in the midst of making a request, of the purport of which she had but the vaguest notion, though his manner and expression led her to believe that it was not an ordinary one. She blushed as she remembered it, and felt glad that her father did not pursue the subject.

"Well," said he, "I can't see that *that* ought to be such a great grievance. The Manor courts are better than ours, and you'll have the whole day to-morrow to amuse yourselves."

That was certainly something to look forward to, for a whole day at the Manor was an event in these times. Felicia, who was proud and sensitive to a degree, had an instinctive feeling that Lady Lawley's affection for her, despite its effusiveness, would not bear any very great strain, and the consequence was that she did not take much advantage of the standing invitation to go there whenever she could. She spent an afternoon with Lady Lawley at stated periods, and was always present at social gatherings, but the familiar intercourse which had been carried on between the two houses when she was a child had long ago become a thing of the past. That Lady Lawley looked upon her with a sort of suspicious dread, on her son's account, had not, however, entered into Felicia's head, for until within the last few weeks she had never regarded him in any other light than that of an old friend and playmate, and though latterly the idea of Will as a lover had, in a vague, suggestive way, presented itself to her mind, she had never entertained the idea far enough to consider the possible or probable consequences. She was, therefore, quite free from any embarrassment, and utterly failed to understand Will's annoyance when Lady Lawley, so unexpectedly to both, came upon the scene.

She was somewhat curious to know what was the favour Will had been about to ask, but instead of troubling herself with idle conjectures, she was content to wait till the following day, when, if it were anything of consequence, he would be sure to find an opportunity of proffering his request. The opportunity came soon enough, for Will drove down to fetch her next morning in his own dog-cart. He seemed, however, rather thoughtful and preoccupied, and made but little response to Felicia's playful sallies.

"What is the matter, Will?" she asked at length, as they bowled swiftly along the dusty high-road. "Have you seen a ghost?"

"What a little witch you are, Felicia, for getting to the bottom of things. Well, yes, I have, or something rather like it. Don't look at me with that air of mild pity. If you'll allow me, I'll explain myself."

"Certainly," said Felicia.

"You remember yesterday my asking you about Dick?"

"Yes." Felicia's gay manner changed instantly, and there was a sharp note of inquiry in her tone.

"Well, last evening Lestrange and I were over at Greychester, and as we were walking together up the High Street suddenly Lestrange seized hold of my arm. 'Do you see that fellow?' he exclaimed, and I looked up and saw a man just running down the steps of the Imperial Hotel, where he had been talking to a lady and gentleman. I saw them all three before, but had not noticed them particularly till Lestrange spoke. The lady had gone in before I could look up, but the gentleman just turned back to speak to the other fellow, and I saw his face. It gave me quite a start, Felicia. It's some years since I've seen Dick, as you know; but I could swear 'twas he, though he has grown a beard, or something which makes him look much older and different. It seemed so curious to come upon him like that, just here in the next town, when only that day you were saying you had no idea where he was. But perhaps you have heard something of him?"

"No," said Felicia, speaking with some effort; "did you say he had a lady with him?"

"Yes; but I could not see what she was like. She was just entering the hotel. As to the other fellow, Lestrange got quite excited about him; in fact, he left me and went after him. When I joined him again at the station, he was just coming out of the telegraph office. I believe he had seen the man off by train, but he did not offer to enlighten me on the subject, nor did I ask any questions."

"Will, are you quite sure it was my brother?"

"Positive. I should have spoken to him if I had had the chance."

"Have you mentioned it to anyone?—to Mr. Lestrange?"

"No; I didn't care to, quite. I thought you might not like—might not wish me to."

"Thank you," said Felicia, and then relapsed into thoughtful silence.

"He had a lady with him." Was her brother, then, married? And what sort of a lady was this whom he was evidently bringing home? These thoughts aroused a thousand questions and conjectures in Felicia's mind.

But by the time they had entered the lodge gates and were clattering up the broad carriage-drive, her seriousness had taken wing, for she had a whole pleasurable day before her, such a one as she might not get again for a long time to come, and grey forebodings must not be allowed to shadow the brightness of it.

Bertram was amusing himself on the lawn with a butterfly net, and as they drew near the house he came running up with shouts of delight, and dancing about so perilously near the horse's feet that Will had to exercise his utmost skill in bringing the high-spirited animal to a sudden standstill. Felicia called out to the child in a great fright, but Anthony Lestrange, who was reading to Lady Lawley under the trees, made short work of the distance between them, and catching hold of the fluttering white pinafore soon set the boy in a safe place. Then he lifted Felicia out of the dog-cart.

"Now, Bert, will you have a ride round to the stables?" called out Will. "I'll have the reins and you shall have the whip."

It was a bit of a temptation, but Bert's allegiance to his guest would not allow him to take advantage of the offer.

"No, thank you, Uncle Will," said he, in his child-like way. "I want to stay with the pretty lady."

Anthony, looking at Felicia as she stooped to kiss the baby face uplifted to hers, thought the title not at all inappropriate.

The grounds at Lawley Manor were very extensive. The tennis courts, to which they shortly adjourned to have a game before luncheon, were situated at the lower end of the garden, nearly a quarter of a mile away.

"Mr. Lestrange was so charmed with your garden, Felicia, he thinks nothing of ours now," said Lady Lawley, as she unfurled her parasol and looked round with satisfaction on the brilliant *parterre* blazing with rich colour under the rays of a hot July sun. "You have not been into the conservatories lately, have you? Norris has some new orchids which you *must* see. He is quite proud of them."

So they had to linger on their way to look at the floral wonders, and Norris, the head-gardener, being there, they were further detained to listen to a learned horticultural discourse, till Will became impatient, and begged his mother not to keep Felicia any longer in that atmosphere lest she should faint.

They were joined at the tennis-courts by Sir John, who very good-humouredly undertook to make up the set, though it was a pastime he would not have chosen on so hot a morning.

He greeted Felicia with his usual hearty warmth. There was never any question about the genuineness of *his* affection for her.

"Well, my dear, I am glad to see you again!" he said, taking both her hands in his. "We shall want you often, you know, now Miss Wylde is coming. It will be nice for both of you; and I hope you'll be great friends—eh, Lestrange?"

Mr. Lestrange replied with a smile that he hoped so too, but Felicia noticed that he coloured slightly at the mention of Rosamond's name.

Bertram was very anxious to make a fifth in the set, but was easily persuaded to confine himself to the garden walk, where he amused himself by alternately tossing about a ball and digging up worms from the border. Felicia played with Will, against Sir John and Anthony, and as Lady Lawley watched the graceful movements of the two white figures, she could not help acknowledging to herself that they were at any rate well matched in appearance. They were all good players, and the game was going on briskly, when Sir John suddenly paused in the midst of serving, and called out—

"Why, heart alive! what's the matter? Here's Dawson running at the top of his speed. Never saw the fellow move so quickly in my life."

They all looked round, and there, sure enough, was the portly butler racing across the park like a schoolboy. He was quite red in the face when he arrived.

"Good gracious, Dawson!" said Sir John, unable to restrain a laugh; "you'll suffer for these frolics. Is the place on fire, or has someone made off with the family plate, or what?"

"If you please, sir," panted Dawson, "a young lady—Miss Wylde——"

"Miss Wylde!" echoed Sir John.

"Yes, sir; she has come—come in a cab."

Sir John waited for nothing more, but set off at once towards the house. Anthony Lestrange flung his racket down and followed, looking extremely perturbed and astonished. Lady Lawley directed the butler to convey Bertram to the nursery, and then proceeded, with as much haste as was possible to her, to meet her newly arrived guest.

"I suppose," said Will, looking at Felicia, "we had better go too. You see, it is just as I told you: Miss Wylde simply turns the whole place upside down, both literally and figuratively. She must have mesmerised old Dawson to set him running like that. Really, it is very annoying, isn't it? to have our game spoilt in this way."

Felicia thought it was, but did not quite like to say so.

"To think of her taking the place by storm like this!" continued Will, in the same petulant tone. "Something *always* seems to come in the way of enjoying myself. You are laughing at me, Felicia; but you don't know how much I had looked forward to having a really jolly time with you to-day."

Meanwhile Sir John and Anthony had reached the house. The one fusty cab owned by the innkeeper in the village stood at the door, from which the servants, directed by a brisk, smart-looking young person, were removing Miss Wylde's travelling trunks, while the driver looked on in helpless and stony silence.

At some little distance stood a young lady, looking about her with an air of haughty indifference. She was tall, slight, and fair, with a lovely complexion, blue eyes, and a quantity of golden hair. She wore a grey travelling cloak, with a coquettish hat of grey and pink.

"Oh, here you are," said she, as the gentlemen came forward. "I began to think the place was deserted."

"My dear Miss Rosamond," said Sir John, "a thousand apologies for such a reception. I needn't say that if I had had the least idea we were to be honoured with your presence to-day it would have been very different. My wife will be here in a moment. Oh, dear, dear me! To think of anyone having to come to Lawley Manor in such a conveyance as that!"

"Rosamond, my dearest, why didn't you let me know?" began Anthony, with a caressing movement, as Sir John left them for a moment to give directions to the servants. "I have been expecting to hear from you every day."

"Oh, have you?" she said, drawing herself away from him. "Pray command your feelings, Anthony; you know I can't bear to see you look foolish before strangers. We need not embrace in public, surely."

"I beg your pardon," he replied, instantly loosing her hands. "But it seems so long since I saw you, dear."

"You don't seem to have taken it very much to heart, anyhow," she returned. "You are a pretty lover, Anthony. I telegraphed to you in London, and expected to see you at the station this morning, instead

"THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES."

(*See p.* 130.)

of which I find you here amusing yourself. Oh, here comes Lady Lawley at last. And, pray, who is that very pretty girl in the background? Fie upon you, Anthony; now I have found you out."

It was now Lady Lawley's turn to apologise and to ask questions.

"What a journey you must have had, my dear! I am afraid you will think Carsthorpe the most heathenish place you ever came into."

"Well," said Rosamond, "I wondered if I was ever going to get to my destination; but, you see, I am here after all, and now I feel quite hungry. I hope you have not had luncheon yet, Lady Lawley. That is Mr. Will Lawley, I suppose; I can see the likeness."

Lady Lawley introduced both Will and Felicia, and then led the way into the house.

CHAPTER VI.

IT was a long time before Sir John could recover his equanimity. That an honoured guest should come to his door in such a conveyance as the village cab terribly outraged his ideas of hospitality. It did not occur to him to feel vexed with Rosamond for having come upon them in this unexpected manner: the indignity of the whole proceeding quite left all other considerations in the background.

Rosamond, however, who speedily abandoned the injured air she had at first affected, graciously used every effort to soothe his ruffled temper.

"Of course it was all my fault, Sir John," said she, as they sat at luncheon. "I ought to have written to let you know, but as soon as I discovered that Anthony had deserted me in this faithless manner by coming on first, I thought the best thing I could do was to follow him." She shot a meaning glance at Lestrange, who replied, half-laughing and half-vexed—

"I had been waiting for a long time to hear from you. You know I asked you to let me know when and where to meet you on reaching England. Not hearing, I thought it best to follow Sir John's kind advice, and bring Bertram on first, but I left instructions for all letters to be forwarded. When did you write?"

"I don't think I *did* write," said Rosamond ingenuously. "I telegraphed."

"When?" asked her lover. "As soon as you landed?"

"No—not exactly," replied Rosamond; "this morning, I think."

Anthony looked puzzled and surprised. Felicia and Will stole surreptitious glances at each other.

"But, my dear," struck in Sir John, "you say you came from London, yet I'm puzzled to know what train you could have come by. There is but one in the day that stops at Carsthorpe, and that isn't due till three this afternoon."

"Oh," said Rosamond, colouring slightly, and hesitating, "I don't think I came by the orthodox route. Morris was cross this morning at having to get up early, and so made a muddle of everything. We got into the wrong train and had to change."

"Bless my heart!" said Sir John, much interested; "which way did you go, then?"

"Oh, I don't know at all," replied Rosamond. "I can't remember the names of the stations. I only know I *am* here, and very glad the tiresome journey is over. Pray don't let us talk about it any more. I don't like talking about disagreeables. I like to forget them."

"I am quite of your opinion, Miss Wylde," said Will across the table. "If disagreeable things *must* happen, it is best to forget them as soon as possible."

"Especially things that make one feel cross with oneself," replied Rosamond, smiling. "Do you know, Lady Lawley, I was *so* hot and famished when I arrived at your door! I am afraid you thought me very cross and rude," and she looked round on them all with a charming air of deprecation that must surely have put to flight any such sentiments had they been entertained.

The meal passed very pleasantly. Rosamond soon proved herself a most lively and agreeable companion, and whatever might have been their first impressions, everyone was soon quite charmed with her. Her nomadic life, full of ever-varying interest, her wide acquaintance with persons of distinction and with places of note, together with a keen observation and a retentive memory, furnished her with ample scope for exercising her wit. She had a piquant way of narrating adventures and describing places, and if the pronoun of the first person singular figured rather conspicuously in her conversation, she had, at any rate, a way of carrying her hearers with her.

Felicia could not overcome a thrill of envy as she watched the bright, vivacious face, all smiles and dimples and arch glances, and listened to the sparkling chatter, so full of an indescribable airiness and grace. Although she had never had the rare opportunities of mind-culture and mind-enlargement which foreign travel affords, Felicia had read more deeply and more widely than most girls of her age, and her natural abilities and undoubted accomplishments, as well as her charming and easy manners, gave her a very high position in county society. If her life had been cast in a narrow mould, her interests and her sympathies were wide; and having acquired a fair amount of information on most subjects, she had the credit of always being able to hold her own. But in the presence of this gay, artless girl, whose whole manner and conversation were invested with such an irresistible piquancy and fascination, she somehow felt herself to be very homely and old-fashioned. Completely dazzled, like all the rest, with the glamour of Rosamond's charms, she foresaw, not without a hastily repressed yet natural twinge of jealousy, that she must perforce give up the precedence which had hitherto been undisputedly hers.

It was a long time since Felicia had seen Lady Lawley so thoroughly roused out of her languor. As for Sir John, he was in a perpetual broad laugh. Anthony Lestrange meantime regarded with a lover's pride the beautiful girl beside him, and though she addressed most of her conversation to Will and Sir John, he seemed quite content with his comparative obscurity.

"I am afraid you will find this a terribly dull little place, Miss Wylde," said Will. "I wonder whether we shall ever be able to amuse you."

"Oh, don't talk about 'amusing me,'" cried Rosamond, with a pretty shrug of her shoulders. "If you will only let me amuse myself, you will soon see how much I can manage to enjoy myself. I shall not find it in the least dull, I assure you."

"And you won't let anyone else be dull, eh, Miss Rosamond?" said Sir John approvingly. "Faith, it makes me feel quite young again to hear you talk."

After luncheon they went out into the veranda, which was protected during the day by an awning, and was both shady and cool.

"I must really have a hammock here," said Rosamond, flinging herself into a luxurious chair.

"I will get one for you by to-morrow," said Will, who stood beside her arranging her cushions.

"Thank you; that is delicious.—Anthony, please fetch me my fan."

Whilst Anthony was obeying his lady's behests, a little fair, curly head pushed itself round the awning, and a pair of blue eyes looked wistfully in.

"Please can I come in? All the butterflies is gone to bed, and I'se *so* hot."

"Poor little fellow!" exclaimed Lady Lawley, calling the child to her. "Why, it is enough to give him a sunstroke out on that lawn. I should think nurse must be gone to bed, too, to allow it.—Rosamond, you have not seen Bert yet."

"No," said Rosamond languidly; "it would be only civil if he were to come and speak to me."

Bertram had been staring with wide-open eyes at his half-sister, and now, in response to Lady Lawley's admonition, he went towards her and lifted up his face to be kissed.

"Well, Bert, have you forgotten me?" asked Rosamond, patting his cheek playfully. "Don't you remember how I pulled these little curls last time I saw you?"

Bertram shook his head. "I haven't never seen you before," he said, with his usual prompt decision.

Will took the child up in his arms, tossing him and shaking him till he laughed aloud.

"What a lucky young man you are, to have two 'pretty ladies' now to bestow your attentions on. You won't know which to go to first, will you?"

"Oh, yes, I shall," said Bert, and he ran to Felicia, climbed up into her arms, and began kissing her heartily.

"I like *you* best," he said, in a loud, confiding whisper; "and some day when I'm a grown-up man you'll marry me, won't you, dear?"

Rosamond looked half-annoyed, half-amused. "You have not succeeded in teaching him his manners yet, Anthony," said she, in an aside to her lover, who had now returned and was doing his best to fan her. He was not very skilful, however, for a fan was an unaccustomed tool in his hands.

"My dear Anthony, it is like a sirocco," she exclaimed, "and you'll break that fan if you don't take care, in which case I should never forgive you.—Mr. Lawley, I think your hands are better adapted to this kind of work than Anthony's. I am sure you are not half so reckless and uncompromising."

Lestrange, thus dismissed, gave up the fan to Will, and crossing the veranda, he took a seat beside Felicia and Lady Lawley, who were talking of parish matters.

Will and Felicia did not finish the game of tennis, so much looked forward to, so reluctantly abandoned. They might very well have done so had they chosen, but Felicia saw from the first that Will was now thoroughly bent on doing what she had already pointed out to him was his duty. It seemed, too, that Miss Wylde was not at all anxious to dispense with his society, for though her hostess, with her usual thoughtfulness, would have been glad to leave the lovers some little time to themselves after their long absence, Miss Wylde, with the utmost ingenuousness, prevented any such kind intentions being carried into execution.

The Rector, according to promise, came to dinner, and completed the party, and Will drove them home in the cool of the evening.

"And how has my little girl enjoyed herself?" asked Mr. Hardy, as they walked together up and down the lawn in the quiet moonlight.

"Very well, thank you, father," answered Felicia, clasping her hands over his arm. "But this is the best part of it. After all, I would not change places with Miss Wylde."

"No? Not for all the wealth and grandeur and luxury, all the beauty and accomplishments and other graces, which you and Lawley have been extolling so highly?"

"All that is very nice," said Felicia, brushing her cheek against his arm. "But I have something better, that she has not."

Mr. Hardy understood her meaning, and looked down on her fondly. "What a blessing that my little one is contented with her lot! And so you like Miss Wylde, dear?"

"Yes, father; she is very nice, but——"

"But what?"

"I don't think I meant to say 'but,'" said Felicia, after a pause. "I only meant to say I think her very nice."

It was not till Felicia found herself in her own room that night that she had leisure to think over the strange communication Will had made to her that morning. She had not yet mentioned it to her father, having felt doubtful in her mind whether it was advisable to do so. It was more than likely that Will had been mistaken, and she felt there was no need that evening to bring before her father's mind a subject that was sure to cause him fresh anxiety. A vague feeling that some news of Richard might already have reached the Rectory had been present with her all day, but when she saw from her father's manner that such was not the case, she thought it best to defer the information till the following day. Perhaps the morning's post would throw fresh light on the subject.

On the arrival of the postman next day, Felicia went out herself to take the letters. She turned them all over anxiously, but the familiar handwriting was not on any of them. Her father guessed by the unusual gravity of her expression as she came in to breakfast that something was troubling her, and asked her what it was. When she told him, he, too, looked thoughtful.

"I have business in Greychester this morning," said he. "I hope I may hear something about him. It is, of course, possible that Will was mistaken; but if he is really here I shall be sure to find him. Poor boy! I hope it is all right with him. Get his room ready, Felicia: he must not come home without a welcome. Ah, dear! it's only four years ago, and yet it seems half a lifetime."

And the Rector sighed as he took up his paper, while Felicia watched him in sorrowful silence.

"'Rosamond dear, there is something I want to talk to you about.'"—*p.* 125.

CHAPTER VII.

ANTHONY LESTRANGE found no chance of a quiet talk with Rosamond till the following morning, when, breakfast being over, they went out together into the grounds.

"Rosamond darling," he began, as he placed her hand on his arm, "how delightful it is to be together again, isn't it? I had looked forward to being the very first to greet you; but there, dear, of course you were not able to say just what your plans were. You must not run away on these wild pleasure tours again without me. I can't spare you, dearest."

"That's just like a man," said Rosamond, tossing her pretty head. "You want to deny me all my pleasures."

"No, no, Rosamond, you know that is not the case. I only want to share your pleasures with you. Is that very unreasonable?"

"I did not say you were unreasonable, Anthony.

But you don't care about the kind of things I do. You are such a dear, wise, solemn creature, you would be a regular wet blanket on all my amusements."

Anthony turned towards her a quick glance, full of pained surprise. She was looking up at him with an artless smile.

"I hope you will not always think so, dear," he said quietly.

"Oh, I dare say you will improve," she returned, laughing. "I must teach you not to be so grave and dull, and then we shall get on admirably together. My poor dear Anthony, have you forgotten the way to smile?"

They had wandered into a secluded corner of the garden, where an avenue of limes led down to a shady retreat, a sort of sylvan arbour, carpeted with moss, and over-arched with interlacing green. Carved wooden seats, about whose massive framework the ivy had begun to trail, stood here and there, seldom used now, and therefore somewhat neglected. In the centre of this open space stood the ruins of what had once been a sundial, while antique vases and cupids in every stage of dilapidation looked out from sheltered nooks, the sole relics of former glories.

To one of these seats Anthony led Rosamond, and, retaining her hand in his firm, gentle grasp, he began, in a tone of grave earnestness—

"Rosamond dear, there is something I want to talk to you about."

"Oh, is there?" said she saucily. "I hope it is not anything very serious."

"We have been engaged a long time, dear."

"Yes, we have, rather. You are tired of me, I suppose, and want your freedom."

"Oh, my dearest, don't jest like that. Are you bent on making me unhappy? You know I have been very patient all these years: now I am going to ask you to fix a definite time—in short, dear, when shall we be married?"

Rosamond's manner changed instantly. She drew a long breath and looked at him, as if that were the last thing in the world she expected or desired him to ask.

"I have forborne to press this question for some time, dear, not because I have not thought of it, or looked forward to our marriage, but because I have been much occupied, as you know, with the matter of the inheritance."

The quick colour rushed into Rosamond's face, a startled look came into her eyes. She bent her head, and her voice trembled a little as she answered hurriedly, "Why do you distress yourself, Anthony? There is surely no need. If the will is gone, it is not our—not your fault."

"Not our fault, dearest, certainly; but it would be our fault if we made no effort to get it restored."

"You can't do that; I am sure you can't," said she, with more excitement than the subject seemed to demand. "What is the use, Anthony, of fretting and worrying yourself in this way? You have been doing all you can these last twelve months, and are just as much in the dark as ever. Can't you let the matter rest? After all, it does not make so very much difference. It is not as though the property had gone out of the family."

"It comes to the same thing, Rosamond. If the property has been, through dishonest means, bestowed upon the wrong person, the fact that it remains in the family hardly alters the case."

"But, indeed, Anthony, it does; because, if it had gone to strangers, Bert would have lost *all* his prospects; but as it is, I, and I know *you* too, will feel bound to provide for him in a way that will make up to him for the loss of the inheritance."

"My dear, I know your benevolent intentions; but you don't see the matter from the right standpoint. Our generosity and goodwill cannot possibly make up to him, in exact proportion, for being deprived of his rights."

"How do you know that he *is* being deprived of his rights?" asked Rosamond rather sharply.

"I know it, Rosamond, because I am one of your father's executors, and as such am partly responsible for the due execution of his wishes."

He spoke with great decision; but a glance at Rosamond's face told him that a storm was impending.

"One would suppose," said she—a very dark look gathering in her eyes—"that you hated to see me happy and enjoying myself. You care a great deal more for Bertram than you do for me. You know very well that everything ought to have come to me, and that it is really and honestly mine at present, and yet you are doing everything in your power to get it taken away from me. One would think you wanted me to be poor, and have all my pleasure and enjoyment spoiled."

"I am sorry you take that view of it, Rosamond," said Anthony, looking deeply hurt. "You must know how unjust it is. I only wish Mrs. Grundy gave me credit for so much stoicism. Do you know that my position lays me open to very dishonouring suspicions?"

"What do you mean, Anthony?" she asked, with more feeling than she had hitherto shown.

"I mean that suspicion has fallen on me."

"On *you!*" blankly. "Oh, surely not."

"It is true, dearest. You remember, I shared your father's confidence to the utmost, and was with him at the time of his death. Everyone knew that; and it has been set abroad that I was concerned in the abstraction of the later will. People said that naturally I wanted you to have the property."

"Oh, Anthony!"

"That is the construction a charitable world puts upon it."

"But," said Rosamond, turning towards him with a face in which fear and indignation were strangely mingled, "people have no right to say such things! Can't you prove to them that it's all false? Oh dear! what a lot of trouble my father's foolish fancy has made."

"Hush, Rosamond!" said Anthony, anxious to calm her excitement; but she snatched her hand away from his.

"You know I never did agree with it," she broke out passionately; "I always thought it was unfair and unjust. Even *you* never seem to consider how hardly I have been treated. I think I have quite as much reason to talk about being deprived of my rights as Bertram."

"Unfortunately, dear, private judgment and feeling do not alter plain facts. Since you take it so much to heart, I am very sorry that the poor child's claims should have superseded yours; but I did hope, dear, you would consider my little fortune sufficient for both our needs. It is not inconsiderable, as you are aware. I did not know you had set your heart upon Wyldeholme and its wealth. You used not to care so much about such things."

"I think it is only natural I should care about Wyldeholme. You are most unfeeling, Anthony." And here Rosamond showed unmistakable signs of giving way to tears.

"Poor child!" said Anthony, putting his arm round her and drawing her gently towards him. "You never will understand me."

Perhaps Rosamond felt a little ashamed of herself. Her lover's patience and gentleness seemed to touch her, for she submitted to his caress in subdued silence. Had he attempted to remonstrate or argue, she would have felt justified in continuing to feel aggrieved, but the quiet, sad tenderness in his tone gave her no chance to do so. She had no idea how deeply she had wounded him: she had no conception of the strange tumult her passionate words had set stirring under that outwardly calm exterior.

"I think you must see, if you will give a little quiet thought to it, Rosamond dear, that whatever view we may take of the matter, it can't alter existing facts. It is not fair to the poor little boy who is the innocent cause of this trouble to visit resentment on him for no other reason than this. It seems very hard to you, I dare say, dear (and it grieves me very much because you feel it so), that your prospects should have been altered by this marriage of your father's, but then you must remember that Colonel Wylde had a perfect right to do as he pleased; and, indeed, I don't know that anyone could blame him. At any rate, however we look at it, it makes no difference; if the property rightfully belongs to Bertram, as it unquestionably does, we have no option but to use every endeavour to get justice done by him."

Rosamond made no reply, but sat, with flushed cheeks and tearful eyes, looking on the ground. Anthony felt it was of little use to say more, and, indeed, the subject having taken this unexpected turn, there could be nothing gained by pursuing it.

"Come, my dearest, let me kiss away these tears," said he playfully. "Our first morning together must not be spoiled in this way. Besides, darling, I don't want my character quite taken away. They will think I have been ill-treating you shamefully."

"Well, you should not talk about unpleasant things," she said, the smiles beginning to dawn again through her tears; "you know I can't bear it. But it's just what I say—you are never content to let me enjoy myself. There is always something dull or disagreeable that you want to talk about."

Anthony coloured slightly, but said nothing. He felt strangely sad and disappointed at heart. He did not for an instant doubt that Rosamond loved him, but her too evident want of sympathy with him jarred upon a naturally sensitive spirit.

Rosamond, however, soon recovered her gaiety, and when Will joined them later on, was full of plans and bright schemes for making time pass pleasantly.

"I am going to get Lady Lawley to give a party," said she. "Are there any nice people about here?"

"Not very many," said Will; "at least, not many that you would care about, I think. That is the worst of the country—one gets so little society. I have now been at home about five weeks, Miss Wylde, and that is the longest stay I've made here for the last three or four years. Like you, I enjoy travelling, so, as you may imagine, I don't see too much of my worthy friends and neighbours. However, we will ask my mother about it. It's a long time since we have had any gaieties at Lawley Manor. Shall we have a game of tennis now, or don't you care about it?"

"Yes, by all means," said Rosamond; "I am tired of doing nothing. I wish that nice girl—I forget her name—were here to make up the set."

"You mean Miss Hardy," said Anthony; "I am glad you like her so much already, dear. Sir John has made up his mind that you shall be great friends."

It is not very often that a man's pre-arrangement in so delicate a matter as women's friendships finds any satisfactory fulfilment. Curious as it may appear, it is yet a fact that a man's estimation of a woman is nearly always in some measure at variance with the estimation in which she is held by her own sex. The difference may be in quality, in degree, or in kind: but whatever it is, there *is* a difference, not always acknowledged, but generally perceived. The reason lies probably in the widely different natural characteristics of mind, thought, and disposition; from different standpoints the same object is apt to assume different proportions, as the same object different colours in different lights. Thus it is that though a woman may be equally admired or disliked by her friends of both sexes, yet the masculine and feminine reasons for either sentiment are rarely in accordance. It is the utmost folly for a man to attempt to choose a woman's friends, and it is worse than useless for him to expect her to like another woman simply because *he* does, or because he thinks she ought to In such matters women's instincts refuse to be guided by masculine opinion. Whatever concessions may be made out of love, deference, fear, or other motives, there can never be any real friendship between women that is not absolutely and mutually spontaneous.

From the very beginning of their acquaintance, Felicia and Rosamond did not like each other. There was not, perhaps, a positive feeling of dislike between them, but, in a strictly negative sense, they were out of sympathy with each other. Felicia, however, would not recognise it even to herself, except in the very vaguest way, and Rosamond was not a girl to let her real feelings be seen. She had very good reasons of her own for wishing to be friendly with Felicia, and when Rosamond made up her mind to be agreeable she was absolutely irresistible. Miss Hardy, somewhat to her surprise, soon found her society indispensable at Lawley Manor; and not only so, but Rosamond made many opportunities of visiting Felicia at the Rectory. Accompanied sometimes by Anthony, but more frequently by Will, who was now

her devoted slave, she would drive through the village nearly every day of the week in the elegant little phaeton Sir John had procured for her special use, and it was very seldom she turned the ponies' heads homewards without making a call on the Hardys. Sometimes, but very rarely, she took Bertram with her, but the boy did not care for her society, and when taken to the Rectory, though a certain innate pride prevented him from lamenting openly, it was never without a visible inward struggle that he could be got away again. He much preferred attending Sir John and Anthony in their morning rides round the estate, for the active mind of the latter, finding little scope in the round of visiting, tea-drinking, and gossip indulged in by the ladies, was glad to develop itself in the rough open-air life adopted by the lord of the manor. Mounted in front of Anthony, Bertram felt that he enjoyed a position of great superiority, and received the attentions of Sir John's tenantry with a grave dignity that admirably became his exalted station. To these excursions Rosamond made no serious objection. She was fond of the boy in a certain way, but was not accustomed to have much to do with children, and she found him a trouble.

"I should have brought him," she would say sometimes, in answer to Felicia's inquiries; "but, of course, he wanted to go round the farms with Anthony. The child has such plebeian tastes. He never seems so happy as when pottering round with the farmers' wives, or talking to bedridden old women in the cottages."

"I am not surprised he enjoys it," Felicia would say, half-amused at Rosamond's protesting air. "It must seem quite new to him after having lived so long in London; and some of the people are very nice, and would be kind to him, I know."

"Oh, yes, I dare say," Rosamond would answer. "But, my dear Felicia, just think of the dreadful ways he will get into, and the language he will learn! It seems to me such a strange thing that he should *persist* in speaking bad grammar, though poor Lady Lawley and I are *always* telling him of it. He will never learn better while he goes so much amongst these poor people. I shall get Anthony to send him to school; I am sure he is old enough now."

To this Felicia would say nothing, having an instinctive feeling that that was the last thing Mr. Lestrange would think of doing. The difficult problem as to what was to be done with Bertram was still unsolved, but it was by no means the most difficult one Mr. Lestrange had to encounter. He had spoken truly when he told Sir John there were obstacles in the way of his marriage; but he hardly liked to acknowledge what he felt to be the truth, that his greatest difficulties and anxieties were caused by Miss Wylde herself. The way in which she had received his request that the time for their marriage should be fixed, and the fact that she never since alluded to the subject in any way, made him shrink from again urging it. After a few futile attempts to gain her interest, he therefore fell back upon silence, and though no shadow of coldness marked their public intercourse with each other, yet there was between these lovers, admired and envied as they were, a conscious want of heart-sympathy and heart-union.

CHAPTER VIII.

Several weeks passed away. No intelligence of Richard Hardy had reached the Rectory, though his father had used every endeavour to gain some knowledge of his whereabouts. Greychester was a large and populous town, and though it lay at a distance of only ten miles from the rural village of Carsthorpe, it was too busy and enterprising a place to take much notice of such affairs as were incidents of note in the smaller worlds revolving round it. Society at Greychester had long ago become indifferent to the fate of Richard Hardy. The heavy tradesmen's bills which had poured in in such profusion to Carsthorpe Rectory were settled and done with; the scandal his conduct had created had died out, and Richard himself might very well have made his appearance in the place without being noticed, or, indeed, even recognised.

It may well be imagined that Mr. Hardy was not anxious to revive the memory of these scandals, but such indirect inquiries as he could safely make without betraying his anxiety for information had been made, and had proved fruitless. Much as he longed to see his son again (for the instincts of love in the father's heart had overmastered the sense of shame), it was yet with a feeling of relief that he reported to Felicia the ill-success of his mission. They did not, however, knowing Richard's erratic disposition, at once give up all expectations of seeing him; but as day followed day, and no tidings came, their anxious suspense gradually gave place to a more settled state of mind.

Meanwhile a new element seemed to have come into Felicia's life. Gaiety was now the order of the day; for Miss Wylde's demands were not easily satisfied, and nothing could go on at the Manor without Felicia. So the Rector's daughter, whose simple life had hitherto been spent in the uneventful round of household and parish duties, varied by school-treats or county gatherings, now found herself in constant request at garden-parties, receptions, musical evenings, and a variety of amusements designed to feather the wings of Time.

One morning Felicia was busy in her own little sitting-room, whose latticed windows looked out upon the garden, when she heard the click of the gate, and soon after saw Mr. Lestrange coming up the garden path. As he passed the window he looked in, and seeing her there, paused.

"Good-morning, Mr. Lestrange," said she, with a smile of recognition. "Please come in." And Anthony, without waiting for further invitation, stepped over the low window-sill and took the hand outstretched to him.

"I come with a message from Lady Lawley, Miss Hardy," said he; "but as I see you are busy, I don't like to deliver it. We take up a great deal of your time, and I am afraid you can ill afford to spare it."

"If that is the case, I ought to have the strength of mind to say so, don't you think?"

"I should not imagine you were wanting in strength of mind, Miss Hardy; but perhaps good-nature sometimes overrules prudence."

"I hope it is not so," said Felicia, with sudden

seriousness. "If I neglect my duties, what you call good-nature is simply selfishness; and you know I *have* a great many calls on my time and attention."

"I know you have, and that is why I am ashamed to come to you this morning."

"Oh, never mind," she returned, with a careless smile. "I will forgive the interruption; but if you don't mind, I will continue my work. Perhaps you could manage to forget your message, Mr. Lestrange, if you think very hard of something else."

Anthony laughed, and drawing a chair up to the table where Felicia was sitting, he picked up a pile of cards and scraps that lay there.

"My fingers are clumsy, I know, Miss Hardy; but this seems to be work not entirely above my comprehension. As you have evidently a long morning's work before you, suppose you let me lighten your labours."

"How very kind of you!" said Felicia, with a look of surprise. "But I could not think of keeping you at so uncongenial a task. Yes, there is a morning's work here; and when I have filled these scrap-books I want to take them down to the village to some children who are ill with scarlet fever. And that reminds me, Mr. Lestrange, to ask you to take care that Bert is not allowed to go down by that row of cottages near the old mill. It is rather bad in that part of the village, you know. They have had it in nearly every house."

"I heard something about it," said Anthony. "Harris was speaking of it to Sir John. Thank you for your caution, Miss Hardy. I will give special instructions about Bert. But do you think you ought to go yourself?"

"Oh, yes," said Felicia; "there is no one else to go except father. I am used to visiting all these people, you know; and I could not stay away on account of illness. Besides that, I should not like to."

Anthony sat still for a few moments, watching with interest the deft fingers busy with the gum-brush, and the serious bright face absorbed in the selection and arrangement of the scraps. The low-ceiled, latticed-windowed room, with its dark wainscot and old-fashioned furniture, had a very snug, cosy appearance, for the feminine element was decidedly in the ascendency, in spite of its simplicity, and gave an air of dainty refinement and grace that was in admirable harmony with its owner. The easel and canvases that stood in one corner, the hanging bookshelf, occupied by Felicia's own particular library, the work-table, the fans, the flowers, all bore evidence to a woman's presence. It was not by any means so luxurious or so elegant an apartment as Rosamond's boudoir, yet somehow Anthony felt more at home in it. He looked first at his surroundings with a conscious feeling of satisfaction, and then back again at the reposeful face and dignified mien of the girl sitting opposite him. It was so cool and pleasant in this shady room, fragrant with the scent of roses and honeysuckle wafted in by the soft breezes, so quiet and restful to sit idly watching the busy fingers and listening to the low, sweet voice of Felicia, who went on talking, in her quiet, unembarrassed way, of village matters, that Anthony felt a strange disinclination to take his departure. The longer he stayed, the stronger grew the feeling. He had offered to help her, and she had practically declined, yet he lingered. There was no reason, he felt, why he should not do so, for in coming he had but obeyed his lady's behests; and he knew only too well that she would be at no loss to amuse herself during a somewhat prolonged absence. He felt, a good deal more keenly than he showed, that Rosamond looked upon him with a sort of suspicion as being at dire enmity with all her plans of amusement. It was true he could not always enter into them, for his ambitions and aspirations were on a higher level than hers, but none the less did his strong, true heart find pleasure in seeing her fully satisfied and happy. Since it was evident that his society alone was not sufficient to make her so, he was content in his unselfishness to give place to others; and as Rosamond had taken a great liking to Will Lawley, whose gay disposition and artless but polished manners made him a general favourite amongst ladies, it had become a recognised thing that Will should take upon himself the leadership in all Rosamond's schemes. It was fortunate that Anthony was not of a particularly jealous disposition: he had implicit confidence in Rosamond, and would not condescend to harbour ungenerous suspicions. Yet though he accepted with grace the subordinate position allotted to him, he could not overcome a restless feeling of heart-loneliness and disappointment amid the gaieties of this artificial life.

Perhaps the one reason why he hesitated about staying at the Rectory that summer morning was the consciousness that these haunting feelings which sometimes made the laugh and jest such a mockery to him were somehow stifled, subdued, and set at rest in this atmosphere of quietude and peace. Lestrange was at heart a worker: his was a nature full of strong emotions and wide energies, which could not find scope for development in any narrow, conventional round of self-seeking or self-pleasing. As he sat thus watching Felicia at her work, he seemed to have come out of his old world and entered into another, wider, brighter, and better, in which the dormant faculties of mind and soul had room to breathe and move. That it was so, he felt to be a little disloyal towards Rosamond. Though she could find complete happiness irrespective of him, he felt a twinge of conscience lest he should be doing the same. Felicia, too, experienced a subtle, instinctive feeling of the same kind, and feared lest Anthony, by prolonging his visit, should lay himself open to Rosamond's displeasure. She would not say anything calculated to detain him, yet she did not feel vexed because he did not go.

"You have not yet delivered your message, Mr. Lestrange," said Felicia presently. "After all, I must not let you forget it altogether, for fear you should incur Lady Lawley's severest anger."

"Or Rosamond's," said Anthony, laughing, "for I believe it was she who enjoined the urgency of my errand. There is to be another garden-party next week, even more elaborate than the last, and your assistance is required in arranging the details. Rosamond begged me to say she must see you to-day, as she has something very important to talk to you

"Someone was about to enter unannounced."—*p.* 130.

about; and Lady Lawley desires, if you are not too busy, that you will come up to luncheon."

Felicia looked thoughtful. "I hardly know what to say. I must go into the village, and I want to take these with me. My father is away to-day, so he will not want me; but these errands may detain me some time, you see."

"Shall I tell Lady Lawley you will come this afternoon, or to-morrow?" suggested Anthony.

"Oh, this afternoon, with pleasure, if you think that will do."

"I am sure it will, Miss Hardy. But now you must indeed let me help you. I should so much like to."

"Should you?" said she, irresolutely. The offer was a tempting one. for she did want help; but while she still hesitated he took the brush out of her hand, and drew the scrap-book, in which she was pasting scraps, towards him. She looked surprised for a moment at this cool, masterful proceeding, but Anthony's manner was so simple and straightforward that she could not possibly resent it.

"Can I find another brush, Miss Hardy; and may I do this book which, I see, you have not begun?" he asked, restoring the things to her a moment later with a smiling apology.

She gave him the necessary materials, and he set to work in good earnest, but Felicia had to keep strict watch on him, for the conversation drifting on to art and literature, he became so absorbed and interested in it that she several times observed him putting the cards in upside down.

"I did not know you were an artist, Miss Hardy,"

said he presently; "if it is not too presumptuous a thing to ask, I should like to see some of your paintings."

"Do not give me so dignified a title, Mr. Lestrange. My efforts are very feeble," she replied carelessly.

"I suppose you paint from nature," he continued. "You have some lovely scenery about here. I visited your waterfall yesterday for the first time. It is really a charming spot, and I was quite surprised to see such a magnificent fall of water in these parts. Did you ever think of painting it?"

"Yes," said Felicia, blushing vividly: for the memory of that happy day in the woods had become rather painful to her lately. "I tried it once, not very long ago. It is unfinished."

"Oh, what a pity!" said Anthony. "I should like to see it."

"There it is, on the easel."

He jumped up eagerly to look at it. "Oh, Miss Hardy, this is beautiful! You *must* finish it."

"I do not think I could," she said.

He turned to look at her, somewhat surprised at the grave decision in her tones. The expression on her face did not encourage him to pursue the subject, and he turned away baffled but interested.

He was still studying the picture when the door opened suddenly, and someone was about to enter unannounced, but seeing who was present precipitately retired. The intruder had vanished before Anthony had time to turn, but Felicia, who stood facing the door, caught a glimpse of a tall, muscular frame and dark-bearded face. One glance into the restless, brilliant eyes was sufficient. Felicia, already somewhat discomposed, turned deadly white, and leaned against the table for support.

Anthony hurried to her side.

"Why, what is the matter, Miss Hardy?" he asked, in much astonishment and concern. "Can I get you anything? Some water?"

"Oh, no, thank you; no, don't go away, please," she said, laying a detaining hand on his arm as he was moving towards the door. "I am quite well—indeed I am."

"I don't think you are."

"It is nothing, I assure you. I am not going to faint. I felt stifled for the moment, that was all."

Anthony looked only half-satisfied. "Can I do nothing for you?"

"You have already done a great deal," she replied, forcing a smile, "and now I am going to put my work away. Mr. Lestrange, I don't know now whether I shall be able to go up to the Manor to-day. Will you tell Lady Lawley so? Someone has come to see me, I think."

Anthony felt himself dismissed, but he was rather loth to go, for the colour came back but slowly to Felicia's cheeks, and he feared she was in no very fit state to receive visitors.

"Can I not do your errands for you in the village? These books are finished. I will leave them for you, if you like."

"Oh, thank you, if you don't mind—I should be very glad."

He gathered them together, and she gave him directions where to leave them.

"Is there nothing else I can do?"

"Nothing else, thank you. Good-bye, and thank you very much for your help."

"Do not thank me," he replied simply; "it has been a pleasure."

Then they shook hands, and Anthony went out by the way he had come in.

(To be continued.)

THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES.

A FLAT French landscape, and three children bent
With weighty burden. Sadly poor and mean,
A passer-by pronounced the little scene,
And scarcely noted it as on he went:
His ears so dulled with harsh and sordid care,
The children's laughter wasted on the air.

A poet viewed it from the selfsame lane;
A wealth of colouring for him it spread:
The emerald earth, the blue sky overhead,
The upborne sheaf of dancing yellow grain,
Made it so beautiful and jewelled a place,
He never even saw each childish face.

An angel, watching them with grave sweet eyes,
And guessing at their comrades left at play,
While they toiled on this sunny summer's day,
"At work for father," pierced the poor disguise
Of ragged raiment as they onward trod,
And knew them for the messengers of God.

MABEL E. WOTTON.

Not to the Mount that Burned with Fire.

Words by James Montgomery, 1825. *Music by* George Garrett, M.A., Mus.D., F.C.O.

mf *cres.*

1. Not..... to the mount that burn'd with fire, To dark - ness, tem - pest,
2. But to Mount Zi - on we are come, The ci - ty of the

f

and the sound Of trum - pet wax - ing high and higher, Nor voice of
liv - ing God, Je - ru - sa - lem, our heav'n - ly home, The courts by

mf

words that rent the ground, While Is - rael heard, with trem - bling
an - gel - le - gions trod; Where meet, in ev - er - last - ing

awe, Je - ho - vah thun - der forth His law:—
love, The church of the first - born a - bove: A - men.

3. To God, the Judge of quick and dead
The perfect spirits of the just;
Jesus, our great new-covenant Head;
The blood of sprinkling, from the dust,—
That better things than Abel's cries,
And pleads a Saviour's sacrifice.

4. Oh, hearken to the healing voice,
That speaks from heaven in tones so mild!
To-day are life and death our choice;
To-day, through mercy reconciled,
Our all to God we yet may give;
Now let us hear His voice, and live.

SPIRITUAL FAILURES.

BY THE REV. W. MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

II.—SAUL THE KING.

THE heart clings fondly around King Saul. We know what must be the end of his career, but we cherish hope for him until the last. Even at Endor we cannot join in his despair, and we unconsciously applaud the devoted armour-bearer who refused to slay him in the day of his defeat.

He is amongst the monarchs of Israel what Charles the First was in England—fascinating, but false; weak in method and purpose, but commanding to the death the affection and homage of his friends. Yet there is around the Israelite a dramatic grouping and progress of events which we miss in our English story. Saul is more interesting than Charles was. The people around him exhibit more of the variety and beauty of life. If we catch not the moral grandeur of Hampden or the fiery enthusiasm of Elliot, we feast our souls with the chivalry of David and the quenchless loyalty of Jonathan.

Indeed, no other country, nor any other time in Palestine, could present us with such a picture. The march of the Lord of Hosts is felt amidst the tumult of affairs; and those affairs arose and marshalled themselves with many powers in a period of rude transition and rapid development. The old statesmanship was passing away. The line between the last of the Plantagenets and the first of the Tudors is not more sharp than that between the Israel of Samson and the Israel of Saul. It was no longer possible to live as in the time of Gideon, nor to re-enact the terrible patriotism of Jephthah. Fierce and fearless as were the heroes of the past, the present longed for heroes who could think as well as act, and rule by force of will as well as by deeds of prowess in the field of war.

The older social forms were also passing, never to return. The last remnant of the patriarchal government was almost gone. Like our own feudal system, it died slowly and hard. But the tribes longed to become a nation, and national sentiments with them, as with us, modified the minor ideas of religion, and clothed the conception of the Eternal with another mantle than that whose skirts Moses had beheld in Horeb. It is a mistake to suppose that at any period of the history of Israel the enactment of the Law was universally observed. Palestine was no more unanimous in piety than England and Ireland are to-day. Religious ideas were no more crystallised there than they are here.

This, however, will not adequately explain the magnificent ruin which Saul's history presents. A great, strong man would have stemmed opposing tides and mastered the difficulties of his age. Had his moral and spiritual stature been as commanding as his physical, he would have died in an old age, honoured and deplored. But it was the spiritual and moral defects in the man which led him to inevitable failure. It is therefore with this side of his life that we are chiefly concerned.

I. *He was only half converted.* It seems strange to throw the new words back into the rough theology of the eleventh century before Christ. But whatever the idea of conversion might be then (as it is often imperfect and erroneous now), the fact of a change or a determination for God is equally common to both. He felt the force of the Divine call, and to a certain extent he answered it. He was submissive if not ardent at his anointing by Samuel; and he realised the significance of the other signs which Samuel gave him. They were signs of his possible future—a future which God openly and decisively laid before him.* The first sign told him to set his mind at rest concerning earthly anxieties, and to prepare himself for higher tasks than the pursuit of earthly possession. The second, when the three men on their pilgrimage to the holy place presented him with two loaves of bread, was an assurance, public and confessed, of the new dignity conferred upon him. The third, leading him into the society and within the influence of spiritual minds, declared that his new life was to be one animated, directed, and ruled immediately and alone by the Spirit of the Lord.

These were the three platforms to which successively God leads His heroes. The earthly and temporal belonging to all must be forsaken by those who would climb the heights. Mere dignity of position is nothing—the divinity which doth merely hedge a king: but the dignity of a kingly nature, the inestimable worth of a man, the confidence in himself and his methods, the power to arouse, control, and govern as a monarch of men, each of these is essential to greatness. Chief of all, and last, the spiritual power crowns the man, reminding him that no nation lives by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God—that a true king must be a true prophet as well, and that he must seek first for himself and his people the Kingdom of God.

Now, Saul accepted all this; and the inspiration came, and he too prophesied, and for a while was turned into another man. But even at this period we can perceive a source of moral weakness in him. It was the great day of the lots, when the future king was to be publicly selected. The lot had fallen upon

* 1 Sam. x.

Saul, but shyly and bashfully he had withdrawn himself, and hidden "among the stuff." Modesty is beautiful in a girl and commendable in a man; but it ceases to be a virtue when it makes a man shrink from any duty and decline any burden which may be laid upon him.

His prophesying, too, seems to have been of short duration; for high religious enthusiasm—that enthusiasm by which alone the career and work of the prophet are fulfilled—is difficult to sustain. The full deep river must have an abundant and unfailing supply. Shallow life may gurgle and whirl and foam in eddying corners, but it is shallow still, and passes on in shallow reaches among the meadows. It is thus and for this reason that so many who start well in the Christian life go back, or, to use St. John's pathetic words, leave their first love. Whatever of religion endured in Saul's life showed itself only in paroxysms of zeal at distant intervals. The half-converted have the worst of both worlds.

This half-converted state is clearly revealed in the names which Saul gave to his children. One son is Malchi-shua, "the help of Moloch"; another is Eshbaal, "the man of Baal."* In these we see the touch of truth: the king's affections betray the king's religion. Jehovah, Moloch, Baal, each and all are challenged and cultivated for the well-being of the house.

In nothing do we perceive so thoroughly the hopelessness of half-measures as in religious life. The other prince of the tribe of Benjamin, destined beyond the king to perpetuate the fame of the youngest son of Israel, was so fully convinced of this that he uses language which many conceive to be unreal and extravagant. Christ to him is all in all. He is crucified with Christ. He will know nothing of the wealthy citizens of Corinth but Jesus, and Him crucified. It is the old story of entire consecration: the one method of complete content, of spiritual assurance, and of temporal happiness on earth.

II. *Saul practised an imperfect morality.* As a popular writer has acutely remarked, his religion was never blended with his moral nature. Like many men and women now, he thought he could thrive with divided interests, divided energy, and divided heart. He had no distinct idea of the difference between mere ceremony and the higher range of true obedience to duty. The outward never yielded to the inward. He was commanded to await the arrival of Samuel before he offered sacrifice or made an attack upon the Philistines. He lost his nerve as the Philistines approached, and endeavoured to propitiate where he ought to have obeyed. Again, he was commanded to annihilate the army of the Amalekites and all their property; and he was caught in the trap of vanity and pride and selfishness. Once more he is put to the test by one of those strange crossings of events which make up the plots and catastrophes of the tale-teller and the poet. Jonathan is away when his father makes a vow that anyone who took food until the sun went down should be accursed. He has performed a marvellous feat of arms, and, weary and hungry, he eats a morsel of wild honey in a wood. An unaccountable terror seizes the whole army. The matter is reported, and it is at once concluded that some moral wrong has been done. Lots are drawn, and the lot falls upon Jonathan. Whereupon his father pronounces his death, and he is rescued only by the quick and decisive action of his comrades. The fault of Saul was the dimness of vision, which had not been cleared by intercourse and intimacy with the Highest. For there is spiritual insight as well as worldly knowledge, and it is a fault in any character when these do not co-exist.

The same lack of balance, inspired by those acts of religious frenzy which were noticed before, dictates some of the bloodiest episodes in his life. Because of the slight service done to David, he put the whole priesthood which ministered in the tabernacle at Nob to the sword. Not one whom the sword could reach in the city of Nob, even to the new-born child, was spared. If ever a solemn covenant was made with any people, it was that which was concluded by Joshua with the Gibeonites, and declared to be of perpetual obligation. Saul sought to break the treaty and to slay all that people. Witchcraft had always been denounced; but with a striking inconsistency he slaughtered every witch and wizard he could find; and in the hour of his own despair he sought the counsel of one of these, who somehow had escaped.

It was for two things, we are told in the Book of the Chronicles, that he fell: first, because he disobeyed the commandment of God; and secondly, because he sought counsel from the witch of Endor. That story is folded in deep mystery, and is dark as that night in which Saul crossed the hills to the witch's retreat, or dark as the king's own heart and soul. Many and many an explanation has been attempted of what actually occurred, and of the occult powers and influences that were at work. It is not possible to attempt any such explanation here, and we are interested only in the relation of Saul to a forbidden oracle. The fatal end of the approaching battle seems to have been felt by Saul, and the pronouncement of his doom by Samuel must have harmonised sadly and sorely with the apprehensions of his own mind. The dark deed failed in its purpose, and sealed and hastened his end.

III. In the last years of his life we see Saul *overmastered by the events about him.* Their chequered story—lit up by gleams of penitence, remorse, or sincere affection—can be explained only on the supposition of insanity and madness. Insanity is not always hereditary or of hereditary origin. It is the deep danger of sin that we never can foresee where any path of sin or vice will lead. That half-conversion of early days, that slight acquaintance with spiritual things, that passing inspiration which associated him for a while with those who saw the vision of the Almighty, gave place after a time to a dogged wilfulness, a passionate and uncontrollable temper, and a loss of power and command over himself. When a

* 1 Chron. viii. 33.

man ceases from self-discipline, from moral drill, from spiritual struggle and progress, he has ceased to succeed, and he begins to perish. There can be no command of others where we have failed to command ourselves. The men before us grew stronger than we: the common facts of life pass out of our power. It is said that Napoleon lost a battle because he lost his temper; and that the Duke of Marlborough, base as he was, always won because he was always under self-control.

Thus event after event bore fiercely down upon the whole of Saul's closing years. The Philistines, whose power made him first to offend, hem him in, and all but re-conquer the entire land. Jonathan, beloved as he was, cannot trust his father a single day, nor justify the unreasoning orders he gives and actions he performs. David, whose nature and disposition would have made him the champion and principal buttress of the throne, is compelled to lead a vagabond life, and to become the bandit chief of his age. The people tremble as they follow the king to battle; for dismay and alarm have swathed the palace, the tabernacle, and the limestone refuges of the hills. A spell hangs over the land, to be rudely dissolved only when Saul fell upon his own sword and perished.

So will perish in failure all half-hearted spiritual life. The laws of the spiritual world are unalterable The principles which uphold and strengthen the life of men's souls now would have done the same work for Saul. Where he failed upon false principles, thousands are failing to-day. They have been brought near enough to the spiritual world to understand some of its secrets and feel some of its power; and they step out like Judas from sacramental glory into sleepless night, to feel that what they are is at a terrible distance from that which they might have been. The sweet savour of the Gospel has turned into the bitter taste of spiritual decay. In that decay disobedience is inevitable Moral decrepitude begets ill-shapen service. The hold on the hand of God is loosened and then let go. The sanctions of eternity—its dread issues, its boundless continents of the unvisited and the unseen—are lightly regarded, and then forgotten. The true manhood becomes paralysed, and we only wait for the real end of unspiritual and demoralised lives—the end of death.

How different the close of St. Paul's career!—"I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day."

WITH A CHILD'S EYES.

A COMPLETE STORY. BY THE AUTHOR OF "A HERO'S FOLLY," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN MORRIS sat alone in a cushioned pew in Orstone parish church, and listened to the sonorous music of the great organ. The sound seemed to him to be wonderfully like a man's voice speaking grand truths; there was no hesitation, no abrupt change—all was smooth, forcible, resolute. But then John Morris was a child, and children often hear and see more than can be discerned by their elders.

For a boy only seven years old, he was strangely still; scarcely moving hand or foot, or turning his gaze away from the stained-glass memorial window which fronted the pew.

He was used to sitting there during the choir practice on Saturday evenings—the only person in the body of the old church. He would not have missed that one hour in the week for worlds, and his nurse sometimes threatened him as a punishment—"You shall not go with your Uncle Sydney if you are naughty, Master John."

John did not think he was ever naughty, but his delinquencies were often commented upon in the nursery, and he was sadly callous on the subject so long as that threat was not carried into effect.

As he sat in the church on that particular evening, he had a great deal to think about, besides the music he so loved. Uncle Sydney, volunteer organist, and a new-comer in Mrs. Morris's household, was a puzzle to him. To other people he was Major Cheshire, a retired officer, who had seen service in Burmah. John thought of him only as a possible friend, but the child was diffident about making first advances.

Poor little boy! His father had died so many years ago that he could not remember his love; and his invalid stepmother, though careful for his health and comfort, thought him dull and uninteresting, and took but little notice of him.

Uncle Sydney was always kind; still, he never called his nephew anything but "John." Now, the boy's feelings were pronounced upon this subject; he hated his name with all the power of hatred that was in him. Other boys who had been similarly christened were lovingly addressed as "Jack" or "Johnnie."

When the choir-boys began to sing, his interest flagged; the high, clear voices did not please him; he liked the deep, thrilling organ best. So he drew a piece of paper and an end of pencil from his pocket, and, there in the semi-darkness, wrote, with painful slowness:—

"*Jackie! dear Jackie!—darling little Johnnie!*"

Then he indited a letter to himself, smiling all the while with pleasure in his work:—

"*Dearest Jack.—*

"*I love you verry mutch; I think you are a good litle boy.—From your loveing Uncle Sydney.*"

When the practice was over, the uncle and nephew walked home together slowly, for the soldier used a crutch.

John watched his elder's face all the way; the stern quiet face, with fair, overhanging moustache, and light grey eyes with a suspicion of a smile in them,

"Major Cheshire put in an appearance."

but there was no conversation until home was reached, when a few words were exchanged.

"You were not tired of waiting, John?"

"No, uncle; I could have waited a long while more!"

"Fond of music, eh?"

There was a world of expression in the boy's eyes as he answered enthusiastically—

"Oh, yes—yes!"

As the door of the pretty villa opened to admit them, a girl came running up the path. John stared with his round brown eyes, and saw that she was pretty, dark-haired, and merry.

"I've only just arrived, Major Cheshire, and Isabel is asleep; she didn't expect me so early. I was going to walk about the garden, but I'm quite cold!"

"I am sorry. You must let me take care of you until my sister wakes. You should not have stayed out in this chill wind."

"It was so lonely indoors!"

"Come in to the fire, Miss Danesford; you look quite tired."

John glanced up into his uncle's face in astonishment; he had never known him to speak so softly, nor seem so pleased. He would have liked to stay to watch his hero, but he knew that in Mrs. Morris's house little boys must neither be seen nor heard. He was going reluctantly away, when Major Cheshire called to him—

"You may stay with us; we're going to have a late tea, little Johnnie."

The officer did not guess the effect his speech would have. His ordinary brusque manner was the result of training, not of harsh intention, and he did not know how dearly his sister's stepson loved and admired him. From that moment, John Morris gave his little heart for ever to his military uncle.

The boy remained in the room that evening, and was duly grateful for cake and muffin; but, as he sat with his round, dark head bent over these dainties, he was saying two words over and over again: "Little Johnnie!—little Johnnie!"

Later on, he repeated them in his dreams, and slept with a smile on his face. He was like other boys at last, and had found somebody to love him.

CHAPTER II.

NEXT day a greater treat was in store for John; the church was to be decorated for Christmas, and he was allowed to accompany Miss Danesford, to help her to twine the scarlet holly and the dark green laurel—to hold the slippery wreaths while she nailed them into place.

During the course of the morning, Major Cheshire put in an appearance; then he assisted the girl in her work as best he could, and John sat down upon an upturned basket and continued his investigation of his hero's face and manner.

Why did Uncle Sydney smile so happily whenever Miss Danesford turned to him to ask his advice about the inscription over the chancel arch? Why had he changed so quickly? He was no longer stern and self-composed; his voice was eager, almost tremulous on one occasion.

The boy could listen to the conversation; he heard constant references to former days—to an old flower-laden garden where his two friends must have spent long hours together, so well did they seem to remember the broken sundial by the lilies, the "apple walk" the fountain, the willow where the rustic chairs were set, the shadows on the lawn, cast by the moonlight. John had seen gardens very much like this one must have been, and he had never found much beauty in them. Why did Major Cheshire and Miss Danesford linger so fondly over these reminiscences?

He was almost lost in his own thoughts when a new word caught his ear.

"Beryl, Beryl!" the man was saying, dreamily, "what a pretty name it is. Do you recollect how I carved it once on the oak-tree in the meadow?"

"Yes; it is there now. Time has spared it."

"Time is kind, then. I often thought of that tree and the clumsy letters while I was out in Burmah, Miss Danesford. I often think of it now that I am home, beggared and crippled."

"I heard that you had lost your fortune," said the girl gently. "Oh, Major Cheshire, I am sorry for you! But you mustn't mind too much; money has never more than a certain value. I know it has never

made me happy! And I don't call it being crippled to have to use one crutch. Why, you can go anywhere you like, and—and you must be proud to know that people all admire you!"

"Do they? They have no reason."

"Ah, you mustn't try to deceive me. I know how you got wounded in saving a comrade's life!"

"A soldier's duty—nothing more, Miss Danesford."

Major Cheshire lowered his eyes as though to avoid her bright, friendly glance, and as he did so, his own gaze fell upon the child's wee face, where reverential love for him was eloquently written. He bent to kiss the boy.

"Well, are you happy, little Johnnie?"

"Yes, uncle; very happy now."

Miss Danesford had hurried away to fetch some white flowers. The Major leaned against the pillar, and, laying a hand on the curly brown head of his nephew, talked to him as he had not done before. It was a strange impulse which prompted the bronzed soldier to tell his troubles to the child—the impulse which comes of a longing for the sympathy the world seems to deny. John heard all the tale of the old garden, and the sweet-faced, laughing girl who had made its home sunshine.

"I loved her, Jack! loved her with all my heart, as I do now. Isn't she beautiful? But I'm very poor, dear boy, and she is very rich, and I can't ask her to marry me now that I can never do more in the world. I can only live alone in this dull country place, or some other just like it, all alone for the rest of life!"

He rubbed his strong fingers backward and forward among the curls.

"Uncle Sydney, I *wish* I could help you!"

"Kind little chap! I know you would if you could; but that's where the truth comes in—you can't, dear. Never mind, I must be brave; a soldier shouldn't be a coward, should he? Beryl is only going to stay a week; we shall be very lonely when she's gone, shan't we, Johnnie?"

"Yes, because she's so kind and pretty, uncle."

"True, my boy."

The boy's cheeks were flecked with tears, and his tone was hesitating.

"Uncle, won't you let me live with you all your life? 'Twouldn't be quite as dull as living all alone; and I shall be a man some day."

When Beryl came back, she found the child in his uncle's arms, the little dark brown head nestling against the fair one, whose hair was fretted away at the temples.

CHAPTER III.

SIX days later, John Morris was crouching on a low stool by the nursery fire, and thinking as earnestly as he had thought during the choir practice in the parish church; but his reflections were no longer for himself.

The door of the nursery was ajar, and from the drawing-room came the sound of a song, evidently a duet, sung by two melodious voices. John had never cared for vocal music, but now he cared very much for it. Perhaps his taste had improved; perhaps he could hear pathos or reality in this singing which was absent from the choir-boys' solos. All the past six days his child's eyes had seen deep into the hearts of the two friends he so loved, as his intellect had awakened to better understanding of the romance which existed so near him. When Uncle Sydney fondled him, he knew that the man was in want of sympathy; when pretty Beryl bent to kiss him, and he felt her wet eyelashes brushing his cheek, he was sure that she, too, was sad. To-morrow morning early she was going away. Christmas was over. John felt certain that Major Cheshire would not beg her to stay; he was too proud to ask her to marry him now he was quite poor. How the boy wished that Beryl could be persuaded to tell Uncle Sydney that she too was unhappy; but, though very ignorant of love etiquette, Johnnie knew that it was not usual for a girl to speak. What could he do? They were singing together now for the last time. Then to-morrow she would go, and his hero would be lonely.

Johnnie rose from his stool, and crept out to the landing to listen. Presently he was arrested by an unexpected sight. A slim figure, dressed all in white, had come from the brilliantly lighted room, and had run into the darkness of the library. It was Beryl.

What was she doing? Leaving the company because she could not share their gaiety?

In another moment the child had slipped silently after her. He could hardly grope his way among the chairs and tables, but he heard a sob, and the sound guided him.

Pretty Beryl felt two little arms twining around her bare neck, and a smooth little face pressed close to hers.

"Oh, Johnnie! you dear, darling boy! Why did you come here?"

"To try to comfort you, Beryl; Miss Danesford, don't cry any more, and don't go away. *He* wants you to stay *so much*, only he can't ask you, because he's poor."

"You don't understand, little one. I must go away some day, and if I stay longer, I shall only be more sorry when the time comes."

Johnnie pondered this new point of view between soft kisses: then he dropped from her knee, and ran out of the room down the long corridor. He had a grand plan to carry out, and his tiny heart was thumping with excitement when he reached the drawing-room. Perhaps Uncle Sydney wouldn't see him, wouldn't come!

Major Cheshire smiled and nodded to the eager little face at the door. Then, obeying the boy's beckoning, stepped out into the hall.

"What is the matter, Johnnie? What do you want? A piece of cake and some sweets?"

"No, no. I want *you*, uncle: only for a minute, oh, do come!"

"Later on. I'll come to say 'Good-night' to you when you're in bed, Jack, and I'll bring you some crackers."

"I don't want any crackers! Uncle, if you won't come you'll always be sorry you didn't!"

"Well, where are you going to take me?"

"Only to the library; but you won't speak, will you? Promise you won't say a word till I let you!"

"'Oh, Johnnie! you dear, darling boy!'"—*p.* 136.

The tall man took the small boy's hand, and patted it kindly.

"Some bit of fun? I didn't think you cared for pranks, you grave little fellow. There—I promise—but you mustn't keep me long, Jackie, or people will miss me."

"Walk very quietly, uncle. Like this."

Together they crept down the dim corridor, then into the dark room.

Beryl was trying to "be sensible." She was rubbing her brown eyes to make them look as though they had not been crying, but she gave just one more sob.

Major Cheshire pressed his nephew's fingers so tightly that he hurt them, but little Johnnie was too brave to call out.

"I've come back, Beryl!" he cried, in his boyish tones; "are you very unhappy?"

"Yes, Jackie."

Major Cheshire was left standing alone for a moment. John was being kissed.

"Poor Beryl! Uncle Sydney is unhappy too."

"Then it's not about me, Jack; it's only because he's poor."

"Only poor if he cannot win your love, dearest; the richest man in the world, if you will give your sweet, true heart to him."

"Sydney!"

Johnnie felt another face come close to Beryl's—a face with a long, fair moustache. He could tell by the girl's muffled voice that she was hiding her blushing cheeks, with the still lingering tears, on his uncle's broad, firm shoulder.

Softly the child stole away up-stairs again to his stool by the nursery fire. He met with a scolding for having been down-stairs without permission, and was put to bed at once in punishment, but he lay back smiling among the snowy curtains of his cot.

He could still hear the music—beautiful music. A song called, "For Ever"—a love song, Johnnie knew—sung by a tender baritone. Then another duet.

The boy was almost asleep when he felt himself lifted by strong arms, and saw his Uncle Sydney leaning over him.

"Little chap, you've made two people very happy!"

"Oh, uncle! you'll never be lonely now!"

"No. But I shall hold you to your promise, Johnnie. You must come and live with me—with *us*—and Beryl will always love you."

"Uncle, I *am* so fond of you!"

Again they were pressed together, the bronzed cheek and the little curly head.

"I'm very fond of *you*, dear," the man said softly; "your child's eyes watched to good purpose. If it hadn't been for you, I should have lost my Beryl."

MARY HAMPDEN.

THE EYE OF THE SOUL.

BY THE REV. HARRY JONES, M.A., CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN, AND PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S.

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"—ST. MATT. vi. 22, 23.

THESE words have a first and second sense: a literal and a figurative meaning. They are true in regard to the bodily eye, with which we see external objects; and they are true in regard to the spiritual eye—the conscience—with which we see good and evil. We have the power of outward and inward vision; and that which applies to the one, applies also, in great measure, to the other. In the first place, each man has his bodily vision given to him for a guide. He is always using it. He distrusts any evidence but that of his own senses. He resents having it discredited; and others appeal to it. When a dispute occurs between two men about the presence of some visible object which one has seen, and the other has not, he points to it and says, "Look for yourself!" When a man denies the existence of a particular passage in a book, if we can put a finger on it, we settle the matter by asking him to read it "with his own eyes." When a witness is examined in a Court of Justice, he is chiefly bidden to say what he has "seen," and not what he has been told by another. We are always appealing to the testimony of a man's own sight—this is what he uses himself. He may be weak-eyed or colour-blind. He may be compelled to employ the eyes of others. He may have impaired his own by misuse, abuse, and self-indulgence.

There are times when the apparatus of the eye becomes so infected with evil that, so to speak, the "body is full" of delusions, or horrors, which are worse than darkness. And yet the reliance which we place upon our own vision is such as to create a maxim that "seeing is believing:" we judge for ourselves. In the main, rightly or wrongly, we are guided by our own perceptions, by the use of such eyesight as we have; and when it has misled us, or even caused harm to others, so long as it has been honestly used, men are slow to blame.

So, in its way, is it with the conscience—the eye of the soul. That is given to a man for a guide in seeing good and evil. And, in proportion as it is healthy and sound, he receives guidance. It is the channel through which he is taught. Supposing his conscience (the eye of the soul) to be perfectly open, pure, and unaffected, or, as our English Bible puts it, "single," the whole body is full of light. If it be prejudiced, and yet honest, mischief may be done; nevertheless, the man himself is not condemned before God. This was the case with St. Paul, who once said, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" and in writing to his young friend Timothy, spoke of himself as having been a "persecutor and injurious." But he declares that he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief, or misbelief. His convictions were wrong, but he did not do violence to them. It is while we go against what, in our conscience, we believe to be true, that we are committing the sin. "He that knoweth to do right, and doeth it not, to him it is sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." In this the use of the conscience is like that of the eye—if a man wilfully disregards the plain evidence of his senses, he runs many kinds of bodily risks; and if he defies the prompting of his heart, he invites spiritual disaster.

There are other ways in which the conscience is like the eye. I have referred to the well-known fact that even good eyesight needs to be supplemented by science when we want to see things that are too small to be perceived by unassisted vision, or too distant to be discerned except by artificial assistance. The keenest, healthiest sight is impotent to discover the minute germ, or the remote star, without a microscope or telescope.

And so it is with the conscience. There are things which, however valuable and necessary they may be, we do not perceive at the first glance. We are compelled to make use of inquiry and investigation before we can apply our natural mental faculties to their due discernment. Many needful and important things have to be diligently found out by taking pains ourselves, or making use of results which have been obtained by others.

Again: there are people whom we call colour-blind. Though their vision is good in other respects, they cannot distinguish between, say, red and green, and they are—or should be—in this matter compelled to accept the evidence of their companions. It were well indeed if, in the use of their "consciences," more could believe that they are thus dependent. But, unhappily, some cannot be so persuaded; and we have to take other measures to protect ourselves against their mischievous perverseness. Still, even their obstinacy is at least a sign of the stubbornness with which we cling to the truth that a man's own conscience is intended to be his guide. Too often men have to be left to reap the fruit of their own imperfect or distorted beliefs. As there are those who persist in affirming that the world is not round, but flat, and seem incapable of yielding to the common verdict, so some profess an utter disregard for truths which may be said to be universally accepted or, in the teeth of unavoidable proof, are of the same

opinion still. We may feel impotent to convince them, though we are careful to see that they do as little harm as possible by their fallacious assertions.

Again: I have noticed that the bodily vision may be so impaired as to become more or less useless. Thus is it also with the conscience, the eye of the soul, through which we discern good and evil. It is possible for a man to receive such a moral shock that his power of just discernment is apparently ruined. Some great disappointment or disillusion renders him incapable of judging between right and wrong. There is often more hope of recovery in such a case than in that where a man deliberately and obstinately refuses to accept or examine the conclusions of others. Time may restore that power of perception which has been suddenly upset. He may thus recover what he has lost for a while.

Take another aspect of the likeness between the eye of the body and that of the soul. In the case of self-induced disease, when a man fancies that he sees what does not exist, as with some who follow strong drink, there is a parallel perversion of the mental faculties. In the words of Scripture, they may have their conscience seared with a hot iron. They may so defy by self-indulgence the power of choosing between good and evil which God has given them as to lose it. Their sense of righteousness fades by degrees till they become morally blinded. Here, however, they are not wholly barred from recovery. We cannot replace an eye which has been put out, nor can we, of ourselves, restore healthy perception to a man whose spiritual sight is badly injured, or who has, so to speak, destroyed it by his own defiance of the Spirit of truth. But that which is impossible with men is possible with God. There have been instances of recovery from the most depraved moral conditions. It seems, indeed, as if the conscience had such vitality that it was incapable of utter ruin, but that, even when most cruelly abased, there remained in it a germ of life which could be appealed to and reassert itself. It is conceivable that this renewed sensitiveness may take the shape of the bitterest remorse: which indeed may shadow forth the mystery of future punishment. That may be the leaping up of a conscience into an awful recovery of clearness and force when there remaineth only a certain rekindled looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation. But while there is any life there is hope. Such is the manifold power of the Word of God, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, that when the soul and spirit have been poisoned by a man's own defiance of what he knew to be right, the love which passeth all understanding may reach him, and so revive his conscience that he rises out of his blinded state, and is restored.

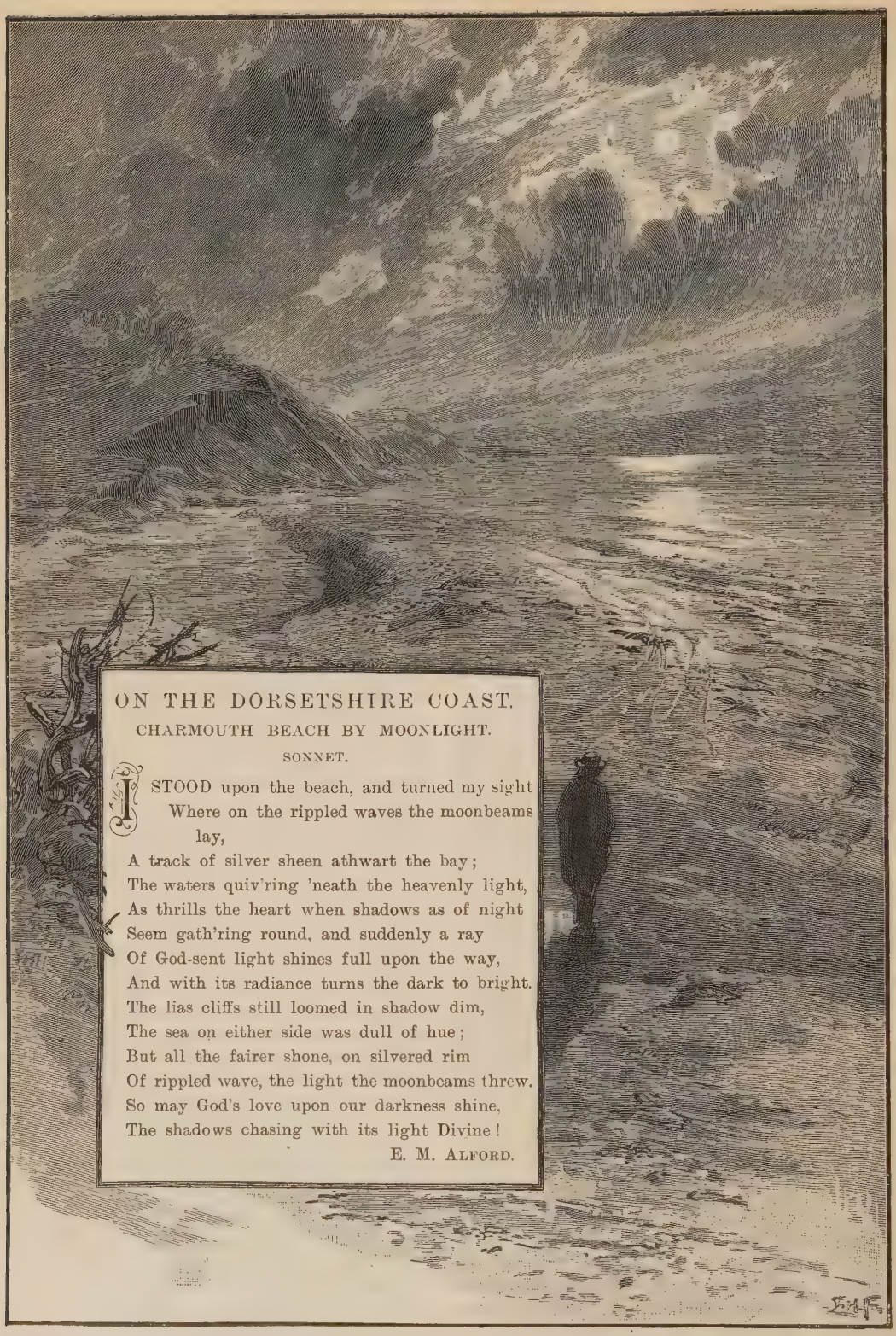
There are other ways in which the eye of the body may be compared to that of the soul. I will not, however, pursue the resemblance between our outward and inward power of vision any further, but add a few words about the preservation, education, and healing of the conscience.

Preserve it, guard it, jealously. We may be tolerant, and unwilling to disturb the conviction of others, believing them to be honest, and at the same time hold fast to our own. There is an old and widely accepted proverb, "Live, and let live." Sometimes, however, it is only half realised, and then we may read it thus: "Let live, but live." We do not accept the conclusion to which our neighbour has arrived when we admit his right to hold what he believes. To his own Master he standeth or falleth; and so do we to ours. We guard our own consciences as a precious gift—we let live, but live.

The conscience, again, needs "education." Training so extends the power of the bodily eye that with use we may come to perceive distant objects, like the sailor on the sea or Arab in the desert. We may thus acquire, and even transmit, excellence of vision. So with the conscience. It gathers the power of perception by use. And this growth in clearness and strength comes from constantly using it in little matters. He that is faithful in few things is found capable in more, in many. "He that is of the truth," said Christ, "heareth My voice." The man with a truthful soul, who is always conscientious in his ordinary transactions and language, acquires power to see and hold more of that which is right and true. Unto him that hath shall be given. The eyesight of his soul is educated. As the greatest scholar begins with a right learning of his letters, and advances by small increments of attention, and enlarged ability to understand what he studies, so is it with the conscience. Carelessness in using it with regard to so-called minor matters prohibits any growth of its power to apprehend those that are greater. But the conscientious man, who is wholesomely scrupulous in his daily life, gathers fresh self-confidence and respect. He honours himself, and he is honoured. He increases in wisdom and in favour with God and man. His influence over others extends; and his eye being single, or pure and clear, he receives more and more of that light wherewith he is capable of being filled. We may thus educate the conscience.

And, lastly, even if wounded, it may be healed. What is done, cannot be undone. There are men and women conscious of having, perhaps secretly, gone against what they knew to be right. And some have tried to hide this from their inward vision. But they cannot. Or they have sought to take the edge off their self-reproach by relying on what are called "extenuating circumstances" when they look at their position before God. But they had better leave these alone when they address themselves to Him, however material they might be in the eyes of men. In approaching the All-seeing God, when we commune with ourselves and are still, it is unwise, useless, to mitigate our confessions with excuses. He knows all. And, knowing all, He says through the mouth of Christ, "Come unto Me, and I will refresh you": and by the mouth of the disciple whom Jesus loved, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Thus, and thus only, can a wounded conscience be healed; and before God the things which its owner has done shall be no more mentioned unto him.



ON THE DORSETSHIRE COAST.

CHARMOUTH BEACH BY MOONLIGHT.

SONNET.

I STOOD upon the beach, and turned my sight
Where on the rippled waves the moonbeams lay,
A track of silver sheen athwart the bay;
The waters quiv'ring 'neath the heavenly light,
As thrills the heart when shadows as of night
Seem gath'ring round, and suddenly a ray
Of God-sent light shines full upon the way,
And with its radiance turns the dark to bright.
The lias cliffs still loomed in shadow dim,
The sea on either side was dull of hue;
But all the fairer shone, on silvered rim
Of rippled wave, the light the moonbeams threw.
So may God's love upon our darkness shine,
The shadows chasing with its light Divine!

E. M. ALFORD.

CROSS-BEARING, COMPULSORY AND WILLING.

BY THE REV. T. M. MORRIS, IPSWICH.

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."—ST. LUKE xiv. 27.

"And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear His cross."—ST. MATTHEW xxvii. 32.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."—GALATIANS vi. 14.

AKING these three scriptures together, we have some thoughts suggested as to compulsory and willing cross-bearing which deserve our attention.

In the first passage our Saviour declares, in a positive and quite unmistakable manner, that cross-bearing, self-denial, self-sacrifice, in some form or other, is the law of His Kingdom.

In the case of Simon the Cyrenian we have an instance of unwilling, involuntary, compulsory cross-bearing.

In the case of the Apostle Paul we see one who was not only prepared willingly to bear the cross, and even suffer on it, but one who accounted it the grand distinction and glory of his life, that he was permitted thus to have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings.

I. Let us notice, first, in how plain, positive, and unmistakable a manner our Saviour declares cross-bearing to be the law of His Kingdom. There is no evading the cross. There is no such thing as substitutionary service possible. The rule is absolute—"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."

It is a very obvious fact that, quite apart from all religious considerations, everyone has some cross which he must carry. No life is so smoothly ordered that there is never anything amiss in it. No one is so happily circumstanced but there is something which he would like altered, amended, or removed; something crooked that he cannot make straight, something wanting that he cannot supply. And everyone has not only something in life which he is obliged to regard as *a* cross, but something which is so special in its character that he is compelled to regard it as *his* cross. Now it is possible, if we are Christians, to view our cross in such a light, and bear it in such a way, that in some sort it ceases from being ours, and becomes Christ's. We feel that while it is the same cross that we once regarded as entirely and peculiarly our own, yet, knowing that it has been placed on our shoulders by Christ's hand, and that it is to be borne for His sake, and so borne that His name shall be glorified, it becomes His rather than ours.

We are here taught that Christian life consists in following Christ, and that the following of Christ involves self-denial and cross-bearing. We are called to a lifelong and unreserved following of Christ, and if we only remember the way that was trodden by Him, we need not wonder if the way in which we have to walk should be in places rough and painful. If we think what Christian life is, as it must be maintained and manifested in a sinful world like this, and by men and women who have within themselves the dregs and remnants of a sinful, sin-corrupted nature, we must see that we cannot follow Christ, live for Christ, witness for Christ, without some measure of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

We may not in these easy-going days be called on to sacrifice much; but let us not therefore imagine that there is no room or need for any sacrifice at all. In our continued following and imitation of Christ we shall find that there is constant need for the sacrifice of this or that. We must sacrifice our pride, our prejudice, our worldliness, our love of ease and self-indulgence—everything, in short, which we feel to be inconsistent with the service which we should render unto Christ. And the one thing essential is this: that whatever we do or abstain from doing, whatever we bear, whatever we give up, it must be for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. The sacrifice, the self-denial, the cross-bearing will be of no worth unless in submitting to it we have been constrained by the love of Christ, and in coming under the spell of His love we learn the secret of making our cross His.

II. In the case of Simon the Cyrenian we have an instance of unwilling, involuntary, compulsory cross-bearing. The incident recorded by the Evangelist is a very remarkable one. As the executioners were leading forth our Lord and Saviour to the place of His crucifixion, burdened with the cross on which He was to suffer, they found after a while that He was so exhausted as to be quite unable to sustain its weight. In this emergency, the officer in charge looked round that he might requisition the services of a substitute who should take up and carry the burden under which the Lord Jesus had fainted and fallen. At that moment, Simon the Cyrenian, who, like many other strangers at this Passover season, had been obliged to find lodgings outside Jerusalem, was coming into the city, and he was impressed for this service, which we may be sure he unwillingly and reluctantly rendered. Not knowing what had transpired that morning, supposing at first that Jesus was only some common criminal led forth to die, he submitted to this cross-bearing as a hard, degrading, unavoidable necessity.

According to a common and credible tradition, he

afterwards, with his family, became associated with the Christian Church; but though it is probable that his brief connection with the suffering Saviour on the morning of the crucifixion led ultimately to his conversion and that of his family, there can be no doubt that, looking only to what he did on that occasion, we have an instance of involuntary and compulsory cross-bearing. When his service was requisitioned by the Roman officer, he had no choice but to take up the cross and bear it for Christ. We may take him, then, as an example or type of the unwilling cross-bearer.

This cross came very suddenly upon Simon. This was a very unlooked-for and a very unpleasant experience. Having no idea of whose cross he was carrying, we can see him toiling along in the hot sun and under the heavy load, complaining of and bemoaning his ill-fortune as he went, that he should have been passing by at that particular moment, and have had this menial, degrading, and most unwelcome service forced upon him. But we see at once how the case would have been completely altered if Simon, at the time, had known who Jesus was—the Christ of God, the Son of God, the Saviour of men. What an honour, what a privilege would he have accounted it, that he was allowed to carry the cross for Him! The shame of the cross would have been forgotten in the thought of the glory of the Divine Sufferer, and its burden would at once have become light.

Does not this illustrate certain phases of human and Christian experience? We have seen that in every human life there is a cross that must be carried. We have no choice in the matter; there it is, and it must be taken up and borne. And every man feels that it is his own cross, distinguished in certain particulars at least from those carried by others. So far we are all brethren of a common lot. Cross-bearing is a part of our lives, whatever we may say about it, however we may regard it. But the same thing may be viewed in two different lights, and it becomes to us a very different thing according to the light in which it is viewed. How different a thing was that cross-bearing as it appeared to Simon on the morning of the crucifixion-day, when he knew not to Whom he was rendering this unwilling, reluctant, grudging service, a service which he would not have rendered but upon the compulsion of Roman swords and spears, and that same cross-bearing as it afterwards appeared to him, when it pleased God to reveal His Son to him and in him!

How different do the troubles and crosses of life appear to one who regards them as coming upon him as the result of a hard, inevitable necessity, some cruel and evil fate, as so many things to be reluctantly and stoically submitted to, and to one who believes that these burdens have been imposed by the loving and gracious hand of Him who will not allow us to be overburdened, and Who would have us carry the cross for His sake, and in such a way that His Name shall be honoured and magnified! We have no choice as to cross-bearing—that falls to the lot of everyone. The glorious possibility opened up to us in the Gospel is that of making our cross Christ's, because we bear it in His Name and for His sake.

III. In the case of the Apostle Paul we see one who was not only prepared willingly to bear the cross, and even to suffer on it, but one who accounted it the grand distinction of his life that he should be permitted thus to have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. His exclamation, which expressed the profoundest feelings of his heart, was, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is true the Apostle tells us elsewhere that he does rejoice and glory in other things besides the cross, but we cannot fail to observe that he only glories in them as they stand in some kind of relation to the cross—as they were rendered glorious by the glory of the cross, and helped, by reflecting it, to enhance the glory of his Divine Redeemer.

It was the desire of the Apostle to know Christ not only in His exaltation but in His humiliation, not only as seated on the throne but as agonising on the cross—he wanted to know Christ, not only in the power of His resurrection but in the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. And this was not a mere sentimental desire. He could say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Now the cross of Christ, in the judgment of the Apostle, was not merely an object to which he looked, and in the contemplation of which he rejoiced and gloried as that on which the Saviour suffered and died for him; it was a cross which he was to carry—on which he was to suffer—it was to be the instrument by means of which, to use his own striking words, the world was to be crucified unto him, and he unto the world.

Well, what was this cross which the Apostle so willingly carried in Christ's Name, and for Christ's sake? Not a material cross such as Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to carry; that was a service which could only be rendered once. It was not a series of self-inflicted penances. With the Apostle it was a lifelong cross-bearing; every part of his life was marked by self-denial—self-sacrifice willingly submitted to for the Master's sake. From the time of his conversion he yielded himself up in complete self-surrender to the service of Christ. He was ready to go on any errand on which Christ might send him, to engage in any work to which Christ might call him, to bear any burden which Christ might impose, to endure any suffering, any shame, any loss which the Christian calling might involve. And he did not regard all this as a mere sacrifice or submission. He could say, So far from being ashamed of this cross-bearing, I glory in bearing this cross for Him, who did not shrink from dying on the cross for me. If anyone questions whether the life of the Apostle meant cross-bearing in

the sense of self-denial and self-sacrifice, let him read what the Apostle says about his life in 2 Cor. xi. 23—33.

And the Apostle gloried in bearing the cross and suffering on it, not merely because he was doing it in the name of Christ and for the sake of Christ, and as the means of promoting the honour and glory of Christ, but because these very things, painful and hard to endure as they were in themselves, endured for Christ became the means of his sanctification. By the cross the world was crucified unto him and he unto the world.

From the time that the Apostle saw the cross and the Crucified One, the world's relations to him and his relations to the world were changed, and he could say, The world is crucified unto me and I unto the world; from that time he could say, What things were gain unto me, those I count loss for Christ. But crucifixion is not a sudden, but a lingering death, and with the Apostle the process of crucifixion extended from his conversion onwards. And all those things which he endured in life were contributory to the process which was only terminated by death. Those things which the Apostle enumerates as having given a character and complexion to his life could have been no more pleasant to him than they would have been to us. But he does not complain, he does not repine, he does not rebel; he glories in the cross which he is called to carry, and upon which he is even called to suffer.

One may look upon the cross as that which is put upon him without his consent, by a power which he cannot resist. Such a one drags on wearily through life with the cross upon his shoulders, thinking it very hard that he should have such a burden imposed upon him, that he should be compelled to bear the cross.

But how different is the voluntary cross-bearing! The unpleasant features of life remain—pain is painful, burdens are burdensome, troubles are troublesome—but how different they are to us if we view everything in the light of that cross on which the Saviour suffered for us! We feel, then, that whatever we do or endure, we are doing or enduring for Him. If we believe *that*, the burden is lightened, the cross is transfigured, and as we look at His cross we shall be able to straighten ourselves under the weight of ours; for our cross becomes His, and we can say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

LIGHTS FROM HEAVEN.

SUNLIGHT, moonlight, starlight—
Morn and night and even—
The near light and the far light,
All come down from heaven;
Shedding all about them
Glory everywhere—
What were life without them?—
Cheerless, dark, and drear.

There come lights from Heaven,
Even than those more bright
By God to man's soul given,
The God of Love and Light;
Cheering all our sadness,
Though deep that sadness be,
Turning grief to gladness—
FAITH, HOPE, and CHARITY.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.

HOW PHŒBE MOORE WAS TEMPTED.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. BY THE AUTHOR OF "'TWIXT LOVE AND HONOUR," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE lady-clerks employed in the Birmingham branch of the United Operatives' Life Insurance Company were standing about in groups in one of the company's large offices, indulging in a little conversation during the few minutes that remained of the "luncheon half-hour."

Everyone present was discussing the same subject—Miss Langley's resignation; regrets for her loss being mingled with speculations as to her successor.

"Who is coming here?" asked Miss Burton of Miss Moore, Miss Langley's assistant, who chanced to be passing one of the groups at that moment.

By "coming here" was meant taking the superintendency of that particular department.

"Miss Bingham, I believe," replied Phœbe Moore shortly; and then she would have passed on had not a detaining hand been laid on her arm.

"Miss Bingham!" repeated a chorus of voices, in which incredulity and disapprobation were about equally blended.

"Oh, Miss Moore, we made sure you would get it! No one else knows the work of the department so well as you do."

"*I* get it! Oh, no; you forget what a junior I am." And Phœbe Moore looked intensely uncomfortable.

"But Miss Bingham knows literally nothing of the work," objected one after another.

"She will soon pick it up," replied Phœbe. in her quick, business-like tone.

"You mean that you will do the work, and she will get the credit," remarked Miss Burton boldly.

"Oh, hush!" exclaimed Phœbe, glancing round nervously. "As Miss Bingham is the senior on the lower-grade list, it is but fair that she should be tried in this department, seeing that a vacancy has occurred here on the higher-grade list. My turn will come all in good time, I dare say."

Then Phœbe Moore returned to her seat, and the little group broke up, dissatisfaction being more or less plainly visible on every face.

It was interesting to watch Phœbe Moore as she worked. She wrote like lightning; nevertheless, her handwriting was peculiarly bold and clear, and, no matter how many times she was interrupted while writing an endorsement or report, she could always continue at the point where she had left off without pausing to collect her thoughts. At times her desk was fairly besieged by junior clerks seeking advice as to the treatment of "cases." More often than not, Phœbe would sort away her papers in their respective pigeon-holes while she was replying to questions, her eyes being fixed on the person she was addressing; yet she never misplaced a document, while her explanations were so lucid, that she was seldom called upon to repeat them. In short, Phœbe Moore was a thoroughly capable clerk—one whose work was a source of profit to her employers, and of satisfaction to herself.

But this afternoon, although Phœbe went on working as energetically as ever, she was, in truth, very unhappy. No one, however, suspected this, with the exception, perhaps, of Miss Langley, who understood the character of her assistant sufficiently well to fear that Miss Bingham, with her blustering, self-confident manner, was just the person to rub Phœbe up the wrong way.

The afternoon wore on, until at length the current work of the department was finished.

One by one the clerks came up to Miss Langley's desk to wish her good-bye.

And now only she and Phœbe were left.

Phœbe drew her chair up to Miss Langley's desk to receive a few words of instruction as to how those "cases" still under treatment were to be carried through.

At length, however, the last word of advice had been given, and nothing remained but to say farewell.

Each woman rose instinctively, then hesitated—not knowing how to commence the saying of that long good-bye.

Miss Langley had ever felt grateful to Phœbe for all the assistance she had rendered her over and above that which duty demanded, but never until this moment had Miss Langley realised how great was her personal regard for her assistant.

"I hope things will go smoothly, and that you will learn to like working under Miss Bingham."

Miss Langley was painfully conscious of the feebleness of her words, yet knew not how to throw more warmth into them.

"Thank you, Miss Langley. I, too, hope so."

Phœbe's eyes were restless and uneasy. Womanly softness was fast gaining the ascendency, and Phœbe was a little ashamed that it should be so.

"I—I think Miss Bingham will be nice to you. You must try not to mind if her manner is just a little too official at times. It's only her way, you know. She is a cousin of yours, is she not?"

"Only a very distant one; I know next to nothing about her," Phœbe hastened to explain.

"I feel sure it will be all right," Miss Langley repeated, in a tone sufficiently doubtful to belie her words.

Then there was another awkward pause.

At length Miss Langley held out her hand.

"Good-bye, Miss Moore."

"Good-bye, Miss Langley. I hope you will be happy in your new life; I—I hope it very much. I——" Phœbe caught her breath quickly, and stopped short.

Miss Langley gave one hurried glance round the office. Yes, she and Phœbe were alone; even the messenger-boys had left.

Then Miss Langley bent forward and kissed—actually kissed!—Phœbe. "Good-bye, dear. I shall think of you often and often in my new home. It is very hard to leave you all; I can't help feeling it to be so, although I am so happy."

It was all terribly unofficial; but, then, walls and ledgers cannot tell tales.

Phœbe returned the kiss; then turned aside to hide her emotion, while Miss Langley hastened away in the direction of the superintendents' dressing-room.

CHAPTER II.

Of course Phœbe knew exactly how matters stood. She was fully aware of the eagerness with which Miss Bingham looked forward to promotion, the certainty that she would obtain it, should the work of the departments show no signs of deterioration under her superintendency, and the self-confidence that would characterise her efforts to prove her efficiency. Phœbe also knew that, should anything go seriously wrong, Miss Bingham would have to stand aside, while someone else—possibly Phœbe herself—was tried. On this latter point, Phœbe's perception was probably clearer than Miss Bingham's.

Thus fully realising the criticalness of Miss Bingham's position, Phœbe was honestly prepared to do her utmost to help her cousin—always provided that that stiff-necked young woman would have sense enough to be guided by her assistant.

Unfortunately, however, Miss Bingham evinced no becoming desire for guidance. The ease with which long practice had enabled her to cope with the comparatively simple work of the department she had just quitted, had encouraged the gratifying but illusory conviction that she was an exceptionally brilliant

clerk. Moreover, she was one of those trying persons who are always burning to reform everyone and everything, except themselves; and, now that she was placed at the head of a large department, she was determined that those under her should have the full benefit of her faculty for putting things right. Thus, with only the most superficial knowledge of the work, she commenced reorganising the department, insisting on her little-needed reforms with aggressive self-assertion.

It was in vain that Phœbe tried not to contrast Miss Bingham and Miss Langley; their points of dissimilarity would obtrude themselves on her notice. The very way in which Miss Bingham strutted about the office, with her blustering gait and loud, rasping voice, irritated Phœbe almost beyond endurance.

Invaluable as Phœbe was in her capacity of assistant, she had one fault: she liked her own way.

At times of pressure, no clerk could work harder, to better purpose, or more cheerfully than did Phœbe. Many a time had a messenger fetched her a cup of coffee and a biscuit, that she might continue her work instead of availing herself of that well-earned "luncheon half-hour." Often had she been in her seat before the charwomen had quitted the scene, in order to arrange the work so as to avoid confusion and delay in giving it out when the clerks arrived; while she had never been known to hurry away in the afternoon as long as her presence was needed, although it was but reasonable to suppose that she, in common with others, must occasionally have had private engagements of a pressing nature.

When, however, the work was slack, Phœbe took life easily. She would glance at the paper before seating herself at her desk; she would chat for a minute or two on matters unofficial with those who came to her for work; and she would sometimes overstay the regulation half-hour in the luncheon-saloon.

Miss Langley had understood how *not* to see things—an art the acquisition of which is as necessary to good and sound government as that of keen observation — and, fully appreciating Phœbe's official zeal, had allowed her to go her own way.

Miss Bingham, however, saw no reason why she should turn a blind eye to the irregularities of her assistant. "Setting her authority at defiance," she mentally termed Phœbe's conduct. It mattered not that her ignorance of the work compelled her to defer to her assistant twenty times a day; she was head of the department, she argued, and it was therefore her duty to see that discipline was maintained.

Thus it came to pass that Miss Bingham glanced meaningly at the clock one afternoon as Phœbe seated herself at her desk.

"I think you went up to lunch at one o'clock, did you not, Miss Moore?"

"At five minutes *to* one, Miss Bingham," replied Phœbe, with portentous distinctness.

"Five minutes *to* one? It is now twenty minutes to two! That is three-quarters of an hour."

"Yes, Miss Bingham."

"'Is anything the matter, Robert?'"—*p.* 147.

Miss Bingham paused, thinking Phœbe would apologise.

"Only half an hour is allowed for lunch, Miss Moore," said Miss Bingham at length.

Phœbe turned her papers, and her pen flew over the surface rather more rapidly than before; but she answered never a word.

"Only half an hour is allowed for luncheon, Miss Moore," reiterated Miss Bingham, "and I must beg you not to exceed that time in future."

"Very well, Miss Bingham."

Quiet as was Phœbe's answer, she was fuming with indignation. Only the previous day, her luncheon had consisted of a cup of coffee and a biscuit, taken as she worked. Phœbe was, however, too proud to defend her conduct by reference to her self-sacrificing zeal. But she would be zealous no longer; she would make no further attempt to bolster-up Miss Bingham. That self-satisfied young woman should in future be allowed to tread the path leading to official ruin, unrestrained by her assistant. The work of the department would suffer, but that was nothing to do with Phœbe; *she* was not responsible for it.

But beneath the satisfaction which this easy means of vengeance promised, was an uncomfortable sense of its pettiness.

At the stroke of five Phœbe put away her writing implements, wished Miss Bingham "Good-afternoon," very stiffly, and hurried away. She would make a point of leaving to her time in future; there should be no staying to finish what she had in hand.

Phœbe and her sister Bessie were members of a large family. In order that the younger children might be the better educated, the two girls had come to Birmingham, Phœbe to obtain a clerkship, and Bessie to earn her living by art-needlework.

Early as it was when Phœbe reached the apartments that she and her sister shared, Bessie was awaiting her coming somewhat impatiently.

"I've put out our dresses on the bed, and all the things we are likely to want. Robert is coming for us at half-past seven, isn't he? We shan't have much time to spare, so we had better make haste over tea," exclaimed Bessie, as Phœbe removed her outdoor garments and laid them on the sofa.

The two girls were going to an "at home" given by their great-uncle and great-aunt in celebration of their golden wedding. For some days past Bessie had been busy making up becoming costumes for herself and her sister, and she was now all impatience to see the result of her labours.

She insisted on dressing Phœbe herself, declaring that her reputation as an artistic dressmaker was at stake, and that she would not risk having the effect of one of her most successful creations marred by her sister's clumsy adjustment of it.

"There! I declare I've made you look quite beautiful!" exclaimed Bessie, as she put the finishing touches to her sister's toilet.

The idea that Phœbe could in any circumstances look *beautiful* caused both girls to laugh merrily. Nevertheless, when Bessie led her sister up to the mirror, Phœbe was fain to confess that a wonderful transformation had been effected. Her dark silky brown hair was coiled artistically round her head; her soft silk dress, of delicate coral pink, fell in graceful folds, the high Medici collar forming a becoming background to her face; while a bunch of exquisite cream-white roses, tastefully arranged midst some fine old lace at her throat, gave her just that touch of womanly sweetness that she sometimes lacked.

"Now, don't be hypocritical, Phœbe; admit that you think you look nice," cried Bessie.

"Ah! but where shall I be when you have donned your finery?" And Phœbe cast a swift glance of loving admiration at her pretty sister, which robbed her words of all frivolity.

"You had better ask Robert that," laughed Bessie. "Phœbe, my dear, I don't believe Robert even sees me, or anyone else for the matter of that, when you are by."

"What nonsense you are talking, Bessie!"

And then Phœbe descended into the sitting-room to await her lover's coming.

As children, Phœbe Moore and Robert Græme had been playfellows, and when, three years before the commencement of this story, they chanced to meet in Birmingham, the early friendship was renewed, and almost imperceptibly drifted into an ardent attachment. Robert was a peculiarly handsome man; Phœbe a plain, almost insignificant-looking little woman. Yet it never occurred to Robert that his *fiancée* was plain; perhaps a man never does believe that the woman he loves above all other women is void of personal attraction.

It was a bitter grief to Robert that he was not in a position to offer his *fiancée* a home. He was, however, only a junior clerk in an old-established bank, and was neither foolish enough nor selfish enough to urge Phœbe to marry him on an impossible income. But the future was full of hope; one of the senior men was likely to be pensioned before long, and then several of the juniors, Robert probably among the number, would go up a step.

Year after year passed, however, and still this longed-for event was delayed. Very impatient did Robert wax over the weary waiting. He groaned at the natural depravity of landladies; enlarged upon the unparalleled hardships of a bachelor's lot; chafed at being obliged to allow Phœbe to continue a life of toil, for which, he emphatically declared, she was altogether unfitted. In short, he fumed and fretted with all a man's characteristic impatience.

Phœbe was standing with her hand on the mantelpiece, thinking of these things—thinking, too, of the treatment she had received from Miss Bingham earlier in the day—when her meditations were interrupted by the sound of a cab drawing up in front of the house.

She knew that it was Robert come to take her and Bessie to the "at home." She listened eagerly to the familiar knock, recognised Robert's voice as he inquired if Miss Moore were in, and his step as he came towards the sisters' sitting-room, without having waited for an answer to the unnecessary question.

She raised her eyes, with an expression of pleased expectancy, to fix them on the door through which her lover would enter. She thought her pretty evening dress would please Robert, and she wanted to be

told by him how nice she was looking. She was far too sensible a little woman to believe all Robert's flattering speeches; nevertheless, they were as music in her ears, because they bore testimony to the one all-satisfying truth—that he loved her.

But he hardly seemed to notice her apparel, more than to say, as he kissed her—

"So you are ready, dear?"

For a moment she was disappointed. Then she replied—

"We shall both be ready in a moment."

He made no further remark, but stood by the fireplace, kicking up one corner of the hearthrug.

"Is anything the matter, Robert?" Phœbe asked, at length.

"Old Smith has been pensioned."

It was the event to which they had both been looking forward for so long. In the joyful excitement of the moment Phœbe put her hand caressingly on her lover's shoulder, and looked up with happy confidence into his face.

"Oh, Robert, you can't think how glad I am!"

But there was no responsive joy in his eyes.

She let her hand fall to her side, and involuntarily drew a step farther away from him. Could it be that he thought such frank avowal of joy unwomanly? The vague suspicion caused her to turn hot and cold.

But he did not appear to notice that she shrank from him; in fact, he seemed almost unconscious of her presence. Yet she was in his thoughts all the time. He was wishing he had not spoken to her so often and so confidently of that step up which was to have been brought about by the pensioning of the senior clerk. More reticence in the past might have spared him much humiliation in the present.

"Robert, what is it?"

"A mere nothing: only that Payne, the manager, has seen fit to put Noakes over me," he replied bitterly.

"Put Mr. Noakes over you! Do you mean, Robert, that you haven't got a rise at all?"

"Of course I haven't got a rise, when Noakes is put over me."

"But Mr. Noakes is your junior, isn't he?"

"Could he be *put* above me if he were not my junior?"

Disappointment had made Robert irritable. Phœbe, however, was too wise to appear to notice this; too wise, also, to condole with her lover.

"Are not any of the other seniors likely to be pensioned before long?"

"Reynolds *might* be. But now that Payne has passed me over once, I have no guarantee he won't do so again."

"But, Robert, why has he done it?"

"That's more than I can say. Some of the men declare Noakes is his nephew."

"That would explain everything," observed Phœbe; and she could hardly have made a remark more soothing to her lover's wounded pride.

Here the conversation was cut short by the entrance of Bessie.

"Robert, don't you think Phœbe's dress is very pretty?" asked Bessie, as the three were being jolted along in a four-wheeler.

"Yes, very," replied Robert indifferently.

"How uninteresting lovers are!" thought Bessie for the fiftieth time; and then she relapsed into silence.

The "at home" was a very large one, Mr. and Mrs. Hales having expressed an earnest desire that the celebration of their golden wedding should as far as possible be graced by the presence of all their relatives and intimate friends.

Phœbe, womanlike, soon succeeded in hiding all signs of vexation; but Robert was silent and moody, much to his *fiancée's* distress. He was usually so agreeable in society, and Phœbe was so justly proud of him, that it was a new and painful experience to her to see him making no attempt to contribute his share towards the social success of the evening.

So distressed was Phœbe that she was just wishing it were time to go home when she caught sight of a tall, exceedingly upright figure, standing with its back to her. Surely she must be mistaken! Yet that straight back and those square shoulders could belong to no one else.

No! Phœbe was not mistaken. In another moment she was face to face with Miss Bingham.

CHAPTER III.

"You here, Miss Bingham!" exclaimed Phœbe, almost involuntarily.

In her surprise at meeting the head of her department, Phœbe had, for the moment, forgotten that Miss Bingham was distantly related to Mrs. Hales.

"I certainly did not expect to meet you, Miss Moore," replied Miss Bingham.

Nevertheless, Miss Bingham shook hands warmly, if somewhat patronisingly, with her assistant.

Phœbe returned the greeting coldly enough.

"*We* are cousins, you know, although only distant ones. Still, I think we must forget the office now that we are so far away from it, and be Emma and Phœbe to each other," remarked Miss Bingham, with a condescending smile.

Phœbe winced.

"Our cousinship has hitherto never obtruded itself," she replied shortly, being careful not to avail herself of the gracious permission to address Miss Bingham as Emma.

"Official etiquette has to be observed, you see," replied Miss Bingham loftily.

"Oh, of course," replied Phœbe, equally loftily. And then she paused, hoping Miss Bingham would pass on.

But instead of doing so, Miss Bingham seated herself by Phœbe's side. She was determined to be affable.

Later on in the evening Miss Bingham again accosted her cousin.

"Allow me to congratulate you, Phœbe," she whispered confidentially. "I had no idea you were engaged."

"Had you not?" replied Phœbe, in as indifferent a tone as she could assume.

"Mrs. Hales has just introduced me to Mr. Græme. He is very nice-looking; quite a handsome man, I should call him."

Never had praise of her lover sounded less sweet in Phœbe's ears.

Presently Miss Bingham was standing near a group composed of either relatives or intimate friends of the engaged pair. A fellow-clerk of Robert's was present, and Noakes's promotion was being discussed.

"It 's simply monstrous!" Robert's fellow-clerk was saying. "Every man in the bank made sure you would get it, Græme. What business had Payne to push his own nephew forward like that? If the case could only be properly represented to the directors, something might still be done."

Phœbe glanced at Robert. It was as she feared: this outspoken sympathy was galling him terribly.

"Is this gentleman who has been promoted over Mr. Græme's head the manager's nephew, then?" asked Miss Bingham.

"Whatever business is it of hers?" thought Phœbe angrily.

"How grossly unjust!" exclaimed Miss Bingham, her question having been answered in the affirmative, "Only those who can put aside all personal feeling are fit to be placed in authority over others." And Miss Bingham was evidently warmed by a glow of self-approval as she remembered the reproof she had administered to her cousin Phœbe only that very day.

"'Oh, Miss Bingham, the return hasn't gone yet!' she gasped."—*p.* 150.

Phœbe was not slow to follow the drift of Miss Bingham's thoughts.

"She always thinks she has acted wisely," was Phœbe's unspoken comment. "What a conceited idiot the woman is!"

Nor was Phœbe's wrath appeased when Miss Bingham whispered into her ear at parting—

"Now, don't let this affair of Mr. Græme's worry you. Who knows but that something may not yet be done to put things right?"

After the "at home," Phœbe found Miss Bingham's manner more unbearable than ever. She would

occasionally inquire after Bessie and Mr. Græme in an insufferably patronising tone, evidently expecting Phœbe to be deeply impressed by her condescension, while, having now acquired a superficial knowledge of the work, she seldom if ever consulted her assistant about matters official.

Although Phœbe had vowed that she would let Miss Bingham go her own way, her better nature had triumphed in so far that she had even offered a suggestion when she saw Miss Bingham about to make a blunder. Instead of being grateful for the kindly intention, however, Miss Bingham had let it be plainly seen that she thought her assistant was taking too much on herself.

It was after the administration of a more than usually pointed snub that Phœbe asked Miss Bingham if she should see to the getting out of the totals for the quarterly return. For some years past this duty had fallen to Phœbe; the return, when completed, having been handed to Miss Langley, who had always made a practice of checking it herself. Great, then, was Phœbe's surprise when Miss Bingham replied—

"Thank you, Miss Moore; but I do not think I need trouble you. The compilation of so important a return should, in my opinion, be carried on under the immediate supervision of the head of the department."

Phœbe purposely turned a blind eye and a deaf ear as Miss Bingham called up a few of the most reliable clerks, and told them how to set about compiling the required totals.

Then a fair copy was made of the return, and, having checked it, Miss Bingham affixed her initials thereto.

Presently Miss Bingham got up to fetch something from the other end of the room, leaving the return, face upwards, on her desk.

Phœbe's pride was not proof against the temptation of casting one glance at it. That one glance was sufficient. Her quick eye had detected the omission of an all-important item. To have checked the return, and not to have discovered so fatal an omission! Phœbe's lip curled with scorn. Should she draw Miss Bingham's attention to it? But, no; it was no business of hers. Miss Bingham deserved to suffer for her egregious conceit.

All the afternoon Phœbe thought of the direful fate awaiting Miss Bingham. Miss Semple, the head of the branch, would, in accordance with her invariable rule of holding each superintendent entirely responsible for the work performed in her own department, sign the return without glancing at it; and then she would lay it in all confidence before the Board. But woe betide Miss Bingham when the Board discovered the glaring omission!

At a quarter to five Miss Semple sent for Miss Bingham, and that all-important young woman obeyed the summons, taking with her the return.

Phœbe looked up as, with swinging gait and heavy tread, Miss Bingham strutted down the office. For a moment Phœbe felt almost irresistibly impelled to rush after her, as she watched her hastening on thus unconsciously to her official ruin. But she checked the generous impulse. Had she not been snubbed again and again for her well-meant endeavours to bolster up her self-sufficient cousin? Why not let her be taught a lesson? Surely she needed one.

A few minutes later Phœbe left the office. She was glad Miss Bingham had not returned from her interview with Miss Semple. She would have felt so hypocritical had she been obliged to wish her cousin "*good* afternoon," when she had just allowed her to do that which would destroy her peace of mind for so many days to come.

Nevertheless, Phœbe was sorely troubled. She could not persuade herself that the fatal omission was no business of hers. She felt she had acted meanly, and being naturally generous, the consciousness of meanness was very bitter to her.

Even later on in the evening, when she was expecting Robert, who had promised to take her to a concert, Phœbe felt little of that pleasurable excitement with which she invariably looked forward to meeting her lover.

For the second time in his life, Robert, as he approached his *fiancée*, was unobservant of her demeanour. On the first occasion his temporary blindness had been due to bitter disappointment; but now it was happiness that dazzled him.

"They've made it all right for me at the bank!" he exclaimed excitedly. "I should have wired to you this morning, only I wanted to see how you would look when you heard the news."

"I can't understand it," Robert remarked, later on, when he had calmed down a little. "I was called into the directors' room this morning, and they were most awfully civil to me. What puzzles me most is that the post has evidently been made expressly for me."

"It's very delightful," said Phœbe.

"It's all that. But what I can't understand is how the directors discovered that I had been treated unfairly."

"Perhaps one of the other men told them," suggested Phœbe.

Robert shook his head. "I doubt if there's a man in the place would risk offending Payne."

"Will Mr. Payne get into trouble about it, do you think?"

"Lose his position, do you mean? No; he's far too clever a man to be shelved. But I fancy he's had a word said to him; he's so particularly affable to me."

Intensely happy as Phœbe was made by Robert's news, the remembrance of that wretched return *would* flash across her mind to damp her joy. How she wished she had been more generous now!

Horribly treacherous did Phœbe feel the following morning, when Miss Bingham, having greeted her with patronising affability, asked—

"Did you see Mr. Græme last evening?"

"Yes," replied Phœbe, wondering why her cousin spoke in so insinuating a tone.

"I suppose your wedding will not be delayed much longer now. You must convey my congratulations to Mr. Græme when next you see him, if you please."

Phœbe looked so mystified that Miss Bingham hastened to explain.

"One of the directors is a very old friend of ours, so I took upon myself to open his eyes to what was going on in the bank. I thought, when I first heard how Mr. Græme had been treated, that I could soon

alter all that; and now you see I was right. If you remember, I told you at the time not to worry too much about it."

So at the very time when Phœbe was rejoicing over her cousin's probable downfall, that cousin had been scheming to do Robert a good turn. Miss Bingham's voice might be loud and rasping, her manner bumptious, and her gait aggressively self-assertive, but at heart she was a well-meaning, kindly woman. Phœbe saw that clearly now. And, seeing it, she would have given much to feel that she, too, had acted generously. But, alas! even now the Board might be discovering that fatal omission. What would not Phœbe have given at that moment could she have got back the ill-fated return? Miss Bingham would probably never know how meanly her assistant had behaved; but Phœbe would always remember it herself, and, remembering it, would find the regaining of her self-respect no easy matter.

"Have you nothing to say to me for having been a fairy godmother to Mr. Græme?" asked Miss Bingham at length, puzzled by Phœbe's very apparent distress.

Yes, indeed, Phœbe had something to say to her! But what she said was hardly *à propos*. She had caught sight of the return, lying, with unblushing effrontery, face upwards on Miss Bingham's desk.

"Oh, Miss Bingham, it hasn't gone yet!" she gasped.

"Hasn't gone! What hasn't gone?" echoed Miss Bingham, beginning to wonder if the good news had affected Phœbe's brain.

"The return, I mean," explained Phœbe, clasping her hands together in her excitement.

"No, it hasn't gone yet. A telegram was handed to Miss Semple yesterday afternoon just as I was about to give the return to her, and she asked me to hold it over, and take it to her at eleven o'clock this morning," replied Miss Bingham, thinking how very strange was her assistant's manner.

Phœbe glanced hurriedly at the clock. It was just a quarter-past ten. Yes, there would be time to get out a revised return by eleven.

"Miss Bingham, are the guild premiums heavy this quarter?"

"The guild premiums!" repeated Miss Bingham, looking thoroughly mystified.

"I mean, how does the total for this quarter compare with that entered on last quarter's return?"

Then Miss Bingham saw what she had done.

"Good gracious! I had forgotten that. Whatever can I do? Miss Semple will be sending for me in half an hour!" And in her distress Miss Bingham forgot to be official.

"Will you let me help you mal e out a fresh return, Miss Bingham? I think there will be time," said Phœbe meekly.

And on this occasion Miss Bingham did not reject Phœbe's offer of assistance.

* * * * * *

Six weeks after, Miss Bingham was present at Phœbe's wedding.

"Emma, I was so pleased to hear yesterday's news," the bride found an opportunity of whispering to her cousin.

"Yesterday's news" was the announcement of Miss Bingham's promotion to a place on the higher grade list.

"Thanks so much!" replied Miss Bingham. "But, of course, I had been expecting it for some time."

NEW FABLES WITH OLD MORALS.

THE GLOWWORM.

IT was the spirit of the moor that spake, and she said to a little brown insect, "Go forth upon the hill-side and there await your mate. He will move from one blade of grass to another until he sees you on the ground."

And she to whom the spirit spake made answer humbly—

"How will my mate find me? To us the blades of grass are mighty, and he will not see me at their feet."

And the spirit answered, "See, I have given to you a pale green light to guide your mate amidst the grass, and hence take the name of glowworm."

Then the glowworm went forth to the hill-side, but the sun shone brightly, and her pale light could not be seen, so that she thought hardly of the spirit of the moor, and mourned for many hours, saying, "My mate will find me not, and will surely perish in the search."

But as the hours passed away, the sun sank beneath the horizon, and day gave place to night. And then as the moon hung out her silver lamp the pale green light of the glowworm shone like a star upon the grass, and as her mate drew near she said within herself, "The spirit of the moor was right." For, like other beings, she had been impatient in her judgment, and had erred.

THE LION'S COURT.

THE king of the lions held festival, and his subjects came to do him homage. Among the rest came a lion, who brought with him his son, to whom he pointed out all that was worthy of note.

"That lion," said the elder, as one passed by them, "is the bravest of the brave. To his valour we owe it that the tigers have ceased to dispute our sway; by his gallantry the elephants were driven back across the river that forms our southern boundary. The one beside him is the wisest of councillors. By his sage advice our young warriors allow the herds to graze

undisturbed, and destroy them not when they require them not for food."

"And who," asked the son, "is that?" as a lion, scarred and maimed, went slowly by.

"That," said his father, "is one whose youth was passed in quarrelling with his brethren. At last, after much bloodshed, he was banished until he should atone for the past by some deed of daring."

"And did he do it?" asked the younger lion eagerly.

"At last," said his sire, "at the risk of his life, he learnt the plan of an attack about to be made upon us by the tigers, and brought the news to our sovereign, who forgave him; and his past crimes are forgotten."

"True, father," said his son, "but the scars are still there." For though the sins had been repented of, the evil result still remained.

The Fading Leaves.

It was summer, and the woods were in full beauty, for each tree was robed in green. Now, a traveller passed by upon his road, and as he looked upon the trees and marked how each reflected back the sun, they all seemed to him alike, and he said within himself, "It were hard by their colour alone to tell the leaves of one tree from another;" and he went on his way.

But when summer had given place to autumn, it chanced that the traveller returned by the same path. And as he looked upon the trees, he saw that on one the green leaves seemed in death to have caught the glory of the setting sun, while others were but slightly tinged with the palest yellow, as though they only reflected the hue of those near them. On one side of the path a tree shone with the deepest scarlet, while over against it stood one on which a wizard seemed to have laid his hand, and to have shrivelled the leaves into dark-brown cerements.

And the traveller thought within himself, "There are many who can show a brave front in prosperity; but it is adversity that brings out their hidden qualities and shows whereof they are made."

The Tigress.

In a thick jungle there lived a tigress, and as she stalked to and fro amid the reeds, all living beings gave way before her, for all feared her. Many a deer had she struck down in the mere wantonness of cruelty, many a jackal whom she found feeding on a carcase had she slain. Nothing seemed too mean to suffer from her wrath; and when she lay down to rest, the monkeys gathered in the trees overhead, and wondered why she had been created, and why she was suffered to live, the scourge of the land. When they knew that she had cubs, all the dwellers in the jungle mourned, for they said, "They will be as bloodthirsty as their mother!"

But at last, after she had wrought much destruction, men came into the jungle to hunt the tigress; and the inhabitants of the forest rejoiced, for they said—

"So wicked a creature will without doubt forsake her young, and the hunters will find them, even if the mother escapes."

Now the hunters discovered the lair of the tigress, and her cubs lying therein, and they thought to carry them off; but ere they did so, the tigress came upon them, and wounded them grievously, and she died fighting valiantly in the defence of her offspring. For there are none so bad but that they have some redeeming quality.

The Giant Tree.

A husbandman, in search of a dwelling-place, came to the side of a river, and he saw that the land was pleasant and good for pasture, and he made his abode there. But as he built ox-stalls and sheepcots, he found a hindrance in a mighty tree that grew beside the river. Its trunk was rugged and rent into furrows by age, and its branches, each one like a forest tree for thickness, spread around for many a rood. Now, as the husbandman looked upon its far-reaching limbs, he thought it beyond his strength to overthrow; and he touched it not.

But after many moons, when the husbandman's flocks had grown and multiplied, there was need of further dwellings for them; and he thought much thereon, and at the last he raised his axe and smote upon the mighty tree.

And lo! the tree gave way before him, for it was rotten within, and had no strength; and the husbandman, as it fell, said within himself, "This tree is like a mighty empire which, resting on the corruption of the people, appears all-powerful, and yet yields at the first blow, because it is hollow and unsound at the core."

The Fox and the Trappers.

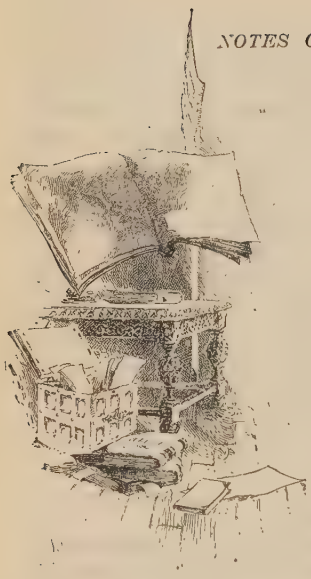
There came to a northern forest a hardy band of men, who lived by ensnaring the wild beasts and preparing their skins for use. They were learned in all kinds of woodcraft, and few of the forest tribes escaped from their snares. One only, the fox, could never be taken, for he had learned how to outwit all their devices, and ofttimes he destroyed their traps and escaped uninjured.

Now the hunters had to visit a distant hunting ground for a time; and they said among themselves, "We cannot take our store of furs with us, and if we leave them, the fox will break through any snare that we devise, and destroy them." And one spoke on this wise, and one on that; but at last one hunter, wiser than the others, said, "Let us leave our stores uncovered, and only surround them with a slender cord." And they did so.

Then, after the hunters had gone, the fox came and reasoned thus with himself: "The hunters have guarded their stores in some manner which I understand not;" and he looked carefully around, and saw no snare, and therefore he feared the more, and he went his way. And when the hunters returned, they found their stores untouched. For he who is always deceiving others is oftentimes himself the most easily deceived.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.



PIETY AT HOME.

ST. PAUL, speaking of widows, says that they should first learn to show piety at home. He means, probably, that before undertaking any wider sphere of work they should be sure that home duties were not neglected. So, too, when a devil had been cast out of a man by our Lord, and the man had asked to be allowed to accompany his Deliverer, he was told to go home to his friends and tell what had been done for him—tell it chiefly by his altered conduct. Even the world understands that a man ought not to show his worst self to his friends at home. In a brilliant modern comedy one of the characters is pronounced a "jolly good fellow." "Did you ever see one of these jolly good fellows at home?" another asks. How much significance underlies that simple question. Does he first show unselfishness, obedience, reverence—in a word, piety—at home?

NOT LAUGHED DOWN.

A hawker pretty notorious in many parts of Hampshire is accustomed to wind up a long cry by shouting: "All colours of blackleads!"—a very obvious bull. One day a servant-girl said to him—"George, do you know people laugh at you? How can there be *all* colours of *black*-leads? It is impossible—quite impossible!"—"Let 'em laugh," replied the old man, scornfully, holding up, as he spoke, a bundle of black, blue, and red pencils. "What do 'em know about my business?" This man might be laughed at, but he could not be laughed down even when doing what was obviously absurd. It would be well if people—especially young people—were as indifferent to ridicule when doing what is right. Are you trying to serve God? Then do not allow yourself to be laughed out of that service. You are engaged in the business of your Heavenly Father; and what do the worldly and the wicked know about that business?

"DARKNESS AND DAWN."

So Archdeacon Farrar calls his powerful "historic tale" of "Scenes in the Days of Nero," which has just been published by Messrs. Longmans. He might well have called it the story of the days of Nero, for, in effect, that is what the book is. The two volumes form a biography of the notorious Nero, but the history is clothed in "tale," to secure a more artistic presentment and greater human interest. Revered names are introduced, but only in so far as tradition, at least, warrants; and the author has very little in the way of anachronism to apologise for. The "Darkness" which the book represents, is that of the dying paganism of the Roman Empire; the "Dawn" that of Christianity, with its light-bearing, life-giving principles. It will surprise no one, then, to find that the picture Archdeacon Farrar sets before his readers is necessarily a very highly coloured one, from the very force of its contrasts. Perhaps no other than a narrative form could have been used so well to piece together what can be gleaned of this great transition-time. And certainly no writer could have devoted greater research to it than has Archdeacon Farrar. Let no one be warned away from it for fear lest it should prove too much tale and too little history. The effect of its really slight plot is to link together the hitherto scattered fragments of information, and to put new life into the once dead bones of history, pure and simple.

WANTED—TIME.

When Michael Faraday, the celebrated man of science, was a poor apprentice, he used every spare moment for making experiments. In a letter to a boy friend, after telling of one of these experiments, he added: "Time is all I require. Oh that I could purchase at a cheap rate some of our modern gents' spare hours—nay, days! I think it would be a good bargain, both for them and for me." The youth had learned the first secret of success—not to waste time; not to throw it away on useless persons or useless pursuits. The frivolous think of nothing but pastimes and modes of "killing time;" but a day will come to even the most frivolous when they will value time as much as our own impetuous Queen Elizabeth did when she exclaimed on her death-bed, "My kingdom for a moment!"

"THE DEVIL'S PATERNOSTER."

This is not a bad description of grumbling. A Christian should use *Te Deums* rather than the devil's paternosters, but in our hearts many of us utter the last more frequently than the first. Not seldom the master of a house piously says grace before dinner, and then a veritable devil's paternoster of grumbling as he partakes of each dish that succeeds it.

"THE DAILY ROUND, THE COMMON TASK."

When, after their shipwreck, St. Paul and his companions landed at Malta in rain and cold, the islanders, pitying the condition of the shipwrecked

men, kindled a fire that they might warm themselves and dry their clothes. As a contribution to the fire we read that the Apostle gathered a bundle of sticks. Did he think that this was work below the dignity of the great teacher of the Gentiles? No, he knew that those who serve men serve God, and that on occasions it may be quite as much a religious act to gather sticks as it was to address the Athenians from Mars Hill or to write the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The soul of St. Paul was bound in the bundle of life (1 Samuel xxv. 29) with his Saviour, and this sanctified the commonest acts of life. For him to live was Christ. Let us hope that something of the same experience causes the stick-gatherer in our illustration to smile. Certainly if she is doing her lowly task for the sake of helping an over-worked mother, she may be gladdened with the reflection that she is serving Christ. She hardly knows that the snow is making her feet cold, because the practical religion of common things and everyday life warms her heart.

"Her lowly task."

FOR THE STUDY AND THE FIRESIDE.

A little more than two years ago, we included in a series of articles on "Great Preachers" an account of an interview with the Rev. Dr. J. A. Macfadyen, of Manchester; but within a few weeks of its publication, he whose busy life it described passed away. We have now before us his "Memoir and Sermons" (Hodder and Stoughton), written and edited by his friend Dr. Alexander Mackennal, of Bowdon. The biographer's

work is well and succinctly done. Dr. Mackennal has been just to the subject of his work, but he has avoided falling into the great temptation of one who tells the story of a friend's life-work—overcrowding with detail—and his choice from Dr. Macfadyen's sermons is a most happy one.—While we are speaking of so prominent a free-church preacher as the late Dr. Macfadyen, we may fittingly mention the new edition of Skeats' "History of the Free Churches of England," which has just been issued by Messrs. Alexander and Shepheard, with the additional chapters required to bring the work down to the present day, supplied by Mr. C. S. Miall. As a popular history of English Nonconformity, the work has no parallel in ability and style. Of course, we do not necessarily identify ourselves with the author's views, or endorse all his strictures; but we are all the more glad to be able to bear testimony to the value of his work, which is a fine record of active, conscientious endeavour. For twenty years the book has been unobtainable: it was a happy idea to carry on its story to the present day, and Mr. Miall has done this service with great care.—"Cassell's New Popular Educator" has now reached its sixth volume, which well fulfils the promise of its predecessors, and carries on this useful work. This is just the book for teachers of senior classes to put into the hands of their scholars. Another work, from the same publishers, "Cassell's Storehouse of General Information," seems well fitted to supply a need many of us have long felt of an encyclopædia that shall be at once concise, and full enough to serve the purposes of general reference. This work promises to prove its right to its title, and to convey information scientific, biographical, and general, on a scale that will serve most practical purposes. We must not forget its illustrations, which are abundant in quantity and excellent in quality.—Probably there are not many new anecdotes in the "Cromwell Anecdotes" (Hodder and Stoughton), collected by Dr. Macaulay, but it is of advantage to have so many useful illustrations arranged in chronological order. All speakers in search of feathers for their arrows ought to find Dr. Macaulay's work serviceable.—There is a "socialism" with which Christians can have no sympathy, but we ought not to lose sight of the fact that the principles wrongly applied in that socialism are to be found enshrined in the doctrines of Christianity. "The Socialism of Christianity" (Elliot Stock), by the Rev. W. Blissard, is a statement of those principles of brotherhood and brotherly action, and it deserves the thoughtful attention of all Christian thinkers and workers.—Messrs. Nisbet have just published in a pretty little booklet the series of papers by the Rev. George Everard on "The Shield, the Sword, and the Battle," which appeared in last year's QUIVER. Many of our readers will be glad to have them in this form for presentation. Additions to two of Messrs. Nisbet's series are an admirable volume on St. Luke, contributed by the Rev. C. F. Farrar, M.A., to "Nisbet's Scripture Handbooks," and a bright little life of "David Livingstone," written by the Rev. J. J. Ellis for "Men with a Mission."

HONOUR ALL MEN.

This is a Christian duty, and one that, if obeyed, will make the journey of life much smoother. When people are civil and kind, not only to the rich and powerful, but to all men, they often get recompensed in quarters from where they least expected it. When the old Quaker Zachariah Fox—one of the richest merchants of Liverpool—was asked by what means he had contrived to realise so large a fortune as he possessed, he replied—"Friend, by one article alone, in which thou mayst deal too, if thou pleasest—civility!"

"FOR MY GOOD."

Speaking to his aunt, with whom he was going to church a few Sundays ago, a little boy friend of ours, aged six, remarked: "I go to church not for my amusement, but for my good." If grown-up people only went for the same reason, there would be less staring about and less anxiety about the clothes that are worn.

PREPARATION DOES NOT HASTEN DEATH.

Some people seem to think that it does. They dread to make a will or set their house in order for the end that is inevitable. They resent the sight of a funeral and all mention of the "King of Terrors"—as if they could escape by hiding from him. And yet, as Archbishop Whately shrewdly observed, "A man does not die because his coffin is made." It does not hasten matters to prepare for death, and therefore for life, by giving ourselves to Him who will keep that which we deliver to Him, and destroy for us the last enemy. St. Paul did not die any sooner because he could say, "I die daily." He was ready to die every day he lived, but he did not die before his time—that is to say, God's time.

ALL HIS ENEMIES COULD SAY.

Not long ago it was proposed to elect a merchant, who is a religious man, mayor of one of our largest towns. Speaking of him, I heard a lady say that he was not the sort of man to be mayor, as he was "a Psalm-singer and a water-drinker." I am afraid that this lady would have shouted on a certain occasion, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Being appointed, he made an excellent mayor, showing a good example, and encouraging everything good in the town.

THE NEED OF QUIETNESS.

We read that "Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide." Where and when do the business men of our day meditate? They have no time for it. The precept, "Commune with your own heart and in your chamber, and be still," is never obeyed by them, and as a consequence their inner spiritual

life is starved, and they have little or no influence for good upon others. Let us try to resist this habit of being always in a din, always in a turmoil, and, however busy, make time to consider our ways, that we may be, if not wise, at least less foolish. The busiest workers have generally an hour in the middle of the day in which to eat and rest, part of which they might spend in communion with a better world. And, when walking to his work through the most crowded streets, a man may acquire the habit of being as much alone with his thoughts as he would be in the Sahara desert.

"Calm Soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of Thine
Man did not make and cannot mar."

THE HOME OF KNOX.

It is not always easy to have the courage of one's opinions—always to do the right, regardless of consequences. We are so afraid of what the world may think that there are not many over whose grave such memorable words might be said as over that of John Knox: "Here lieth a man who in his life never feared the face of man." This noted reformer was born at Haddington in the year 1505. He came of well-to do parents, who wisely gave their son the best education in their power. In due course young Knox took orders in the Church of Rome as a secular priest, and devoted most of his time to teaching in connection with one of the Roman Catholic institutions. In 1546 the martyrdom of Wishart completely changed his religious views, and he became a Protestant. Henceforth his life was full of change and peril. Taken prisoner by the French, he was made to serve for eighteen months at the galleys, and was only released, probably, on the intercession of Edward VI. He then spent five years as a preacher in England, but at the king's death took refuge at Geneva, where he stayed for three years. At the end of that time he returned to Scotland, and devoted the remainder of his life to the spiritual interests of his native land and the advancement of the Protestant cause, so dear to his heart.

(From a Photograph by A. A. Inglis, Edinburgh.)

"THE CHRISTIAN UNDER REVIEW."

We noticed in these pages the first two volumes of a series which Messrs. Nisbet are now publishing under the above title. We have now to acknowledge another six volumes, all alike spiritual in tone and practical in teaching. The Rev. A. Pearson is responsible for the treatment of "The Christian's Aims;" while the Rev. H. Sutton takes up the very important subject of "The Christian's Recreations," and deals with it in a manner well worthy of the attention of every head of a family. "The Christian's Progress" is handled by Canon G. R. Wynne, of Dublin; while the Rev. J. McCann, D.D., who wrote one of the earlier volumes in the series, on "The Moral Culture of the Christian," now writes on the scarcely less important subject of "The Intellectual Culture of the Christian." The Dean of Norwich takes up "The Christian's Duties and Responsibilities," and explains very fully the duties of a true Christian both towards other Christians and to those who are not yet such. The last volume of the series which we have to notice this month is one on "The Christian's Privileges," by the Rev. W. J. Deane, and this is a very cheering and helpful little work. The series, as a whole, is one that we can heartily commend.

THE LIFE THAT IS WORTH LIVING.

From the day when a certain lawyer asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" many lawyers (though the word differs considerably in meaning now) have been religious men. In our own time, at least, two of the Lord Chancellors of England were diligent Sunday-school teachers. The present writer knew Sir Joseph Napier, Lord Chancellor of Ireland ("Holy Joe," as profane students of Trinity College, Dublin, of which he was Vice-Chancellor, used to call him), and can testify that the words he spoke on one public occasion were true: "I have attained the object of my ambition; but I have learned that there is nothing else worth living for but to love and serve Jesus Christ."

HAVE REGARD TO THE SEQUEL.

Do we recognise that responsibility cannot end where we choose? That it follows every bargain we make long after we take the decision? David

Livingstone knew this, and, at a cost of much personal inconvenience and even some risk, he acted upon his convictions in a memorable instance. He was recalled from Africa by Lord Russell. When he reached the coast the question faced him—What was he to do with his steamer, the *Lady Nyassa*? She had cost him £6,000. It was absolutely necessary to sell her. Purchasers stood ready, and would have paid a reasonable, if not a remunerative, figure; but they were Portuguese, and Livingstone looked beyond the fair offer to the future. He was convinced that the use to which the *Lady Nyassa* would be put if he sold her to these people would be the nefarious one of the slave trade. Yet there was no other market nearer than Bombay. The brave missionary-explorer soon made up his mind. Having coaled the steamer and recruited a scratch crew, he assumed the posts of captain and pilot, and set his face towards India. It was a run of two thousand five hundred miles, but the gallant amateur skipper anchored safely in Bombay Harbour six weeks and two days from the start. "The vessel was so small," he says, "that no one noticed our arrival;" but the deed was a new proof of Livingstone's moral greatness. He had thereby kept his conscience void of offence.

UNCONSCIOUS HOMICIDES.

A colonel in the army was lately killed by a fall from his horse. A train having frightened the animal, it bolted, and one of his stirrups breaking, the rider was thrown off. Falling on the back of his head, death ensued instantaneously. A correspondent who attended the military funeral says that the saddest part of a sad sight was to see the horse that had done the mischief led behind the gun-carriage on which was borne the master he had killed. It was a noble-looking animal, and was caparisoned with military saddle and bridle, the riding-boots of the deceased being carried in the stirrups, pointing the wrong way. The horse walked proudly along, unconscious of what he had done. Is it not a picture of many men and women who walk through life well pleased with themselves, although their conduct has been—though they know it not—the indirect, if not the direct, cause of many deaths? The wildness and unkindness of sons killing parents; unfaithful lovers breaking the hearts of those who trusted them too much; wives slowly done to death by the refined cruelty of husbands, and husbands forced to work themselves into the grave to support the extravagance of wives; the votaries of fashion, unconsciously playing into the hands of those who grind down and grind away the poor—all these and many others are unconscious homicides.

A WARNING FROM THE FOE.

There have been many cases, in annals of the mission-field, in which the winning power of Christly service is shown; but few have a more dramatic touch than the story of how Nagpoor was saved during the terrible crisis of the Indian Mutiny. Stephen Hislop had been labouring there for some twelve years, and, if his openly professed native converts were as yet few, his goodness, the sterling reality of his love to God and man, had produced a deep impression. The dark clouds gathered. The outbreak occurred at Meerut on the 10th of May; but the weeks went on, and no one at Nagpoor knew that a date, the 16th of June, was fixed for a rising there. The populace were to join the soldiers in revolt, and massacre all the Christians. It was Hislop who brought about such measures of self-protection as defeated the plot. The missionary was the first and only man in Nagpoor who received warning of the intended revolt and bloodshed. So mighty was the charm of his Christlike love, that a Mussulman, who had not accepted Hislop's Saviour, could not bear that the teacher of the strange faith should die. He came by night, and spoke of the peril, and begged Hislop to secure his wife and family. The ignorant at home said that the reckless zeal of the missionaries produced the Mutiny, and the cry is still raised sometimes that "interests" are endangered by preaching Christ to the heathen; but the men who, like Stephen Hislop, are witnesses of the Master's pity and love, are the true bulwarks of peace.

FOR PREACHERS AND STUDENTS.

The historical position of the Acts of the Apostles, giving a record of the early history of Church institutions, has always given the Book a peculiar interest to the members of Christian Churches, and the greater value consequently attaches to the volume of "The Expositor's Bible" on the Acts, by the Rev. Professor G. T. Stokes, D.D. (Hodder and Stoughton), and particularly to the chapters which deal with early Church history. We are afraid that all our readers would not accept, to their full extent, the whole of Dr. Stokes's conclusions, but the scholarly and careful manner in which they are reached and explained must make the book acceptable to all students, and a valuable help to all who seek a really practical commentary on the text of this most interesting Book.—Of the third volume on St. John in the "Biblical Illustrator" we have really nothing to say that we have not already said of its two predecessors. The work is most creditable, alike to its editor, the Rev. J. S. Exell, and its publishers, Messrs. Nisbet.—A beautiful series of expositions by Dr. J. R. Macduff on the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which the author well calls "St. Paul's Song of Songs," has just been issued by the same publishers. It is unnecessary to say more of this volume than that it is by Dr. Macduff, since all readers of THE QUIVER must remember his series of papers in comparatively recent numbers. The importance and the value of the lessons to be drawn from this particular chapter under consideration it would be impossible to estimate. It has furnished the theme for thousands of

上諭恭錄

光緒十七年五月初七日

上諭總理各國事務衙門奏各省教案疊出請嚴飭各督撫迅速籌辦一摺據稱本年四月間安徽蕪湖教堂被匪徒焚燬江蘇丹陽縣湖北武穴鎮等處教堂亦相繼被燬亟應查拿匪犯早為嚴防等語各國傳教載在條約曾經降旨飭令各省隨時保護歷年已久中外相安何以近日焚燬教堂各案同時並起殊堪詫異其中顯有巨匪潛謀幻煽布散謠言搖惑衆心希圖乘機搶掠甚至安分良民為所誘脅動成鉅案若不嚴行懲辦何以嚴法紀而靖地方着兩江湖廣江蘇安徽湖北各督撫迅飭該管文武查拿首要各犯訊明正法以儆將來至泰西之教本是勸人為善即從教之人亦係中國子民仍歸地方官管轄民教本可相安總因不逞之徒捏造無根之言藉端滋事此等奸民所在多有着各直省將軍督撫出示曉諭居民切勿輕聽浮言妄生事端倘有匿名揭帖造言惑衆即行嚴密查拿從重治罪各國商民教士地方官必當隨時設法保其身家勿任奸徒擾害倘或防範不嚴致釀事端即着據實嚴參其從前各省未結各案並着該將軍督撫從速辦結不得任聽屬員畏難延宕以清積牘將此通諭知之欽此

萬國公報館敬刊

"GOOD NEWS FROM PEKIN"—THE IMPERIAL DECREE.

sermons, but we think for none more sympathetic, or more thoroughly in harmony with its spirit, than those which make up this volume.—Of "Darkest Britain's Epiphany," by the Rev. Robert Douglas, M.A. (same publishers), we can only say that it is an exposition, able enough, of what is commonly known as the British-Israelite position. We cannot accept the author's conclusions, but as a setting forth of a somewhat difficult and peculiar position the volume certainly possesses considerable ability.—Messrs. Morgan and Scott send us a new edition of "The Bible Remembrancer," much enlarged, and with a complete modern atlas of Bible lands. As a help for teachers and students the book is so well known as scarcely to need description, and in its new form it is likely to prove more useful than ever; we commend it heartily to the notice of all Sunday-school teachers.—At the same time we must notice Dr. Pentecost's most helpful "Bible Studies" (Hodder and Stoughton) on the International Sunday-school Lessons for 1892, when the series will embrace the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Acts of the Apostles. If we remember rightly, this is the fourth year for which Dr. Pentecost has made this same ample provision for teachers, and we can speak with hearty appreciation of the help he has thus rendered.—Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton also send us a new reprint of "Bogatzky's Golden Treasury." The work is a reprint of Mr. John Thornton's edition of 1775, together with critical notes, hitherto unpublished, by John Berridge, Vicar of Everton. The whole is introduced to the reader of to-day by the Rev. H. C. G. Moule, Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge. The quaint notes, which are the peculiar feature of this edition, will certainly prove interesting to even the most casual of readers, many of whom, we suspect, will find the book itself new to them.—Messrs. Longmans send us a volume of very interesting thoughts and suggestions by the Rev. A. J. Harrison, B.D., entitled, "Problems of Christianity and Scepticism." It was hardly necessary for the author to add to his title-page a note to the effect that these chapters were the outcome of twenty years' experience. No one could write such a work as this upon mere theory—it is obvious that its lessons are those of long practice.

GOOD NEWS FROM PEKIN.

One of our valued correspondents thus writes:—"We missionaries in China are very thankful for the recently issued Imperial decree, condemning the late anti-foreign riots. Ten thousand copies, of which I enclose a sample, have been printed at our Mission Press, in Shanghai, for wide distribution. The English translation, epitomised, reads as follows:—'It is declared in our treaties with foreign lands that all nations are at liberty to promulgate their religions in China; and all the provinces have been commanded by Imperial decree to protect foreigners at all times; yet now we learn that churches in Tanyang and Wusueh have been destroyed.' (Concerning the barbarous murder of two Englishmen and the shameful treatment of ladies and children in the last-named city the decree is silent.) 'This is strange and astounding. Let all officials, civil and military, be at once commanded to capture, try, convict, and execute the leaders of the riots as a warning to others. The religion of Western countries simply admonishes men to become virtuous, and the native converts are Chinese subjects under Government protection. Peoples and religions should exist peaceably side by side. Let the Tartar generals and governors warn the people against listening to idle rumours concerning foreigners, and severely punish the writers of anonymous placards which originate such rumours. The local officials shall at all times devise measures for the protection of the lives and properties of merchants and missionaries from Western lands, and never permit evil men to harass and injure them: if their precautions do not avail, such officials shall be degraded. Let all recent cases of riot be promptly arranged, no delay for fear of

difficulties being allowed. Be this decree known to all.' And, on the other hand, according to our Shanghai papers of this morning, 'the foreign Powers having treaties with China have all determined to support the British Minister at Pekin in his demands just presented to the Chinese Government, which include the opening of Hunan Province, the hot-bed of anti-foreign machinations. No *non possumus* to be accepted, no trifling or prevarication allowed.' Good hope have we, therefore, of widening opportunities and lessening hindrances in our missionary course 'by the good hand of our God upon us.'"

SEASONABLE SOUVENIRS.

Christmas and New Year cards have long been threatened, but no better method of exchanging seasonable greetings has yet been proposed. The novelties are again numerous, and we are especially glad to see a marked improvement in Scripture text-cards. Mr. E. Kaufmann has issued several new packets, which all teachers should see. We cannot describe them in detail; but we may, perhaps, single out one set entitled "God's unspeakable Love," with prettily cut-out floral designs and well-chosen hymn verses. For those who do not care to use cards, but who like a decorated paper on which to write their Yuletide letters, Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode have prepared some new note-paper, prettily decorated with embossed floral corners, and most thoroughly scented. Some of the designs, such as the "Wild Roses" and "Carnations," are very delicate. Of cards Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons publish a variety that seems almost unending. The sizes range from beautiful panels like Miss Frances Brandage's "Little Choristers" to the tiniest of dainty autograph cards. Squares, circles, diamonds, vignettes of flowers, baskets, dogs, cats, and even gates, all serve to furnish shapes for the cards and to convey appropriate messages and verses—some of the latter being from Scripture, or from the works of Frances Ridley Havergal, Mr. A. L. Salmon, or Mr. Langbridge. The calendars issued by Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons with their cards are, like them, marvels of execution—especially Miss Maud Goodman's charming series of child pictures, which she calls "A Year's Sunshine."

"ONLY PLENTY OF FRIENDS."

When Abraham Lincoln was a young man starting in life, it used to be said of him, "Lincoln has nothing, only plenty of friends." To have plenty of friends is to be very rich—if they are the right sort; and we all can be wealthy in this sense by taking to ourselves the best Friend of all—Him who "sticketh closer than a brother."

"SOMETHING NEW."

The time for the giving of presents and the choosing of prizes is at hand once more, and the old difficulty of choice has to be faced. The cry is always for "something new," and above all in the way of books. We are glad, then, to welcome "The Blue Poetry Book" (Longmans), edited by Mr. Andrew Lang, as a companion volume to his "Blue" and "Red" Fairy Books. What these did for children's fairy-tales, in selection and illustration, this later work does for poetry peculiarly suited to child-readers—it rather gathers together old friends in an attractive dress, than seeks to introduce new ones. A more suitable book for a present or prize to boy or girl this season we cannot imagine.—Peculiarly for boys, Mr. R. M. Ballantyne has written and illustrated two stories, which are published by Messrs. Nisbet. First is "The Buffalo Runners," a stirring story of sport and adventure on the Red River Plains. Then comes "The Coxswain's Bride," in which Mr. Ballantyne has collected three stories of the sea, as full of life as possible. Two other stories from the same publishers seem to us more suited for boys than girls: they are "Above-board," by W. C. Metcalfe; and "Work, Wait, Win," by Ruth Lamb. The first is a sea-story, such as all boys love; the second a tale of patient effort, well worth reading. "Born in the Purple," still another of Messrs. Nisbet's publications, is a bright story for girls, by Emma Marshall, which is deserving of stronger illustrations than accompany it at present. "My Lady Bountiful" (same publishers and author) is a less ambitious tale than "Born in the Purple," but most tastefully bound, and in every way suitable for a prize.—"The Well-Spring of Immortality," by S. S. Hewlett, and published by Messrs. Nisbet, is an Indian story by the author of "None of Self and All of Thee," which we noticed last year. Our readers will like it none the less because it is a story with a purpose—the awakening of the missionary spirit among children.—For older scholars than would be pleased by any of the foregoing story-books, "The Way to Succeed" (Hodder and Stoughton), by the author of "From Log Cabin to White House," would be a timely gift. Its title well expresses the scope of the work, which—needless to say, seeing who its author is—combines interesting and anecdotal reading of the brightest character, with good sound advice, couched in a most friendly manner.—And for scholars still older, or for teachers, what could be better than "Conquests of the Cross" (Cassell), edited by Edwin Hodder? The work is now complete in three handsome volumes, abundantly illustrated and pleasantly written, and forming a handy and useful record of missionary life, labour, and long-suffering.—We have also to acknowledge the receipt of "Credo and Credulity" (Elliot Stock); new editions of "Gough's Platform Echoes," and the deeply interesting autobiography of "The Rev. J. G. Paton" (Hodder and Stoughton); and two little works from Messrs. Nisbet and Co., "The First Thing in the World," by the Rev. A. J. Gordon, D.D., and "Holy Communion," by Major Seton Churchill.

A RESCUE BY "THE QUIVER" LIFEBOAT.

Just as this number went to press we received from the Secretary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution information to the effect that on the 26th of October last the lifeboat *Quiver No. 1*, stationed at Margate, came in at 10.40 a.m., after fifteen hours' service in a north-east gale, bringing ashore the crew, numbering ten men, of the barquentine *Austria*, which had been wrecked on the Long Sand. We are sure our readers will share the pleasure with which we heard of this good service on the part of THE QUIVER boat

FRUITFUL ADVICE.

Never was advice more fruitful than that which was given to John Wesley by Bishop Potter, when he ordained him a deacon. "If," he said, "you wish to be extensively useful, do not spend your time in contending for or against things of a disputable nature, but in testifying against notorious vice, and in promoting real, essential holiness."

THE "QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from September 18th, 1891, up to and including October 23rd, 1891. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver" Waifs Fund:* A Glasgow Mother (20th donation), 1s.; J. J. E., Govan (48th donation), 5s.; Chrysanthemum, Bristol, 3s.; Captain Mathison, Portsmouth, £5; M. H. R., Regent's Park Road, 2s. 6d.

For "*The Quiver" Free Grants Fund:* 3, Enville Terrace, 2s.

For *The East London Church Fund:* H., 10s.

For *The London Aged Christian Society:* Thankful, 5s.

For *The Children's Country Holiday Fund:* A Grateful Tourist, 10s.

For *The St. Andrew's Waterside Mission:* Captain Mathison, £5.

For *The London Cabmen's Mission:* Captain Mathison, £5.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

13. What name does St. John give to the Sea of Galilee?

14. Why did the disciples leave Jerusalem and go to Galilee so soon after the Resurrection?

15. On what two occasions did Jesus use His Divine power to give success to His disciples when fishing?

16. What is the great motive-power of Christianity as set forth by Christ?

17. In what parable does Jesus teach us that the discipline of trouble is a necessary part of the Christian life?

18. Quote some words from the Psalms which set forth the value of affliction.

19. Which of the prophets was specially inspired to reveal truths concerning the office and work of Jesus Christ?

20. What special gifts of the Holy Spirit are applied to our blessed Lord by the prophet Isaiah?

21. In what words does Isaiah illustrate the "peace on earth" of which the angels sang at the birth of Christ?

22. Quote passage from Isaiah which shows that the peace God giveth is the result of faith in Him.

23. What effect had the captivity of the Jews on their religious life?

24. Quote the words of Isaiah which are so often used in connection with foreign missionary work.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 80.

1. St. John, who gives the intercessory prayer of Christ made before His crucifixion. (St. John xvii. 9—21; Heb. vii. 25.)

2. Christian unity. (St. John xvii. 11, 21.)

3. "This is life eternal—to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." (St. John xvii. 3.)

4. The brook Cedron, associated with the journey of King David when he fled from his son Absalom. (St. John xviii. 1; 2 Sam. xv. 23.)

5. The soldiers, terrified at the presence of Christ, went backward and fell to the ground. (St. John xviii. 4—6.)

6. Someone had to be released from prison—whomsoever the people should choose. (St. Matt. xxvii. 15; St. John xviii. 39.)

7. Because they wanted Jesus to be killed, and the Roman Emperor did not allow the Jews to inflict capital punishment upon anyone. (St. John xviii. 31.)

8. That He made Himself to be the Son of God and also a King. (St. John xix. 7, 12.)

9. It is St. John only who tells us that at first Jesus had to bear His cross alone. (St. John xix. 17.)

10. The coat, or inner garment, which reached from the neck almost to the feet, and was fastened at the waist with a girdle, like a tunic. (St. John xix. 23.)

11. It was customary at crucifixions to give the sufferer a stupefying drink, composed of herbs steeped in vinegar, in order to allay the intense pain. (St. John xix. 29.)

12. The careful manner in which the napkin was folded which had been about the head of Jesus, and also how the other clothes had been folded and put away, thus showing the body had not been stolen. (St. John xx. 6—8.)

"O RADIANT DARK!"

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.

MANY beautiful and poetic expressions have been used concerning the "sable-vested night." It has been called most fair, welcome, world-jewelled, restful and holy; but perhaps to you who read this page it is a time of fretting and disquiet, and the lingering shadows seem to you as though they would never pass and make room again for the snow-white dove of day.

Several recipes exist for promoting slumber. Some say a resolute determination to keep the eyes shut will bring refreshing repose, others recommend us to count a flock of sheep passing one by one beneath a hedge, and others again inform us that a meal of onions will secure Nature's sweet restorer. But we all know there are times when sleep seems to evade our pursuit; it seems utterly out of our reach, perhaps by reason of weakness, pain, or besetting cares, and as we advance in life we often know a wakeful night, and realise what it is to watch for the morning and to wish for day.

I remember reading of a child who took a fancy to a pillow filled with everlasting flowers, and seemed to rest better upon the cushion he had craved; and the thought came to me that the promises of our God are *our* everlasting pillow, and, leaning upon His covenant, the darkness shines as noon. The Lord shall be thine everlasting Light, even in those long hours when He holds your eyes waking. Bring to Him your need of sleep. He who sent it like an angel-wing to Elijah in his weariness, and Peter in the hour of peril, when Herod had appointed him to death—He who slumbered when the waves were high, and the storm threatened to overwhelm the vessel—understands the deep benediction and comfort of sleep; therefore ask it at His hand in simple faith. While He withholds it let the shadows glow with thoughts of Him, let prayer and praise shine star-like through the gloom, and let the glory of God light up the ebon shade.

I have heard of one who was much astonished, in a darkened room, to see the words "Trust in the Lord," shining out clearly; this was a text in luminous paint, and its message seemed all the brighter because of surrounding blackness. There is no night, beloved, so long that daybreak never comes; every moment brings nearer the dawn, and the Master's eye can already see the shadows dispersing, and the rising of the sun. Will you not commit yourself to Him till, at His bidding, the shadows go? Night to poor heathen minds is fraught with terrors, for they imagine it peopled with evil spirits; but to the believing soul it has no fear, for the arms of God are strong and loving at midnight as at noon, and He seems to come closer than ever when all else is dark. O Thou whose brightness warms the inmost heart, let every weary one prove in the night watches—

"One glance of Thine creates a day!"

Wondrous blessings have been bestowed by the Almighty in the radiant night. "Ask what I shall give thee," said Jehovah to Solomon His chosen, when He came to him by night in a vision. Have *you* exhausted all your Father has to give? *Ask Him for something* in this golden opportunity of calm and quietude. What a night of heavenly succour was that wherein Jacob lay down aweary and beheld the shining ladder, and what brightness untold was his when long years had fled, and One wrestled with the traveller till the breaking of the day! Remembering how God has blessed His people through the darkness, seeking the treasures He has yet in store for His saints, wrestling with Him heart to heart, even the night shall be light about thee, gemmed with fadeless glories.

A Christian writer tells that in the hour of midnight, while the sleeping world lay round, his heart has been drawn heavenward by the music of the nightingale, thrilling through the stillness with rich melodies doubled and redoubled. But if we listen patiently, prayerfully, we shall hear music beyond this—the still small Voice that comforts us as with a mother's tender compassion, and reminds us, however lonely we seem amid the darkness, the Lord that keeps us does not slumber. We have hearkened to His teaching in the light, when we were strong and prosperous; but now He has lessons to impart to us that He can teach only through mist and shade. Is not the darkness radiant wherein our Counsellor is the Light of the world? There is a land of everlasting sunshine further on, where weary waiting times are known no more, and the Morning Star of Gladness is bright beyond our dreams. Further on, where the saints walk in white with Him who has made them more than conquerors over sin and sorrow, is the City Guthrie describes as "without griefs or graves;" there we shall give thanks for every step of the way the Good Shepherd led us, by day, by night, and we shall understand the meaning of darkness that seems to linger late. Till that eternal "afterward" we will patiently wait upon the Lord, safe in His abiding presence, at rest in His encircling love.

M. S. H.

[*From the Picture by* EMMA SQUIRE, *exhibited at the Royal Academy*, 1891.]

SINGING THE PSALMS OF DAVID.

THE GOSPEL IN THE OPEN AIR.

BY G. HOLDEN PIKE.

GOING TO THE SERVICE.

IN genial weather, and under otherwise favourable conditions, is it not a genuine treat to hear a good sermon out of doors, in the cool shade and on the grass? Then it seems to be an undoubted fact that open-air preaching is not only the most primitive mode of proclaiming the Gospel, but that many of the most memorable services ever held in connection with the Christian Church have been held beneath the blue sky. We think of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself speaking on the mountain-side; of the thousands who assembled at Pentecost to receive lasting blessings; of the preaching friars who went forth at the bidding of Wickliffe in the first grey dawn of the Reformation: and then of those great leaders who were the field preachers of the Revival in the last century. Some of the greatest open-air speakers of modern times have been preachers in Wales, where people seem to regard good sermons as the staff of their religious life. In our own day this old-time and very natural method of instructing the multitude has been most wholesomely revived by the Open Air Mission, which Mr. John Macgregor, or "Rob Roy," the adventurous tourist in many lands and on many waters, instituted in the middle of the century. That brotherhood, which has its members in all quarters of the globe, is now more than eleven hundred strong, and some of these can tell of very distinguished success in their labours. "Rob Roy" himself is now unhappily an invalid at Bournemouth, but in the days of his prime he preached with great effect in the streets of London, while he persuaded other young barristers of the Inns of Court to follow his example. Mr. Gawin Kirkham, the friend and colleague of this veteran, and secretary of the Open Air Mission, is also a notable exemplar in the art. Probably the most successful man in the field at this time, however, is the ex-Polytechnic lecturer, Mr. Charles Cook, who on fine Sunday afternoons can command a congregation of some thousands of persons in Hyde Park. We hear, too, of notable persons belonging to both Houses of Parliament lingering on the outskirts of the crowd.

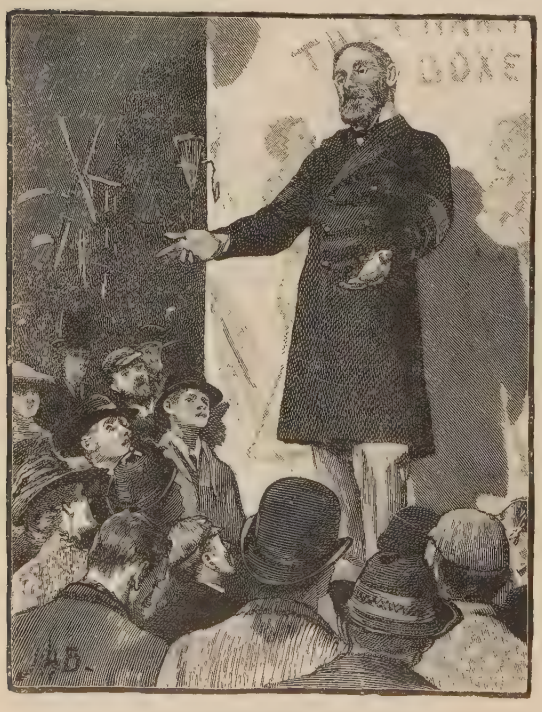
While the main part of the population of London never enters either church or chapel, it is self-evident that open-air preaching of the best kind is one of the wants of the day. The mistake to be avoided consists in thinking that anything will do for common people out of doors. The very opposite of this is the truth; for those who have to be attracted while they are passing, and held to the spot, need that the message given be of more than ordinary force. Those who have succeeded best in this work have been those who have most thoroughly prepared their addresses. Open-air preaching is one of the most useful services that can be rendered to the Church; but no greater mistake can be committed than to suppose that anyone will do for an open-air preacher. We have only to think of Wesley, of Whitefield, and of many others in our own day, to correct this notion: for the discourses which

such have given in fields, on village greens, or in churchyards, have been as carefully prepared as any others. There used to be a sylvan retreat in Oxfordshire, overhung with trees, which was called "Spurgeon's Cathedral;" and in former days this great preacher was accustomed to show a strong preference for the open air.

The open-air preacher who harbours enthusiasm for his work naturally shows a stronger liking for the country-side than for the crowded town; but at the same time he does not neglect London. In London, on Sundays more especially, it is not impossible for anyone who is master of his art to command a congregation. On the Sabbath morning, while the bells are ringing for public worship, there are certain street markets which attract vast assemblies, and at these the open-air preacher may test his mettle. The surroundings may be somewhat noisy, but the preacher who knows what he is about will not add to that; his message, if effectively given, will have a quieting influence. What has been done at Bird Fair, at Petticoat Lane, and at similar great centres of attraction, all adds to the interest of the annals of open-air preaching. It is not on such ground that 'prentice hands should exercise their gifts, but it is there that the veteran may win his trophies. Only remember what Whitefield said: "I can preach without a cassock; but I cannot preach without a character"; and there is no more fruitful camping-ground than London affords. In other large towns, including even those on the Continent, the preaching may become equally effective.

Thus, at Copenhagen, in May, 1890, a service was held in a street, and one man who desired to speak with the preacher after the address confessed to having been a drunkard as well as a freethinker. He led the preacher to his home for quiet conversation. He was first angry at hearing strong drink condemned, but now he repented of that, and told how something which had been said about the last day of a man's life seemed to take hold of him. He could not explain why a few words thus spoken should have affected him, but such was the fact. The preacher plainly declared to his new friend that Christ had touched his heart, and that it was his place to repent of sin and let the Saviour have possession of his whole being. Presently the group consisted of the man's wife, daughter, and two sons. This man became entirely changed; and he not only took his three children to the Sunday-school, but attended himself.

Another striking example of the conversion of a prodigal was that of a young man at the East End of London, who had had a business left him, as well as a sum of £10,000. Instead of making the best of things, he took to drinking, and sank down into a deplorable condition of beggary and destitution. Such was he when first met with, when the preacher spoke kindly to him after the service, gave him a shilling and a supper, and wrote to his widowed mother. Eight months afterwards the same preacher was accosted in the Commercial Road by a respectably dressed young man, who introduced himself as being the same that had formerly been befriended. "Quite true: it is not the same; for God has changed my heart, and I have never tasted the drink since that memorable Sabbath evening when I met you in my deplorable condition," he said, in reply to his friend's inquiring gaze. "I am in a good situation," he added, "and by choice I live in the East End, because here I can better serve the Master whom through your instrumentality I found." That young man told his story to the people at a mission-hall; and thus it happens that those who are won become instrumental in winning others. A very similar case was that of a young commercial traveller whose temptation it was to drink too much, and who had been spending a Sunday evening at a public-house, when he was attracted by a preacher in the street. That man became a changed character, a member of the Church, and an active agent in the work of reclaiming others.



PREACHING FROM A SHOW.

The racecourses of the country do not at first sight appear to be promising ground for open-air preaching practice; but even these have not proved disappointing to those who have utilised them for this purpose. There are many who think that anything sacred must necessarily be out of place on a racecourse; but, at all events, it will be readily admitted that those who frequent racecourses are generally low enough down to need the Gospel above all things. Racing and betting must together represent a terrible evil when their following is such as we have ourselves come in contact with—men whose foul mouths poured forth blasphemy and filth as a native language. The greatest throng of all is to be seen at Epsom; and the ribald fair, as we have ourselves

ON THE VILLAGE GREEN.

seen it on the Sabbath before the Derby-day, was an extraordinary scene of riot and buffoonery to be allowed in a nominally Christian country. This profanation is not now allowed; but in other days we have accompanied the preachers on to the greensward on a Sunday afternoon, to notice how the Gospel could attract a congregation, even amid such scenes. It is quite a mistake to suppose that these people are not, in many instances, quite aware of their lost condition. "I've seen twenty-five Derbys, and I don't think that I shall see another," once remarked one of the old hands. And he then presently added, "There are only two things I want now—the grace of God in my heart and a coffin." Even more telling was a certain betting-man's own confession, which needs to be given in his own words:—

"Some time back I was a betting-man—a reckless sort of man, not caring for anything except to get money, either for drink or betting. I had been on the racecourse, and had lost £165, and came away penniless. Wandering from the course into Epsom town, I saw a mob of people, and went to see what was the matter. I found that it was a preacher of the Open Air Mission who was speaking. It seemed as though God spoke through this man to me, and showed me that I was a lost and ruined sinner. My whole sinful life came up before me, and I thought to myself, 'If I die, I shall be lost'; and I began to think what I could do. As I listened further to the preacher, I found I could do nothing; but that God, in His infinite love, had given His Son to die for me. St. John iii. 16 was repeated, with other texts, till I felt I could stand it no longer, so I prayed God to have mercy upon me as I stood in the crowd, and I there and then accepted Christ as my Saviour. And oh, what a blessed peace came to my poor troubled heart! I had lost £165, but I went home richer than I came, for I had found Christ to be my Saviour. Since then I have been a happy man; my wife and children are happy too; and, although the devil tempts me, God gives me grace to overcome."

In connection with such a confession as this, take the timely rebuke which a betting-man once gave to certain of his comrades of the baser sort who were disposed to mock a preacher. "I am a betting-man, and live by it," remarked this man in his sternest tones. "I attend most of the races in England, and also in France. I have frequently listened to these men preaching God's Word, but never have insulted them, and hope I never shall." He then went on to advise them that if they cared not for such things, it would be better for them to pass on, as there was no compulsion for anyone to stand and listen. "One thing I believe," he added; "when you and I come to die, we shall be glad to send for such men, though we may mock them now."

The open-air preacher will thus find sympathy in his work even on the racecourse; and even in cases wherein he is more directly opposed he will have the satisfaction of knowing that his actions and motives are still admired by those who will not openly express their approval. Talk of racing as an innocent pastime! It is becoming more and more a demoralising vice; and probably the evil effects are more apparent among those who do not attend any of the meetings. Thirty years ago clergymen could often be found on the

ground; but we trust that that is not now so frequent an occurrence as formerly. In 1861 a gentleman who knew the city well remarked, "I don't believe you will find a man in Oxford who will raise his voice against the races."

At the various fairs which are still held in the country the open-air preacher will still take his stand. Except in Russia and a few towns on the Continent, the golden age of fairs is past; and, as many will remember, some had degenerated into such scenes of licence that they were abolished as a nuisance. One preacher, accustomed to frequent fairs, testified that a surprising number of religious backsliders were found at such places. There, too, as common showmen or otherwise, you might meet with those fallen stars who are always a mystery and a perplexity to those who seek to raise the lapsed classes. The fairs which lingered until a few years ago in the suburbs of London were largely attended by the lower classes; and, speaking of one of these, Mr. Gawin Kirkham, secretary of the Open Air Mission, once wrote to us: "Charlton Fair was the abomination of abominations. Not only was the devil personified, but death also. I have seen a man carried on a stretcher to personify a dead man. I once noticed the powerful effect of reciting Scripture at this fair. It was Sunday evening, and a lovely moonlight one, too; but the light was not sufficient to read by, so I repeated from the stage of a show the story of the Prodigal Son, amidst profound silence."

As regards modern times, some of the greatest results of open-air preaching have been won in Wales. The preachers, such as those to whom we refer, seem to be a product peculiar to the country, and their successes were won among a people who value preaching as they value nothing else. Who that has ever been present at a summer meeting of a Welsh Association can ever forget the impression produced? Because the people drawn together were too many for any building to accommodate, the meetings were necessarily held in the open air, and refreshments of the most substantial kind were provided by the townspeople, free to all comers. Then three services, each having two sermons of a liberal length, were provided, some of the discourses being in Welsh and others in English. As the preacher warmed with his subject the sea of upturned faces was a sight to behold; and one reason why the Welsh rear such good preachers is that the people themselves are such appreciative hearers.

When, however, we speak of the great preachers of Wales, we refer to the past; for at the present time the Principality has no orator comparable to those devout and gifted men whose life-work has imparted an interest to the annals of the native pulpit it could never otherwise have possessed.

In the time of Christmas Evans (1766—1838), there was a tendency to favour too protracted services; but the distinguished preacher himself had the sagacity to remark, "Beware of long sermons as well as of long prayers." He did not even harbour any great liking for the custom of giving more than one good sermon at each service. "We do not read that, on the day of Pentecost, Peter, James, and John preached after each other," he remarked; "but Peter, 'one of the Twelve,' delivered that successful sermon." At the same time Christmas Evans was never inclined to drive the people from the ground when they showed a disposition to linger in the camp-meeting through the cool summer night. "I frequently preached out of doors at nightfall, and the singing and praying would continue until daybreak," we find him saying. And that was characteristic of the times, as well as of the man himself. Perhaps we shall not wonder at a service taking this remarkable turn when we take account of what Mr. Stephen has to say about the impression produced by a sermon by Christmas Evans:—

"The day was very sultry, and two good brethren were to preach before him, the second in English. The latter was long, or seemed to be long; and when Mr. Evans was to begin his discourse the people seemed wearied and jaded. His subject was the return of the Prodigal Son. As he proceeded, one man, who had sat down on the grass, got up here, another there; the people closed in together about the platform, looked hard at the preacher, nodded approvingly to each other, wondered, felt, wept, wept aloud, at once with joy and sorrow; powerful emotions were produced that continued through all the remaining services, and remained in many hearts for their everlasting salvation." Christmas Evans had many imitators, but, of course, none of them could reach those high excellencies which made him such a notable reformer of his country. We know of one eminent English preacher who so far won the approval of an elderly dame that she thought he might have passed muster in the same reckoning

"He led the preacher to his home."—*p.* 164.

as the famous Welshman if he had, like Evans, possessed but one eye.

Great as he was, Christmas Evans was not the greatest of the open-air preachers of Wales, however, for that distinction seems to be accorded to Daniel Rowlands (1713—1790), the friend of Whitefield, and whose chief station was at Llangeitho, near the Mynydd Back Hills, not far from Carmarthen. On Communion Sunday, when thousands would be gathered together from all parts of the Principality, the scene was indeed wonderful to behold. We hear of one man, whose home was over a hundred miles distant, who walked to the service eleven times. Great numbers of others also walked long distances, carrying supplies with them, and drinking at running streams by the way. Whitefield testifies that at seven in the morning he has seen ten thousand people at a service, "all ready to leap for joy." The wonder to us is that such a work should have been opposed by anyone; but a century and a half ago such outdoor preaching was more or less a service of danger. On one occasion when Rowlands was preaching near the sea in Cardiganshire, "a company of ruffians came upon them, armed with guns and staves, and beat them unmercifully; but they escaped without much hurt." It is significantly added, "The ruffians were set on by a gentleman of the neighbourhood." In other words, many of the "gentlemen" of that day had very much of the "rough" element in their nature. There was a power in the preaching of such men, however, which the powers of earth or hell could not resist. The effect of the preaching was as wonderful as the preaching itself. From being a godless neighbourhood, the country around the scene of Rowlands' ministry became remarkable for there being no house wherein family prayer was not observed.

Similar results appear to have followed the preaching of John Elias, early in the present century. By one sermon, an hour and forty minutes in length, he effectively abolished the Sunday hiring fair at Rhuddlan. The astonished traffickers never forgot that discourse on labouring six days and resting on the seventh. They never ventured to meet again. Thus Wales, perhaps, owes more to its open-air preachers than to any other class who have laboured for the benefit of their country.

THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS.

BY FAY AXTENS.

CHAPTER IX.

FELICIA now felt able to breathe more freely. She had been anxious that Mr. Lestrange should not know of her brother's unexpected return until she had seen him.

Fear lest he had caught a glimpse of her visitor and guessed his identity had been the cause of her discomposure, but Anthony's evident ignorance that anything unusual had happened allayed her concern. She watched him down the garden path with a heart beating almost to suffocation, for the moment she had anticipated so long, and with such mingled feelings of desire and dread, had come at last.

She found her brother in the dining-room, sitting on the edge of the table, with his feet on a chair, smoking a cigar. How well she remembered the reckless, careless attitude, the bold, defiant poise of the head, the downward droop of the heavily fringed eyelids!

He had evidently made himself quite at home, for the cellaret was open. Master Richard having found it too much trouble to close it again after helping himself to what he required.

His feet came down off the chair, and his cigar was laid aside with a great show of alacrity as Felicia entered.

"Well, Floy," said he, greeting his sister by the old pet name always used in the days of their childhood, "you didn't exactly expect *me*, I suppose. I beg ten thousand pardons for interrupting you. I wouldn't have come in for worlds if I 'd known."

"Why should you not, Dick?" said Felicia, returning his hearty embrace with sisterly warmth (sisters' embraces are sometimes rather Arctic, by the way, but Felicia's were not). "You did not interrupt me at all, but I was startled just at first."

"You looked scared, just about," said he, with a laugh. "'T was a shame, 'pon my word, to come in all of a hop and catch you like that. What 's become of the young man?"

"Mr. Lestrange?" said Felicia, colouring with vexation at her brother's pointed allusions. "He has gone. He is staying at the Manor, and came down with a message from Lady Lawley, that's all."

"Oh, all right, my dear; don't trouble to explain," he returned coolly; "it's no odds to me. I 'm a good deal more concerned at present to know what 's for dinner. I suppose you still keep to the time-honoured one o'clock. Is the governor at home?"

"No," said Felicia, wincing a little at the unfamiliar title. "He has gone to Greychester to-day. He won't be back before six o'clock."

"Oh, then we won't wait. Suppose you just ring the bell, Floy. I should like to interview Martha myself, for, really, the dinner question is one of the deepest importance to me at present."

"I will see about it at once," said Felicia, hurrying out of the room; for she had a vague dread that Martha might not, on such short notice, be able to

meet her brother's demands, and she much preferred giving the orders herself.

The news that Mr. Richard had come home caused great excitement in the kitchen; but the unusual event served to stimulate rather than to retard the activity of Martha and her handmaids, and Felicia soon had the satisfaction of seeing dinner served in a manner that suited even her brother's fastidious tastes.

"Upon my word, Floy, I can't help thinking about it; your face was a study," said he presently, laughing aloud at the remembrance of it. "Anyone could see I was an unexpected visitor."

"And yet you are not altogether unexpected, Dick," said she. "I heard you were in Greychester a few weeks ago."

"I in Greychester? Whoever told you that told a confounded lie!" cried Richard, flashing a dark look from under his eyes. "Consult your commonsense, child. How could I have been in Greychester when the *Connaught* only came into port yesterday morning? Haven't I just told you that a fortnight ago I was in New York?"

"I did not mean to discredit your statement, Dick," remarked Felicia mildly. "I only told you what I heard."

"What business have these meddlesome old fools saying such things about me, I should like to know? If ever I heard anyone making such iniquitous assertions I'd thrash him within an inch of his life."

"I don't see why you should call it an 'iniquitous assertion,'" said Felicia, surprised at Richard's outburst. "There is no harm in it that I know of."

"Well, it isn't true, that's all. Who did you hear it from?"

"Someone who thought he saw you; but, of course, it was a mistake. The gentleman in question had a lady with him. I wondered whether you were married."

Richard bestowed a very searching glance upon his sister before replying.

"I should think you might have known it was a trumped-up tale," said he derisively. "What do *I* want with a wife, who am always out at elbows with Fortune? Much as I can do to keep myself and cut a respectable figure. I'm not such a fool as to saddle myself with a wife."

"People sometimes marry rich wives," observed his sister.

"So they do, Floy my dear, and they sometimes have to knuckle under, too, in consequence, which don't suit Richard Hardy. Give me a little, with liberty, and peace, and quietness."

"Well, anyhow, Dick, I'm glad it's *not* the case," said Felicia, conscious of having a great load taken off her mind. Dick single was far less of a responsibility than Dick married would have been.

"Oh, well, you can keep your mind easy on that score. Do you think I'm much altered?"

"In one way, yes," said Felicia, examining him critically. "You look older. I think your beard makes you look different."

"Oh, yes—stupid institution. I've only grown it lately. Think I shall do away with it; I don't like it. It did very well over the water, but I don't care about it in London. I don't want to look ten years older than I am. I'm only twenty-five, you know, Floy."

"Twenty-eight you mean, Dick. You are five years older than I."

"Well, then, twenty-eight; but you know I hate to be contradicted," said Richard, with a flash of the old domineering spirit. "A few years more or less make no difference: but look here, you needn't go telling everybody what an antiquated old gentleman I look with a beard. You needn't say anything about it—do you understand?—for I shan't show myself in society till I'm a little more presentable."

Felicia said nothing. In the old days, when Dick chose to lay down the law in respect to Felicia's speech or action, she never attempted argument or expostulation. She invariably took refuge in silence; and she did the same now.

"And who is Lestrange, I should like to know?" said Richard presently, "and what is he doing up at the Manor?"

Felicia explained in detail the events of the last few weeks.

"Dear me! they seem to be quite gay. Look here, Floy, I don't think it would be so bad if I were to come down and spend a week or two with you, eh? I've a great notion to look up some of my old friends again. Do you think the governor would have anything to say against it?"

"You had better ask him, Dick; but I wish you wouldn't speak of father in that way."

"In what way, child?"

"As if he were not the good, kind father he is," she retorted, with more than usual feeling—"as if he did not care for you, and were not anxious to see you."

"Bless the child, I don't want to disparage the governor's good qualities. Who ever thought of such a thing? And as to being fond of me, well, I believe I'm conceited enough to credit it, after all. But there, never mind—we won't have a scene. You just talk to him quietly about it, there's a good girl, and drop me a line. I'll give you my address." And he began rummaging in his pockets for a card.

"But, Dick, you are going to stay?"

"Nothing of the sort, my dear. I'm off in about an hour. If you'll just give me the time-table I can tell you to a minute how long you have further to enjoy my society."

Felicia was most anxious he should stay and see his father, and tried very hard to prevail upon him to do so. She knew how vexed and disappointed Mr. Hardy would be; but arguments were of no avail. Richard had already made up his mind, and nothing could turn him from his purpose.

"I must be in London to-night," he insisted; "but, if my father extends his parental arms to me, I shall come down, never fear, in a week or two. Don't breathe a word to any living soul that I've been here to-day, Floy. You can keep those chattering tongues in the kitchen quiet, I suppose," carelessly tossing a couple of sovereigns on the table. "I don't want it gossiped all over the village; I prefer to make my appearance with *éclat*. But you can tell my good

friends up at the Manor you have heard from me, and that you expect me shortly."

It was not until Richard had actually taken his departure, and Felicia was left alone, that she felt herself able at all to grasp the situation. At first, it seemed almost incredible that her brother had really come and gone; but those two shining golden coins, lying just where Richard had flung them, testified to the reality of all that had happened within the last few hours. These coins themselves were as much a cause of wonderment as anything possibly could have been, for, though Felicia was pretty well acquainted with the manner in which money found its way *into* Richard's pockets, she had not much practical experience of how it found its way *out*.

It was evident that Richard was at present in no want of money, and that it was not pecuniary embarrassment that had led him to visit the parental abode. Conjectures on this and other questions in connection with Richard's home-coming furnished matter for much thought and for long converse between Felicia and her father that night; but, tired as he was, before he went to bed Mr. Hardy wrote an affectionate letter of invitation and welcome to the unrepentant prodigal.

The news that Richard Hardy was expected shortly was duly conveyed to the Manor, and was received by Sir John with unfeigned pleasure, by Lady Lawley with a languid interest, and by Will with an unmistakable lifting of the eyebrows.

"Dick's movements are a mystery to me," said he, as soon as he could find an opportunity of speaking confidentially to Felicia. "I could swear that was he I saw in Greychester that day. It was the day before Rosamond—Miss Rosamond, I mean—came down; do you remember?"

"Yes," said Felicia, trying to look unconcerned. "But I think you must have been mistaken, for Dick says he only landed in England last week."

"That's the queer part of it," said Lawley. "However, I've said nothing about it to anyone, and, under the circumstances, I think I had better not."

"Can't you get your brother to come down in time for the garden-party next week?" said Rosamond, as soon as she heard the news. "Do ask him; because, as the invitations are not yet sent out, I daresay Lady Lawley will postpone it for a day or two. I am quite anxious to see your brother, Felicia, for I fancy I met him in Rome last winter. I wondered all along where I had heard your name before."

Felicia could not resist a scornful little smile, for she divined that Rosamond was bent on fresh conquest.

"I will ask him if you like—that is, if Lady Lawley wishes," said Felicia. "But I do not think that he will be able to come. He mentioned a week or two."

"What a demure, prim little thing you are!" cried Rosamond, flinging her arms round Felicia, with a merry laugh. "You don't half know how to get your own way. Write him an affectionate, effusive letter. Tell him we are all dying to see him, that we can't possibly do without him, and that, if he doesn't come, we shall think him the most inconsiderate, hard-hearted creature in the world."

As Lady Lawley assented to Rosamond's proposal, Felicia could not do less than write to her brother, and, much to her surprise, received a reply by the following post, saying he would make it convenient to go to Carsthorpe on the following Wednesday, the day before the date originally fixed for Rosamond's garden-party.

Rosamond was in the gayest spirits. She always showed the greatest interest in every entertainment got up for her benefit, entering with zest into all the details, which she suggested and arranged according to her own Continental ideas. On this occasion, she seemed even more than ever to throw her whole soul into the execution of the plans, devoting all her energies towards making the entertainment a success.

Felicia's presence at the Manor was constantly in request, though for what reason or with what design, it was impossible to say, for her opinion was seldom seriously consulted, and her advice certainly never followed when it ran counter to Rosamond's predetermination. It was true, Felicia cared very little to offer any opinion, for she had never made the art of pleasure a serious study, and, indeed, did not care enough for amusement to devote much time or thought to its cultivation. So far from becoming engrossed in the whirl of these unaccustomed gaieties, she was often really glad that home duties, which she neither could nor would neglect, obliged her to make excuses for absence. In spite of the effusive affection which Rosamond apparently felt for her, Felicia's position was rather that of an outsider, dragged in when she would have preferred to stand aloof and look on.

CHAPTER X.

The morning of the eventful day rose clear and bright. Rosamond's energies had converted the place into something like Fairyland, and, as she stood out on the veranda, and looked on the preparations which were being made for the afternoon's festivities, it seemed to her that the sun beamed gracious approval on the proceedings.

"Not a drop of rain, Anthony, you see, and not a cloud in the sky. We must certainly have the awning and the punkahs on the lawn. It is going to be very hot."

"Yes," said Anthony absently.

"It will be nicest when the sun has gone down. Then we are to have the lanterns lighted, you know, and music on the lawn. You see they are putting up the orchestra over there among the trees."

"Oh, that is for the band, is it? I wondered whether you were going to have a troupe of Christy Minstrels."

"Well, we *are* going to have amateur minstrels, for I am going to perform on my guitar, and Will has promised some banjo songs, besides lots of other people who have been asked to bring their instruments. I hope all the stupid people will go early—people that can't do anything, I mean, and only stand about in the way."

"How soon am *I* to be dismissed?" asked Anthony, rather bitterly.

"As soon as you begin to make yourself disagreeable," retorted Rosamond sharply; but she atoned for it a moment after by putting both arms round his neck, and standing on tiptoe to kiss him. Such a spontaneous mark of affection was somewhat rare, and Anthony valued it all the more for that reason. He held her closely in his arms for a moment or two, stroking the golden head that rested on his shoulder, and looking down on the beautiful *insouciante* face with a new warm feeling at his heart.

"Darling, you do love me, don't you?" he whispered, forgetting in the happiness of the moment all the coldness and reserve that had lately grown up between them.

"Do you think I don't?" she murmured, hiding her face from his searching, tender gaze.

"No, my dearest, I don't doubt your love," he said gravely. "And yet I should like to hear you say, 'Anthony, I love you,' just once more. Will you, darling?"

Rosamond made no answer, but kept her face turned away.

"Let me look into your eyes, dear," said her lover, trying gently to lift her head. "If you will not say it, let me read it for myself"; but still Rosamond resolutely kept her head on his shoulder.

A chill feeling stole over Anthony. "Rosamond, why do you turn your head away? Why won't you look at me? You *must* answer me—indeed you must!"

He spoke with a passionate energy that Rosamond could not withstand. She lifted her head with a quick, defiant movement, and flashed a look into his eyes. Then, to his utter surprise, she broke away from him, flung herself into a chair, and burst into tears.

This unexpected incident in so promising a *tête-à-tête* considerably disconcerted Anthony. Immediately he was on his knees beside her, full of self-reproach, endeavouring to discover the cause of her distress.

Rosamond, however, would not easily be soothed, and it was not until the voice of Will Lawley, humming a tune, warned them of his near approach, that she consented to lay aside her handkerchief and assume her natural composure.

Will gave a very keen glance at Rosamond's tear-stained eyes as he entered the room, which made poor Anthony feel very uncomfortable, but did not greatly disconcert Rosamond. She was one of those people who always look additionally lovely in distress, and she was not unconscious of the fact that wet lashes, flushed cheeks, and tumbled hair, so far from spoiling, rather enhanced, her beauty. It gave to her face an appealing, pathetic expression, which was sure to find its way to the masculine heart.

"I beg your pardon. Do I intrude?" said Will, flashing an indignant look at Anthony.

"Not at all, Mr. Lawley," said Rosamond, rising and going to the window again. "We heard you coming. Anthony and I were just going into the garden. I want to see how they have arranged the tennis-ground."

"They are awaiting your final instructions," said Will; "that is what I have come for. Shall we go down now?"

They all went out into the garden together, but, on the way to the tennis-ground, they met Lady Lawley, who claimed Anthony's attention, and Will and Rosamond were left alone.

"Has anything occurred to vex you, Miss Rosamond?" he asked anxiously. "What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, thank you," said Rosamond.

"But indeed there must be something. You looked so distressed; and you had been crying—I am sure you had."

"Nothing much is the matter," she replied. "Pray don't ask me questions."

"But I can't bear to see you unhappy."

"I don't see what difference it can make to you."

"Oh, don't you!" he replied quickly; "do not say that, Rosamond, for you know better!"

"Mr. Lawley, who gave you permission to call me Rosamond?"

"I beg your pardon; I did not mean to vex you. Please forgive me, and say what is making you unhappy."

"It is really nothing," said Rosamond, smiling plaintively; "only, whenever I make up my mind to enjoy myself particularly, something always happens to make me miserable. It *is* rather hard, isn't it?"

"Ah! then Lestrange has been saying something. Is there anything he objects to?"

"Oh, no! Poor, dear Anthony! it isn't his fault at all. You must not think he is always teasing me. He does not object to anything. He always likes me to have my own way."

Will looked rather sceptical on this point, but said no more. He only drew down the corners of his mouth, and, plucking a rose, vented his suppressed wrath by tearing off its petals and strewing them in the path as he walked.

Half the county had been bidden to Rosamond's garden-party. All the families of note for miles round, a sprinkling of professional people, and a proportionate share of "nobodies," responded to the invitations, and soon the lawn was thronged with bevies of smiling and gaily dressed people, some of whom were to meet for the first time the beautiful heiress of whom everyone was talking.

Felicia and her brother were among the last to arrive. Rosamond's quick glance caught the first glimpse of them, and the absent, rather anxious expression, which a keen observer might have detected in her eyes, gave way to one of studied composure and indifference.

Richard Hardy, in irreproachable costume, clean-shaven chin and company manners, presented a rather different appearance from the loose, untidy, carelessly dressed figure that Felicia had discovered sitting on the dining-room table. He had the air of a well-dressed, easy-mannered man of the world, who was accustomed to good society, and who knew nothing of the reverses of fortune, or the shady experiences which sometimes go along with them.

Always a handsome and striking figure, he looked to-day more than usually prepossessing, and Felicia, as she walked beside him, felt almost ashamed of herself for an inward wincing at the glances of curiosity cast at them by one and the other. Whether or not Richard noticed these glances, it was impossible

to say; he conducted himself with cool independence, as if he had still a character to lose, had not half-broken his father's heart and disgraced himself in the eyes of respectable society.

But whatever opinion the world entertained of him, it was soon apparent that the beautiful heiress regarded him in a favourable light, for her surmise that she had met Mr. Hardy before turned out to be correct, and various reminiscences of their acquaintance in Rome resulted in establishing Richard's position as an honoured guest at Lawley Manor. Certain people, who had before looked askance at him, began to think that perhaps he had turned over a new leaf, and old acquaintances, who had at first held aloof for fear of Mrs. Grundy, now came forward to welcome him home again. In short, Rosamond's gracious patronage made Dick Hardy the hero of the afternoon.

He shared the honours with one other person—little Bertram, who flitted about like an earth-born cherub, bringing sunshine and smiles wherever he went. The tiny, prattling voice, the innocent blue eyes, and sweet, confiding ways of the little child brought kindred souls into harmony, and made a bond of union amongst some who, not knowing one another, at first felt strange and ill at ease. This subtle influence the presence of children, in greater or less measure, always exercises. Rosamond, who was keenly conscious of Bertram's defective grammar and plebeian tastes, would have preferred keeping him in the nursery on this occasion, but Lady Lawley had become very much attached to him, and would not allow him to be absent. Both she and Sir John were almost as proud of him as if he had been their own child; and Bert, who was of a very impulsive and affectionate disposition, warmly reciprocated their attachment. The first place in his heart, however, was reserved for Felicia, for whom he had conceived such an instantaneous and ardent affection.

When he first saw Felicia walking with Dick, he was seized with a fit of jealousy, and refused to go near her. He was standing by Lady Lawley at the time, but, instead of running at once to greet her as usual, he hid his face in Lady Lawley's lap, and, on being pressed for an explanation, declared that "he hated that man." It was in vain that Dick tried to make friends with him, lifting him up in his arms and endeavouring to amuse him by showing him the works of his watch: all the gratitude he showed was by endangering the safety of it by his kicks and struggles to be set down again. This was extraordinary behaviour on the part of Bertram, who was usually so tractable and gentle; but, as he was known to take violent dislikes as well as likes, it was thought best to take no notice of him.

Anthony, who had not witnessed, but heard of this little incident, feeling rather vexed and ashamed of his ward, hastened to apologise to Felicia for this uncivil behaviour to her brother.

"What am I to do with the poor child, Miss Hardy?" he asked appealingly. "You see how it is: no one has any real control over him at times. He is the victim of conflicting influences, and there is no one to take him in hand and to train him properly. Lady Lawley is so kind to him, I fear she will spoil him with over-indulgence; while old Mrs. Deborah is too severe and straitlaced—she threatens him with the most fearful punishments for very trivial offences. The other day he came to me with very minute inquiries about eagles. He seemed most anxious to know all about their appearance and habits—whether they would eat spiders, and if they ever lived in chimneys. At last I discovered that Mrs. Deborah had told him the eagles would pick out his eyes if he spoke disrespectfully to her; and the poor child had cried himself to sleep several nights when the wind howled in the chimneys, his conscience having pricked him because he said Mrs. Deborah's cap was like a cauliflower."

"Poor child!" said Felicia. "What a shame! Why don't you change Mrs. Deborah?"

"I would do so, but she has always been with him, and is thoroughly trustworthy," said Anthony. "If I make a change, I should prefer it to be a thorough change. He really ought to be with a lady—a rather young lady, I think—and, as I occupy chambers in London, such an arrangement as I should like would not be possible."

Felicia looked thoughtful. There were questions she would have liked to ask, but did not care to. She had often thought it strange that Rosamond very rarely spoke to her of Anthony, and never of their marriage, although she was always ready to confide her emotions and experiences. Indeed, whenever any allusion was made to their nuptials, she always laughed it off, evidently treating it as an event of the future.

"What does Rosamond advise?" at length she asked bluntly.

Anthony hesitated. "I have hardly spoken to her on the subject," he said presently. "You see, I want her visit here to be as pleasant as possible; and, after all, there is plenty of time to settle it. Only, sometimes, Miss Hardy, I get anxious about the boy. Early associations and impressions have a lasting effect on the character, and I don't like to think Bertram's training is being in any way neglected."

Anthony and Felicia were standing a little apart from the rest of the company, who, like them, were looking on at the archery. At this juncture he caught Rosamond's glance as she paused a moment before making ready her bow to shoot. She looked very lovely in a gown of soft rose-colour with a large white hat, that cast a fitful shadow over her vivacious and lovely face, and on the graceful outline of the white slender neck. Her loose sleeves, falling backwards, showed to advantage her white, rounded arms as she raised the bow. It was no wonder that wherever she went she attracted a group of admirers, who waited on her every word and movement.

The glance she gave him reminded Anthony that his place was at her side; and, as Felicia was at that moment taken possession of by an elderly lady, their conversation came to an abrupt close. But as Mr. Lestrange stood watching the shooting, and taking his part in the gay banter that was going on, his glance went back every now and then to the graceful, white-robed girl, with the air of stately dignity and gentle, thoughtful face, who sat patiently listening

to the voluble talk of her companion, and the feeling of sympathy which had made that morning at the Rectory so pleasant, again, in a vague sort of way, took possession of him.

CHAPTER XI.

THAT night, when the golden harvest moon, rising above a bank of fleecy, silver-edged clouds, climbed slowly and majestically up the opal sky, and looked down on the gaily lighted lawn—when the sound of the string-instruments mingled in dreamy melodious strains, that woke an echo in the slumberous trees, and lulled to sleep again the birds who had waked with a drowsy chirrup—two of the party stole away into the twilight of a certain shady walk, lighted only by the many-coloured lanterns, festooned on the thickly growing branches.

Arm in arm, they passed almost in silence down the dimly lighted walk, past other shadowy figures that this evening haunted this secluded retreat, till they came to an opening in the brushwood, scarcely noticeable in the dusk, but too well known to one at least of them to be mistaken. Down this narrow path they disappeared, and, after pursuing its winding course for a little distance, found themselves in an open space, where stood an old sundial. To the same carved oaken seat where Anthony and Rosamond had sat that summer morning but a few weeks back, the two silent figures made their way.

Here were no lanterns or lamps, but the moonlight, streaming down through the exuberant foliage, gleamed upon the dishevelled cupids in their shady nooks, and lay in chequered bars upon the carpet of velvet moss. It shone down on the two as they emerged from the dark brushwood, tingeing with pale radiance the delicate pink draperies of the girl, casting a faint halo about the burnished gold of her hair, and lighting with an additional brilliancy the blue depths of her lovely eyes. She seated herself in an attitude of unstudied ease and grace, her head bent slightly forward, her jewelled hands playing with her fan.

Her companion, leaning forward, rested his square chin on his hand, and fixed his bold, unrestrained gaze on her beautiful face.

For some moments neither spoke: they only looked at each other; he, in ardent and unchecked admiration, she with an expression half-defiant, yet not wholly displeased.

"The same little Rosamond," he said, at last breaking the silence, "bewitching and beautiful as ever. What an age it seems since I had a chance of speaking to you!"

"You have not forgotten how to flatter, Richard. It's only about three weeks since you saw me," said she, speaking as if she feared her voice would be heard.

He laughed low, and laid his hand caressingly on her arm.

"You knew I should come?"

"Yes, of course," she replied nervously. "I always expect to have my wishes attended to. Did Felicia give it as a message from me?"

"Not exactly. I guessed it was Queen Rosamond's behest. Poor little Floy! I knew *she* wasn't over-anxious about it."

"Do you think she suspects anything?"

"What about?"

"About us—that is, about our—our knowing each other."

"Or about this?" he asked, lifting her hand and kissing it. She drew it away, with a passionate gesture, at which he laughed again—an easy, careless laugh, as if he were accustomed to be so rebuffed.

"Not more than you have told her. I have been as silent as the grave. But mind you, Rosamond, Floy's pretty sharp; you mustn't suppose that, because she never pries into other people's business, she goes about with her eyes shut. Wasn't it annoying! Some fool saw me that day at Greychester, and told Floy. I had to tell a white lie or two to get out of it."

"Oh, Richard!" cried Rosamond, starting up, with a look of fear, "who was it? Did he see me too? Oh dear! we are betrayed! And Anthony—what will he say?"

"My dear child, calm yourself," said Richard, coolly; "we could not possibly have been seen together. You'd have heard of it before this if we had; and you know we only had a short time together. We should not have had that, should we, had it not been for that tiresome Claydon? What's more to the point is, did the person see *him?* Lestrange is on the look-out in *that* direction, I know."

"Anthony is more determined than ever!" said Rosamond, in a low voice, scarcely seeming to notice that Richard had taken her hand. "He will never let the matter drop."

Richard looked at her steadily for a few moments.

"How much longer are you going to wear this little trinket?" he asked suddenly, laying his fingers on Rosamond's engagement ring as if he meant to take it off. She tried to snatch her hand away, but he held it firmly.

"Loose my hand, Richard. How dare you? I shall wear it as long as I please. If you threaten me, I will tell Anthony everything."

"You will tell *everybody* everything, if you speak so loudly," said Richard, letting go her hand, and flinging himself back with an air of careless indifference.

He saw he had made a mistake, and felt annoyed, as he usually did, in the face of opposition.

"Do not be angry, Richard."

"I am not angry, my dear child, but I think it's a pity you should excite yourself so. We need not attract more attention than is necessary."

Rosamond tossed her head with a defiant air.

"Yes, that style of thing suits you very well, Rosamond!" said he, surveying her with looks of suppressed passion. "You are very beautiful, or I would not risk so much to serve you, especially when I may not so much as kiss your hand in return."

She did not answer, but sat still, looking on the ground. She was thinking of Anthony, who trusted her so implicitly, and a sharp pang of regret seized her that she deserved his confidence so little. She was thinking, too, how much was implied in Richard's words that he had done much to serve her, and a feeling of fear and dread that he would some day—how

soon she knew not—claim a reward, came home to her.

"There, never mind," said Richard presently. "I must be content to look at you, I suppose. No one will raise any objection to that, at any rate; and if at any time I should forget myself and dare to touch this lovely golden hair, you will forgive me, won't you? You see, I've always been used to have my own way about things; but you're such a little witch, it would be a wonder indeed if you could not tame me down. You ought to have seen how these old fossils looked me up and down, when I walked in among 'em this afternoon. You might have thought I was a wild beast just out of its cage, instead of nothing more than a poor black sheep. If they thought Dick Hardy cared a jot for *them*, they were very much mistaken; but 't wasn't likely he was going to point out the lodestar that brought him down in these benighted parts. But, my dear," he went on, rousing himself, "we shall have them all after us in full cry, if we stop here much longer. You must give me another song, Rosamond—I can't let you off that."

"It was soon apparent that the beautiful heiress regarded him in a favourable light."—*p.* 171.

"Well, presently, Richard," she said, flattered into her usual complacency; "but you have had two already, you know. Perhaps I will try a duet with Will."

"A word about Will," said Richard; "you must mind and not weave *too* many snares about his

guileless head. He 's a very impressionable youth, you know."

"What nonsense!" cried Rosamond, with a pretty assumption of incredulity. "You seem to think everyone is going to fall in love with me." And rising, she drew her shawl round her, and stood before him, waiting motionless like a white statue, while the shimmering moonlight floated round about her.

Richard, who did not dare linger, rose also, and, she placing her hand on his arm, they went away together, and soon afterwards mingled again amongst the gay throng without having excited any suspicion as to their absence.

"Dick Hardy seems much improved," said Lady Lawley to her husband that night. "I confess I *did* feel rather anxious about inviting him here; and yet I could not do anything else. However, he was wonderfully well received, and I noticed Lady Delaine made no objection to Geraldine playing tennis with him."

"Don't see why she should," said Sir John. "I don't want to say Dick 's all he ought to be; but it 's all rubbish if a girl isn't to be allowed to speak to him. He 's no worse than many others."

"Oh no, my dear; but that isn't it at all. It was the scandal that was made about him; and, you know Lady Delaine is very particular in such matters. But I did not trouble about her so much; it was Rosamond I cared about principally. How could I tell what she might not hear? How fortunate that she had met him before, and evidently under such favourable circumstances."

"Ah, yes, poor fellow! His instincts are all right, you know, but he gets led away. I hope he 's on the right track now, and will prove a comfort to his father in his old age."

"He seems quite to have lost that reckless air. I had hardly an opportunity of speaking to him, but I was observing him carefully, and thought his manners greatly improved."

"Much quieter, if you consider that an improvement," said Sir John. "But Dick never was much of a lady's man; he was always such an unimpressionable fellow. I was quite surprised to see how he fraternised with Rosamond; but, bless my heart, she 's such a captivating girl, I don't wonder she turns all the young fellows' heads! Anthony is very much to be envied, in my opinion."

"I should like to know when they intend getting married," said Lady Lawley. "I can't get Rosamond to say anything on the subject. She doesn't seem to be in any hurry. I suppose she is fond of him; but I have noticed lately her behaviour with Will. I hope there will be no unpleasantness."

"Goodness gracious, no!" said Sir John, in alarm. "Will 's much too honourable to allow his feelings to go beyond a natural admiration for a charming girl; and you know how lively Rosamond is; she doesn't mean half she says. Still, if I were Anthony, I think I should hurry up the marriage and make sure of my lady."

"The difficulty is with regard to Bertram—there is no doubt about that," said Lady Lawley with decision. "It is a most extraordinary thing what a repugnance she seems to feel towards him. She never has him with her if she can help it: and I have even observed her positively shrink away from him when he goes to kiss her."

"Dear me! you don't say so! Well, I 've never noticed it; but there, you always say I 'm as blind as a bat! And Bert 's such a lovable child, too."

"That is the curious part of it. I am sure she would never care to have him always at home. I really believe that when they are married Anthony will be in a worse dilemma than ever."

"Poor Anthony!" said Sir John.

"I 've wondered sometimes whether Rosamond feels a little bit jealous of Felicia. The child simply worships her."

"Bless me!" cried Sir John, suddenly clapping his hands to his head as if possessed of a new and startling idea, which he feared to let escape. "I have it!"

"My dear John, what now?" said his wife, in a tone of mild remonstrance.

"Why, my dear, did it never occur to you, that Felicia is the very one to have the care of Bert? To send him to school would be simply cruel, but it would be a very different thing to leave him in Felicia's charge. She 'd like it, I 'm sure; and it would put a nice little sum into her pocket, which you and I know very well wouldn't come amiss. Poor child, she 's been called upon to make a good many sacrifices one way and another."

"Well, really, John, I don't know that your idea is such a bad one," said Lady Lawley meditatively. "It would be a very nice thing for Felicia, as you say, and it would be a good home for Bert. He would be sure of having a conscientious bringing-up, and I daresay Felicia would undertake his education as well, until he is old enough for a master."

"Just so. Anthony would be relieved of all responsibility."

"He would be able to see him as often as he liked, too, and yet be quite free in his own movements."

"And Rosamond would not have her feelings hurt."

"Really, I am quite longing to tell Anthony how beautifully we have arranged his affairs for him. I have no doubt it will remove a great stumbling-block in the way of his marriage."

This delightful scheme furnished material for conversation far into the early hours of the morning. When once Lady Lawley took an idea into her head, she never rested till she had worked it out to its minutest details, and she now employed her ready woman's wit in carrying out in imagination every arrangement that was possible to make it mutually pleasant and profitable. She was quite fond enough of Felicia to be really anxious to do her a kindness, and quite fond enough of Bert to be desirous of having him always near her. She had actually gone so far as to think in a vague sort of way of offering a permanent home for him at Lawley Manor, under the charge of a governess, but for several reasons she decided against the idea. Sir John's plan would, however, do away with all the difficulties which hers presented, and would offer instead decided advantages. She determined to speak to Anthony on the subject at the very earliest opportunity.

Accordingly, on the following day, she invited Anthony to accompany her into the gardens as soon as he had finished his morning correspondence.

He responded with alacrity; the more so, perhaps, as Rosamond had already ordered her ponies and driven off, accompanied by Will and Sir John. Lady Lawley led the way across the lawn, where the men were still busy removing the relics of the previous night's festivities, to a shady and secluded spot, where she settled herself with her work, and proceeded to unfold her plan.

CHAPTER XII.

Anthony listened almost in silence, but with profound interest. Lady Lawley, watching the varying expressions on his face, augured success for her plan, and grew eloquent in its favour. She spoke of Miss Hardy's excellent qualities, her amiable disposition, her tact and patience, her mental endowments; she enlarged upon the refining influences of the Rector's home, and descanted quite feelingly upon the sunshine which the element of childhood would bring into it, and the double advantage which would result from such an arrangement as she proposed.

She even ventured to touch lightly upon Rosamond's strange antipathy to the presence of her young half-brother, suggesting her scheme as a solution to the chief difficulty in the way of their speedy marriage. Here, however, she was careful not to say too much, for Anthony's face showed a decided disinclination to enter into this phase of the subject.

"Well, Anthony," she said at last, "what do you think of our suggestion? Does it at all fall in with your ideas?"

"Lady Lawley," said he, "I think you have hit upon a very practical solution to a problem that has been puzzling me for a long time, and I am indeed grateful to you for your thoughtfulness. But we are looking at it from one side of the question only, are we not? I do not know anyone to whom I could entrust my boy with more confidence than to Miss Hardy; but how do we know that she would care to take upon herself the trouble and responsibility, or that Mr. Hardy could approve of her doing so? I know she is fond of Bert, as she has asked me more than once to let him stay there; but I hardly know how she would like his visit to be so prolonged as you suggest. She might find it a tax, and, as she is a lady who has probably no need to consider such matters, I could not hold out 'liberal terms' as an inducement to her to undertake it."

Lady Lawley laughed. "You could not put it quite in that way, certainly; but, between ourselves, Anthony, that would probably be an inducement, apart from all other considerations. You would not suspect the Rector of being a poor man; but I can assure you Felicia knows what trouble is, and I believe when my husband first thought of it he was considering the Hardys' interests quite as much as yours."

"Is that really so?" said Anthony quickly. "I had no idea."

"No, of course not. But, seriously, I think you would be doing Felicia a kindness in making her the offer."

Anthony looked very grave and serious.

"I will think it over, Lady Lawley," he said. "I am very glad you mentioned it to me—indeed, I am grateful. If your plan would be really acceptable to Miss Hardy, I do not see why it should not prove very successful. It would be a great weight off my mind to know that Bert was in good hands; and I should like to leave him near you, too."

"Yes, I have thought of that. I should not like parting with the dear boy. You must not suppose that in suggesting this plan I am anxious to be rid of him."

"I do not think so for a moment, Lady Lawley; but it is absolutely necessary that some definite arrangement should be made before long, and I think it very good of you to render me such valuable assistance in my dilemma. But even now I find I am not at the end of my difficulties, for I don't in the least know how I am to approach Miss Hardy on the subject. I am afraid I feel altogether too diffident."

"Oh, come, Anthony," said Lady Lawley, laughing, "don't talk about being diffident; I am sure you never suffered in that way. But, seriously, you need not trouble on that account. I can understand your feeling. It is a delicate matter; but if you will entrust it to me I daresay I shall be able to manage it better than you could."

"Oh, Lady Lawley, you are indeed kind. I shall accept your offer most gladly, and I am quite sure you will arrange everything for the best."

They had a great deal more conversation, as there were necessarily many details to be discussed, and, when at length the gong summoned them to luncheon, Anthony felt as if a great weight had been lifted off his mind.

That very afternoon Lady Lawley drove to the Rectory. She found Felicia at home, and alone. It was a most favourable opportunity; and as the two ladies sat together over their five-o'clock tea in Felicia's airy and pleasant drawing-room, Lady Lawley was able, without effort, to turn the conversation into the desired channel. Felicia's face flushed with surprise and pleasure as she listened. It seemed at first an altogether delightful plan, although a little reflection showed her that she was undertaking a great care and responsibility. She, however, accepted at once the offer made in Mr. Lestrange's name, subject only to the approval of her father; and Lady Lawley returned home much pleased and satisfied with the result of her visit.

"I hope you will not mind, father dear," said Felicia, when she had finished telling him all that Lady Lawley had said. "It would be so nice to have dear little Bert here always; and I do hope I should be able to train him according to the way Mr. Lestrange would approve. I should *like* to do it, if only for Mr. Lestrange's sake. He is so fond of Bert, and so anxious for his welfare, and I feel sorry for him. He seems to be placed in such a peculiar position."

"Yes, dear, he is," said the Rector. "I, too, should be glad to lighten his burdens; and, if you don't think the charge of the child too much for you, with

"'I do not want my little one to undertake more than she can manage.'"

all your other duties, I should very much like to have him. But I do not want my little one to undertake more than she can manage, and wear herself out with toil and worry."

"There is no fear of that," said Felicia, laughing. "I often think I don't do half enough; and only think, father, what a help the money would be! I should feel inclined to jump at the offer if Bert were the most disagreeable child in the world."

"Well, dear, I'm glad for your sake he's not that. But you are right about the money; it is worth considering, and that is one reason which makes me anxious about it. After all, I hope my little girl won't be quite so badly off as I have sometimes feared. We may be able to make amends yet."

Felicia put her arms round his neck and laid her cheek against his.

"Do not talk about that, father dear; the future will take care of itself; and, while we have each other, we don't want anything else, do we?"

"Don't we, dear?" said Mr. Hardy. "Well, that's a good hearing, anyhow."

"Wasn't it kind of Sir John and Lady Lawley to think about it, father?"

"Very, indeed. But it's just like them; they are worth calling friends, Floy, aren't they? I had a long talk with Sir John yesterday. He spoke so kindly about Dick—seems to think him so much improved; and, indeed, I do hope he is going to settle down a bit now. It is a great comfort to have him at home again."

"It's cheering to find his affairs rather more prosperous; but I sometimes wonder where he got his wealth," said Felicia, a trifle bitterly.

"A fortunate investment, my dear," said the Rector. "Dick told me about it himself, and hoped he should have no occasion to trouble me again. I can't find out, though, what his prospects of a permanent income are."

The promising subject of their conversation came in just at that moment, so all further confidences were for the time suspended.

The next day Mr. Hardy had an interview with Mr. Lestrange, when all arrangements were satisfactorily concluded, and a week later little Bertram became an inmate of the Rectory.

Anthony now felt relieved of one of his greatest anxieties. On the day fixed he took Bertram himself to Carsthorpe Rectory, accompanied by Rosamond, who was extremely pleased with Lady Lawley's plan.

She embraced Felicia, as soon as she saw her, in that pretty, affectionate manner which seemed to come so naturally to her, and made her usually such a favourite with her own sex.

"What a dear, good girl you are, Floy!" she exclaimed, adopting the name always used by Richard, but never employed by anyone outside Felicia's own family. "You are a regular good fairy to come forward like this and help us in our troubles. But you are so fond of children, aren't you? and I have told Bert he is to be a very good boy, so I don't think you'll have any trouble. It *is* such a weight off my mind to know he won't be running wild with all the village children, and getting into worse ways than he has already. I am so glad, too, we have not to send him to school. They do treat children so shamefully, don't they?"

"Not always, Rosamond," returned Felicia, trying to suppress a rather ironical smile. "But you may be sure that I am very glad to have Bert here, and shall do my best to make him happy."

"I feel as if I had brought him *home*," said Anthony presently, when Rosamond, acceding to Dick's request, had gone with him into the garden to inspect a grotto he was making. "I am a little envious of Bert's good fortune, Miss Hardy, and have a sort of jealous fear that in the years to come he will not own to ever having had any home but this. I am afraid you will despise me dreadfully for entertaining such a sentiment; but, if I am not able to see him very often, you won't let him forget me, will you?"

"No," said Felicia, with a sudden warm flush.

"You will talk of me sometimes to him, won't you? It is natural for children to forget easily, and I should not like him to get to look upon me as a stranger."

"He will never do that, Mr. Lestrange. You will always be 'dear Uncle Tony.' I will not lay any snare to undermine his affection for you."

"Oh, Miss Hardy, I did not mean it in that way at all. Please forgive me if I have said anything I ought not. Only, you see, I am rather foolish about the boy, and I should like to think sometimes that Bert remembered old days and was talking about me."

"That will often happen, I daresay, said Felicia, smiling. "You must never suppose you are forgotten. It will be part of his education."

"That is very kind of you," said Anthony. "I fear I am a very exacting guardian."

In the meantime, at the bottom of the garden in the rose-grown arbour, where Will Lawley had so nearly made a certain confession to Felicia on the day Lestrange first came to the Rectory, a different kind of conversation was being carried on.

"'All's fair in love and war,' they say," remarked Richard, as he pushed his way in and flicked the dust off the seat for Rosamond. "Bother the grotto—there's nothing to see. Come and sit here, Rosamond. Fine view, isn't it? Oh, you needn't snatch your hand away like that! It's a very pretty hand, and I'm never tired of admiring it, you see; that's why I like to hold it."

"Oh, but indeed you must not," said Rosamond, glancing down at her shapely hand, with a look that said plainly, she quite agreed with him. "Is there anything particular you want to tell me?"

"Nothing very particular, my lady, at present," said Dick, with a look that said more than words would have done. "How do you like this new arrangement? Suppose you are not sorry to shift the poor little beggar on to me?"

"It has nothing to do with you, Dick, that I can see."

"I don't know about that," he returned. "I've been thinking lately it seems an awful shame; I don't know how I shall ever stand the sight of the youngster about, and know that he is penniless. It will work on my feelings, I know it will. I'm very tender-hearted."

"Richard!" cried Rosamond, pale with fright. "What do you mean!"

"Why, my dear, just this: if my feelings get very much worked upon, he'll have to have his rights."

"His rights, Richard! How dare you speak so? You know very well, my rights are stronger than his. You have often said so yourself."

"Take it easy, Rosamond," was Dick's cool reply. "I was probably speaking then from my own point of view; but the Law, that base destroyer of human happiness, wouldn't take much account of *that*, you know."

Rosamond turned on him with a passionate gesture of scorn.

"I always thought you were my friend," she cried, with a dangerous tremor in her voice.

"Good reason, too, I think," returned Dick, with a slow, long side-look at the flushed, indignant face of the girl beside him. "I think I've acted the part of a friend, but it's rather a thankless part, it strikes me."

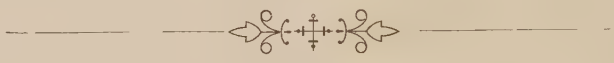
"I don't think you are acting the part of a friend, Dick, when you talk in that cool, heartless way. But you are just like all the rest; you have no consideration for me. You would not care how much I suffered. I see I have been mistaken in you."

"Why, here's a storm in a teacup!" he exclaimed, putting his hand on hers to detain her, as she was indignantly rising to leave the arbour. "My dearest child, don't give way to heroics. I was only joking.

You mustn't treat me so badly another time, you know, or you may drive me to desperation."

Rosamond felt at this moment that her position was not a very pleasant one, but, as she always trusted implicitly in the sway she was accustomed to wield over her admirers, she was soon restored to equanimity. Dick Hardy, however, who understood better than she did the nature he had to deal with, knew that he had scored a point, though he did not at that time choose to make use of the advantage he had gained.

(To be continued.)



SOLOMON: A SPIRITUAL FAILURE.

BY THE REV. W. MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

FROM Saul to Solomon is a long leap. We pass at a bound from a rude and boisterous age to one of luxury, refinement, and settled civilisation. It also has its counterpart in our own history, as the failure of Solomon has its personal counterpart in the lives of many who are living to-day. The struggle for supremacy which makes up the history of the later Plantagenets yields to the peaceful rule of the Tudors. Wealth grows like trees in the tropics. Art and learning, new-born, spring into vigorous manhood; and the Eighth Henry of England is the Solomon of Israel. What Holbein has preserved to us in his stiff canvases of Henry—his features handsome and attractive in early days, his proud bearing, his intellectual eye and aspect, the rich and gaudy dress, and the sensuous self-indulgence suggested by all around him—we can almost without effort, and absolutely without error, apply to Solomon. Nor if we pursue the story does the likeness cease. Each was the ablest of sovereigns, the most unscrupulous of men. Each was at once the coarsest and most refined of voluptuaries. Each, with all his wisdom, was the most merciless of tyrants and the most ruthless of foes. Each made the hugest blunders in dealing with women and men, and each worked out the most dismal failures for his own fate.

Henry's influence is felt—and powerfully felt—to the present day; and Solomon's influence spreads over the beliefs, the literature, and the popular sayings of three continents. The wildest legends have gathered around his name. Pre-Adamite man becomes a reality in the tales the Arab tells of him, for forty Solomons, they say, reigned in the primæval world over forty races by the aid of a magic shield and sword. Bede preserves a story that he repented of his sins, was scourged by the Sanhedrim, and went like a mendicant of the Middle Ages through the cities of Israel, begging alms. In the further East he was regarded as the master of spells and incantations, whilst he was able to interpret the songs of birds and the cries of wild beasts.

It is not without a melancholy sorrow that we nowadays contemplate these legends. They are the survival of the impression Solomon left upon his age, and the proof of his fall from moral strength and splendour to the very brink of the abyss of ruin. Curious minds have been much concerned to discover whether he was lost or saved. The Greek Church leans to the side of a pitiful charity; writers of the Western Church visit him with a sorer sentence. His destiny, like that of most men in the Bible, is carefully hidden: no high priest has ever lived that may enter within the veil where the Eternal works and tells His own secrets. But it is in pursuance of that wisdom, which was the earliest gift of Divine munificence, and the desire for which had first won him the Divine approval, that we should examine and understand the causes which produced so visible a fall, and with all the force wherewith each of us is endowed should avoid the perils and temptations that bore him down.

1. We may put the causes, then, into three classes; and the first class may, perhaps, be called *personal wilfulness*. It is the common adversity of clever kings, the baneful disease which infects the houses of all autocrats. In the case of Solomon it raised a weedy harvest for others, and many a home reaped its sorry sheaves. Early in life—in fact, the year after his accession—he made an alliance with Egypt, against which there had been the most emphatic injunctions since the days of the Exodus. In statecraft Solomon was right: the worst danger of his kingdom lay in the east and north. The power of Egypt, which still was great, formed a heavy counterpoise to the possibility of attack on the side of Syria. Egypt, too, commanded the south coasts of the Mediterranean, as Tyre commanded the north; and the shores of Palestine were as yet without a single port. The grand commercial ideas of the king would thus be realised on the west, and the traffic of the Red Sea from the harbour of Elath secured on the south. The alliance with Egypt opened new markets for the gratification of his splendour, and gave him horses, chariots, and linen yarn. Thus one fleet carried home the secrets of Spain, and whatever might be found in other countries along the Great Sea; while the second penetrated to the Indies and the eastern coasts of Africa.

bearing back so much gold that it became the common metal for use at the king's table.

Here is foreign policy enriching the country, and binding the nations in peace. But a shrewd reader perceives how hollow were the hopes it aroused. Not only was intercourse with Egypt forbidden, but where the Israelites united in any way with that country disaster always followed, and the wisdom of the prohibition became evident. The policy was, after all, short-sighted, and the marriage with which it was ratified became a curse.

The same wilfulness may be seen in an act which often escapes the casual reader. There were still remnants in the land of the old Canaanitish tribes, and these are styled by the remarkable name of strangers. Solomon determined to utilise them for the two mighty works he had undertaken — the Temple and the Palace. The Temple was seven years in hand, the Palace thirteen, and for at least three years the two went on together. Palestine afforded little or no material for either; the alliance with Tyre opened to him the quarries and forests of Lebanon. He therefore took a census of all the Canaanites, and he practically sent every one of them as slaves—a hundred and fifty-three thousand—to the northern mountains. These men had been protected by everything that might secure them the peaceable possession of their own homes. The prophecy of God's own lips had foretold that they would be always in the land; but neither custom, heritage, nor prophecy might stand against Solomon's will.

We must distinguish between wilfulness and the virtue of a strong will. Wilfulness acts before the judgment and the conscience; a strong will acts only after due consideration of what is right. Wilfulness acts because of its own desires, a strong will because of justice and truth. Wilfulness has always been the weakness of impetuous and ardent youth, and unless it has been restrained and educated it grows into the curse of advanced age. Its true discipline is found in complete subjection to the higher will of God, and this may be effected, not so easily by ideas of abstract virtue as by the consciousness of a personal God watching and judging us. If we lose the sense of that, we lose all. The best of men showed its value in His life. From end to end He set His Father's will first and supreme. It was because of it that He worked, and in obedience to it that He suffered. The man that will have his own way quickly finds that it leads to a precipice and a fatal plunge.

2. The second cause of spiritual failure in the case of Solomon was pure *sensuousness*. At first it does not seem to have taken the form of sensuality; but as he determined to carry out his own will, so he was resolved to enjoy life after his own fashion. Our poor Western fancies are dazzled at the thousand forms of splendid self-indulgence which he conjured before him. Human strength and beauty in every form; a body-guard of the biggest men; a multitude of the loveliest women, so many that he could not know the names of half of them; the glitter and glory of a table that would not own a vessel except of gold; curiosities carried from East and West to entertain the court and the populace; ivory from India and Africa in such abundance that thousands of elephants must have yielded their unwilling tusks to decorate or clothe palace and tower; gardens that vied with the paradises of the East; horses stalled by the thousand for chariots of cedar; chariots overlaid with plates of silver and gold; carpets with embroideries from the needles of Israel's deftest daughters—these are only a few of the items of his magnificence. Imagine the Queen of England encircled with it all! For its evil lay in this, that self-indulgence and luxury eat out the heart of our manhood; and, gratified as they were in Solomon, they became a source of suffering and distress to the people. The nation groaned under the exaction of the tax-gatherers. Free-born Israelites were scourged with the whip of labour unrequited, and of public burdens without public strength and security. As soon as the wealth and trade and luxury were tested, they were torn to shreds like the withs of Samson.

3. The third cause was *idolatry;* and this was inevitable. A Moses that could survey all the land of Solomon's life would easily perceive this wilderness of false worship, not behind him, but before. Solomon might have thanked his wives for it. He gave them his heart, and they bore it away from his God. And what a heart it was! We see it pure and healthy in the Canticles; loving probably Abishag, who had cherished his father in the days of old age. But what is it in Ecclesiastes? Even if that book were not written by him, it represents what the nearest literature we possess conceived of the latter days of the wise king. After he was tired of Abishag and then of the daughter of Egypt, after becoming dissatisfied with a dusky maid of Moab and next of a fairer child of Sidon, what true affection had he left? He was seeking after his own gratification; and each new fancy had for its object not the woman, but himself.

It is astonishing to some how untrue treatment of the affections leads the heart from God. But this result comes after a fashion entirely natural. Of course opportunity and occasion help it. The temples built for the Egyptian queen and others were the occasion here. Toleration of what God condemned became the snare, and the wilful and disobedient was at last caught. At last! because it was when he grew old that he worshipped Chemosh and Molech and Ashtaroth—at the time when good men find the peaceful consolation of religion, when doubt has surrendered the last shred of her purple robe, when principles of belief and action have been long tried and loyally wedded, when the ruder passions of youth have been refined into the holier ambitions of immortality, Solomon flees from the thought of a consolation he has missed, from experiments which have failed, and from pleasures he can no longer enjoy.

All about him—like the sheen of putrefaction—spreads the curse of his example. What the great man does the dwarf will attempt; and idolatry, which always haunted the mind of the Israelite, grows upon the nation. A few years will see, almost without a protest, images publicly set up in the land, and the people of the schismatical kingdom commanded to flock to them for worship. A little later, and the prophets of strange gods will be counted by the hundred at the royal court: a little later, and political destruction and foreign captivity will be needed to wipe away the fascination from the mind of the people.

It is thus that a strong man's influence works: for good if he be good, for far-reaching sin if he be wicked. To save a sinner may be difficult, but to make a thousand sinners is a woefully easy task.

For Solomon himself, all this—his wilfulness, his self-indulgence, and his idolatry—meant loss of moral power and control. The oppression of his country, the excesses of his own life, have loosened his hold upon the reins of government. Like a horse that measures the ability of his rider, the nation measured the power of Solomon; it weighed him ultimately in the balance of capability, and it found him wanting. In his own life bitterness worked its bitterest. Madame de Maintenon wrote of Louis XIV. in his old age that he ceased to have pleasure in anything. With all the greatness of France at his feet, with everything he could name at his command, he failed to procure even a pauper's pleasure. We almost irresistibly think of Solomon when we read this. The Book of Ecclesiastes seems to be a true representation of him in his later years. Vexation of spirit is the record of every day. It is all the same, whether he languidly seeks a return to virtue or gives himself to eat and sleep; the result of each is vexation.

It is in such a condition that a man finds what God is, and how vast the space He must occupy in a happy life. And it is such an illustration that helps us to understand how rapidly and how low a man may fall. The brilliant thinker, the wit, the poet, the statesman—great among the greatest, living among us to-day after a lapse of thirty centuries, moulding us to-day in proud independent England by the wisdom of his lips—he too failed. Never had man a better father, never youth a brighter prospect, never saint a closer presence of God. If he could not stand, who may be sure? The spiritual life is like a garden. We not only sow the plant, but we watch and guard and tend it. Remove the fences, and all will soon be waste. The fragrance of the rose, the beauty of the lily, will lie undone, broken and trampled. So is it with the paradise of the soul. Take away the walls of humility, let in the roaming beasts of disloyalty to God, of passion, lust, and sensuousness, make a recreant selfish will the standard of right and the test of action, and you will rehearse the fate of Solomon. Nor will you save yourself by position, wealth, or intellect: for these will only minister to your fall, as in happier days they would minister to your greatness.

On the western shore of England there lies a rude and roofless hut, blown carelessly upon by every wind, hidden by envious hillocks of sea-rejected sand, and seen only by wandering sheep and birds. It is hardly worth a sovereign—site and stones and all. For centuries it was buried beneath the sand, and no one knew it lay there, silent as the saints in their graves. Yet every stone in it is sacred: for thither came, many a century ago, the first of Christian teachers to that land: thither gathered the first British disciple of our Lord, and there they buried afterwards with tenderness and tears the apostle of their conversion. Looking back to times so distant, where judgment may act without prejudice or passion, we cannot but prefer to the voluptuous glory of Solomon the ruined monument of St. Piran upon the wild Cornish coast, and feel that the work and dignity of such a man are sweeter to our taste than the magnificence and wealth of the fallen king.

"WHO INHABITETH ETERNITY."

"WHERE does God live?" once asked a child,
And mutely waited my reply:
"God lives in heaven," I said, and smiled,
And pointed upward to the sky.

This simple faith my childhood knew,
This comfort to my soul was given,
That, veiled by yonder vault of blue,
God looked on me in love from heaven.

With countless worlds a point of light
And space itself a fading star,
Far off He dwells, above all height,
Yet close as His compassions are!

The depths below, the heights above,
Where suns and systems sweep and soar,
Divide not faith, and hope, and love,
From His sweet Presence at the door.

We strive to learn, we know in part:
How great, how high, we cannot tell!
Yet, to the humble, contrite heart,
He comes in all His grace to dwell!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

SUNDAYS WITH THE YOUNG.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR FINLAYSON, AUTHOR OF "THREEFOLD SALVATION," "THE ETHICS OF ATHLETICS," ETC. ETC.

LIFE'S LAMENESS: THE CHARACTER OF SIN.

"This abominable thing that I hate."—JEREMIAH xliv. 4.

"It is a stormy night by the sea-shore."—*p.* 183.

THE church bells were ringing out a merry peal of welcome as a bride and bridegroom left the church after the marriage service. The bride was given some flowers as she passed to her carriage, and a small drop of water fell from a flower on to the bride's light dress. Soon after, a slight stain was noticed there, and the remark was made: "A spot of sin as small as this would shut either of us out of heaven." That remark was perfectly true. The least stain of sin, if uncleansed, separates from the pleasures of Paradise. God cannot look upon sin. If we would dwell with God in heaven, we must be cleansed from every spot and stain of sin. If we would live as the children of God on earth, we must beware of the stain of sin. A little speck of dust on the lens of a telescope will mar its powers of vision. A tiny hair in the mainspring of a watch will suffice to stop the machinery. So one little sin, secretly cherished and wilfully indulged, will choke up our soul's communion with God and destroy our spiritual comfort.

The first step towards a cure is to understand the nature of the disease, so I want you carefully to understand the nature of sin. Under-estimate the disease, and you will under-value the remedy. The object of my putting pen to paper is to warn you against sin of every kind, and to point to God's remedy for sin. But to know and apply the remedy, we must first understand the disease.

What, then, is sin?

Sin is rebellion against God. Man is a dependent being, but he constantly forgets this and rebels. Sometimes you hear young people say, "When I grow up I shall be independent!" Now, this may bear a good meaning, and it may bear a very bad one. If to be "independent" means not to be a care, trouble, or expense to anyone, that is a good and wholesome feeling. But if it means that when young people

grow up they wish to be independent of all authority, it is a very bad saying, a very foolish notion, and a complete mistake. No man or woman, boy or girl, can ever be independent in this sense. God alone is independent. On Him we all depend. And He constantly reminds us of this. You might think that Adam, with all his freedom in the Garden of Eden, was independent. But he was not. That was the fatal mistake he made. When Adam was first placed in the Garden of Eden, his position was one of holy dependence. God reserved a single token of His sovereignty and authority: Adam might freely eat of every tree in the garden, with but one exception. In this single fruit forbidden lay the lesson that he was a dependent creature. The reserved fruit was the symbol of that dependence. Whenever he looked at the forbidden fruit, it spoke to him of God's authority. He must not touch it. Every other tree was open to him but this one. But, alas! self-love was his sin. He would do what God had forbidden. He became a rebel. His sin was the rejection of the Divine authority. The smaller the restriction, the more inexcusable the rebellion. The sin, therefore, instead of being lessened, was only made worse by the insignificance of the fruit. And from that day to this, every man and woman, boy and girl, repeats Adam's sin, though in different forms, by secretly striving to be independent of God. Self-love is the secret of sin. The hidden principle of all sin is rejection of the will of God. None of God's commands are grievous, and therefore the question of our obedience is made to turn precisely on the will of God. Now, if you will remember this, it will be a help to you all through life. God alone is independent. He has made us for Himself; and the more we seek to bring our wills into subjection to His, and our lives into complete dependence upon Him, the happier and the holier shall we become.

As a train was speeding along the railroad in the north of England the other day, a spark from the engine set fire to a shrub in a plantation near the line, and then the fire spread to a forest, where it raged for two days, doing immense damage. Who would have thought that such a result would arise from a little spark? Yet so it is in the world of life—great results spring from the most trivial causes. Our hearts are, like those dry trees, ready to burst into a blaze when touched by the spark of sin. Therefore we must beware of sin. No one with a match is allowed to come near a gunpowder magazine, and if you go to the docks, where inflammable goods are stored, you may often see men turning out their pockets before police officers, to show that they carry no matches. So we should pray, like the Psalmist of old: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24).

If we turn to the Bible and mark some passages of Scripture, we shall gain further illustrations of the nature of sin. I want you carefully to notice these statements of Scripture, because, if you learn to look upon sin as God sees it, you will flee from sin as from your worst enemy. Much of the evil that is in the world arises from false or defective notions of sin. People are prone to say, "Where is the harm of such a thing, or of such a course?" instead of thinking, "Would God approve?" Now I am more anxious to give you principles than rules; therefore I take you to Scripture. How does the Bible describe sin? "Sin is the transgression of the law," or, as the Revised Version translates it, "Sin is lawlessness." There is open rebellion. "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John v. 17). Every coming short of right is sin. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv. 17). It is aggravated sin. Sins of omission will come into judgment as well as sins of commission. Let us take care that conscience be rightly informed, and that we act accordingly. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23). Our life is to spring from a principle of faith. God would have us trustfully regard the will of Christ as our rule, the glory of Christ as our end, and the righteousness of Christ as our plea. "The thought of foolishness is sin (Prov. xxiv. 9). We contract guilt, not only by the act of foolishness, but by the thought of it. Now these are very solemn statements, when we remember that they come from God's Word. They pierce us through and through, and remind us of our fallen condition. They convict you and me, and make us to feel that, even in our holiest moods and purest services, we have need to cry, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep."

That we are born with inbred tendencies to evil is indeed a fact which requires no revelation. It is as much a fact of experience as it is of revelation. It is as clearly an induction as any law of science. How do we prove the law of gravitation? By the fact that all bodies when free to move show a tendency to move towards one another. Pick up a stone; hold it up towards the sky; now release it from your hand; it immediately falls to the earth's surface, attracted by the larger body. How do we prove man's depravity? By the fact that when left to himself he always displays a proneness to evil. A universal effect must have a universal cause. Scripture confirms this fact. But it does more; it reveals the degree of man's sinfulness. He is thoroughly diseased. Sin has tainted every part of his nature, impairing the judgment, enfeebling the conscience, and blighting the affections.

When Canova, the great Italian sculptor, was about to commence his famous statue of the great Napoleon, his keenly observant eye detected a tiny red line running through the upper portion of the splendid block of marble, which had been brought from Paros at enormous cost. Others saw no flaw, but the great sculptor detected it, and he refused to lay chisel upon it. The very perfection he aimed at compelled him to reject the marble block. Now if there is a flaw in your life, others may not see it, but God most assuredly will. And that there is such a flaw God declares. His Word asserts, "All have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23). "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalm xiv. 3). During a naval engagement off Copenhagen, Admiral Parker signalled the ships to cease action. Nelson did not wish to retire his ship. When informed of the Admiral's signal, he looked through the telescope with his blind eye,

and exclaimed, "I see no such signal." He persistently deceived himself in order that he might continue the fight. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). But we deceive no one else. It is no excuse for a man to say he does not steal, does not lie, does not swear, does not covet. Neglect of known duty is sin. Man has a duty to God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind (St. Matt. xxii. 37). Not to love God is sin. And the Bible not only charges man with not loving God, but it speaks of man as being in a state of "enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7). Therefore he cannot restore himself.

Thus we see from direct statements of Scripture the guilt and reality of sin. Let me try to show you this from another aspect. It is a stormy night by the sea-shore. The wind is howling and moaning, and ever and anon with boisterous gusts threatening violence to the shipping in the harbour. The sea is lashed into a seething foam. On the beach are scattered groups of people—men hurrying to and fro with excited determination, and women wringing their hands in mute agony and mingled prayer. You look out to sea. In the darkness of the night you can see nothing, but you can tell by the whirr and rush of the rocket apparatus, by the cries of the lifeboatmen, that a vessel is in danger. You know there is a ship in distress by these signs, though you may not know the extent or reality of her danger. So, when I see the Lord Jesus Christ leaving His throne in glory, living a life of anguish, and dying a cruel death, I learn that sin is a terrible reality. Oh, what a hideous, fiendish monster is sin, when it turns its cursed enmity against the blessed Son of God, and imbrues its cruel hands in His precious blood! And if God spared not His Son, that the claims of His holy law should be magnified, how just is the sentence: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel xviii. 4, 20). Christ lived and died to make atonement for us. He now lives in Heaven to make us *at one* with God. He promises pardon, peace, and power to overcome sin to young and old, to all who yield their hearts to Him. The message of the Gospel is, "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. vi. 14). Have you heard the loving voice of Jesus saying, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee"? Then He adds, "Go, and sin no more." Are you living in the strength which Jesus supplies to all who would overcome sin?

The Emperor Arcadius and his wife Eudoxia had a very bitter feeling towards St. John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople. One day, in a fit of anger, the Emperor said to some of his courtiers, "I would I were avenged of this bishop!" Several then proposed how this should be done. "Banish him and exile him to the desert," said one. "Put him in prison," said another. "Confiscate his property," said a third. "Let him die," said a fourth. Another courtier, whose vices Chrysostom had reproved, said maliciously, "You all make a great mistake. You will never punish him by such proposals. If banished the kingdom, he will feel God as near to him in the desert as here. If you put him in prison and load him with chains, he will still pray for the poor and praise God in the prison. If you confiscate his property, you merely take away his goods from the poor, not from him. If you condemn him to death, you open heaven to him. Prince, do you wish to be revenged on him? Force him to commit sin. I know him; *this man fears nothing in the world but sin.*" Is there no lesson here for you and me?

THE SAME SWEET TUNE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ON STRONGER WINGS," "A SUMMER IDYLL," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.—GOOD-BYE.

"Parting is such sweet sorrow."

A LONG low room, dimly lit by a small lamp and occasional gleams from a sullenly burning fire; shabby old-fashioned furniture, which—from the battered piano, with its yellow keys, to the rickety sofa that seemed to invite a fall—had almost an apologetic air of shabby gentility; and a young man, talking in low rapid tones to a girl whose head was half-hidden in the cushions of a big arm-chair.

"It's no use now, Nancy. Yes, I know you want to say that I've *had* the chance, and I'm not denying it; I have only myself to thank. And yet I don't think that it is altogether my own fault. I'm not clever like you, Nancy, and all the cramming in the world wouldn't make me so."

"Yes, Dick, you *are* clever, cleverer than I am, only in a different kind of way. I often think it's the cleverest kind of people who——"

"Get ploughed for every exam," he said, with a laugh. "No; I have made a hash of everything, so far."

"This is rather sad—on our last evening, too. Can't we think of anything cheerful, that you may have a pleasant memory to take away to Canada?"

"You shall sing to me; for I shan't hear any singing out there."

"What shall I sing?"

"Robin Adair."

"How you love that song! But I ought to sing it to-morrow, not to-night; it is to-morrow that it will be true."

He didn't answer, and she seated herself at the piano while he leaned against the chimney-piece, where he could have a good view of her face.

They made a striking contrast, these two; but it was not so much the *contrast* that would have struck a keen observer as the fact that each seemed, unconsciously, to supply what the other lacked. Slight, almost fragile-looking, though Nancy Lorimer was, there was an air of strength and self-reliance about her; and the dreamy look in her large grey eyes was contradicted by the determined mouth and chin, that would have given a stern expression to her pretty face had it not been for the daintily fair complexion that was one of her chief charms. Dick Wynyard's eyes were grey too, but they were deep-set, kindly eyes, with nothing dreamy about them, only very steadfast and true. His mouth supplied the sweetness Nancy's lacked, and his fair hair and complexion gave him a boyish appearance which his one-and-twenty years hardly warranted. And now, having played the symphony, Nancy began to sing—

"What 's this dull toon to me?
Robin 's not near;
What was 't I wished to see,
What wished to hear?
Where 's all the joy and mirth
Made this place heaven on earth?
Oh, they are all fled wi' thee—
Robin Adair!"

She sang with great pathos, and Dick looked at her as though he were taking in every detail, that he might carry away the picture to brighten his lonely hut on the Canadian sheep-farm.

"Sing again," he urged, as the last notes died away into silence.

"Not to-night, dear Dick; I 'm not in tune; and besides, I want to say something to you. You remember when first you came here, nearly two years ago now——"

Dick nodded.

"Well, at that time father hardly knew how to live, for he had had no pupils for more than a year. He hadn't been successful with the last. He is growing old, and everything is different from what it was when he was young, and people prefer to go to younger coaches. Of course father felt it; but he knew he hadn't done well lately—the world was moving too fast for him, and he was old and couldn't keep up with it. Then you came, Dick, and the temptation was too much for him. He meant at first to refuse; but he wanted the money badly, and he thought if he did his best, his very best, that he would not be doing you any wrong in coaching you. I want you to understand this, and try and forgive father; because sometimes I fancy—I am half-afraid—that if you had gone to another coach you might have passed."

"Nancy! How can you say—how can you even think it? Mr. Lorimer has done his very best for me, and I have no one to thank but myself for the turn affairs have taken. But that you should think——" And he broke off suddenly, with a suspicious huskiness in his voice.

Nancy rose from her chair and stood beside him, looking into the red glow of the fire with very troubled eyes.

"Do you remember that we used to make pictures in the fire? Are you making a picture now, Nancy?"

"Not a picture exactly; but I am thinking of something else that I have to say to you."

"And is it written there?"

"Yes; I will read it to you. It says, 'Dick is going to Canada to make his fortune, and he will be away a long time. He must not be bound by any tie that might hamper him or spoil his career—he must be quite free.' That is what I read in the fire to-night, Dick."

"Nancy!"

"Yes: I've been meaning to say it for a long time, only it is so hard. If things had been different we might have married. But now—both of us so poor, and your father angry with you as it is—I see that for your sake, for both our sakes—for your good is mine—that you must start on this new life quite free."

"Then you give me up? Though we have been—well, *almost* engaged for a year, and though you are everything to me, you can give me up? You cannot love me."

"Dick!"

She did not say another word, but there was an agony of reproach in her eyes. He clasped her hand in his for answer, and both were silent.

She was the first to speak. "You know I love you. You know that, except father, you are all I have to love or live for; but it is best that there should be no tie to bind you. You must trust me, Dick. I am older than you."

"One year; and I am a man, which makes me about ten years older than you in reality." And as he spoke, drawing himself up to his full height, they seemed to have changed. All the strength was now in *his* face, while the self-reliance had died out of *hers*, and left her a very woman in her weakness. It was only for a moment, then he was once more the old Dick, with the sweet, irresolute mouth, while Nancy's chin showed its usual determination.

"Yes, a year is not a great difference if it were on the other side."

"And it will seem less as we go on," he urged. "I shall catch you up in time; when you are twenty-six, for instance, and I twenty-five, I shall be a man, and you will still be my little Nancy."

She laughed, and he whistled softly to himself a few bars of "Robin Adair."

"I shall hate that tune when you have gone: it will be so true; this will be such a 'dull toon.'"

"Oh, Nancy, if I could take you with me!"

"My wish is that you should be as free as though you had never met me."

"That is impossible!"

"Well, yes. But I mean that from to-night there is no tie between us. You are free to go and forget me, if you wish."

"And *you* to forget *me*, Nancy?"

"No, I shall never forget you."

"Nor I you. If it pleases you that I should pretend to be free, I will do it; but it will be like the games children play—all pretence."

"'That is what I read in the fire to-night, Dick.'"—*p.* 184.

"Then, Dick, after to-morrow—when you have gone away—we shall hear nothing more of each other for, let us say, two years."

"I don't understand what you mean. Of course we shall write to each other."

"No; that would not be leaving you absolutely free. Yes, Dick, you must listen to what I say. If this is *real* love that you and I feel for each other, two years will be nothing to us. But if we have been mistaken, then not writing to each other, or being in any way bound to the past, will make it easier to—to forget."

"Well, it shall be as you wish, but I know that nothing will change me; in two years I shall feel as I feel to-night."

Before she could answer, the door opened, and Mr. Lorimer came into the room. He was a tall man, slightly bent, with white hair and a rather hesitating manner, but yet with a handsome, intellectual face that was apt to impress his hearers even more than his sermons, which were rather over the heads of the village congregation to whose wants he had ministered for the forty years he had been vicar of Tilworth.

"There you are, Dick: having a last talk with Nancy," moving towards them as he spoke. "We shall miss you very much, my boy—the house will seem dull without you."

"And I am very sorry to go, sir."

"I wonder how you will like Canada, Dick?"

"Oh, I shall like it well enough, I expect, when once I get there, but I shall miss Tilworth—I have been very happy here."

"That's right, my boy. I am glad you have been happy. We shall often think of you, and wonder how you are getting on—for I shan't expect any letters: you're not too fond of writing."

Dick did not answer.

Both Nancy and her father looked upon it as a settled thing that he should go away and forget them; and he resented it, even though Mr. Lorimer knew nothing of the tacit understanding that had existed between them.

It was Nancy who broke the silence that followed the allusion to Dick's shortcomings as a correspondent—

"Had we not better go to bed?" she suggested. "Breakfast will be earlier to-morrow; and I'm sure you are tired, father."

So good-nights were said, and Dick lighted the candles, as he had been in the habit of doing ever since he came to Tilworth, and each wondered silently when they would all say good-night again.

Nancy could not sleep; her brain was busy weaving pictures of the past, and she seemed to be living all her young life over again. Ever since she could remember, she had lived in this big, rambling house with her father—not even a hazy memory was left to her of that other Nancy of whom he sometimes spoke: the young mother who had died before the baby lips had learned to lisp her name. But there had always been her father—kind, devoted, abstracted—but still representing the sum-total of Nancy's world. Then there had been pupils—big boys and little boys: boys who had played with her and boys who had teased her, until she was too old for games or teasing; and then a time came when there had been no more pupils, and she had gone alone into the study to learn Latin and Greek and mathematics—all the things she loved. And it was about this time that she began to understand what a necessary part money plays in housekeeping. Money never seemed easy to find in Tilworth Vicarage; and perhaps it was having to solve the problem of how to pay one's way that had brought out the determined lines in Nancy's young face, and given it the hard look Dick sometimes complained about.

Then Dick came, and his coming had been the beginning of a happiness that she had not even dreamt of as possible; and now, of her own free will, she was putting it away from her. Was it wise?

"Yes, yes: it is for *his* sake!" she cried, half-aloud; and then the memory-pictures grew blurred with tears, and she cried herself to sleep.

The next day there was no time for good-byes, and breakfast was rather a silent meal, though Dick made a gallant effort to appear cheerful.

"When I have 'made my pile' I shall come back here, and you must have the village *en fête*—triumphal arches, and all that sort of thing."

"You might restore the old church for us, if it will only hold together until you have made your fortune," said Mr. Lorimer. "It will soon be in ruins at this rate, and *I* can do nothing."

"Yes, I might restore the church, and augment the vicar's stipend, too."

"Well, I shouldn't object to that, my boy; but I fancy I hear your cab."

"I must thank you for all your kindness," began Dick; but Mr. Lorimer cut him short.

"Nonsense! Wynyard's boy to thank *me;* and besides, I have liked you for your own sake. We shall miss you, Dick, and you mustn't quite forget us."

This was almost too much for Dick's resolution, but he knew that he must keep his promise to Nancy, no matter at what cost to them both.

A hand-clasp—last good-byes and God-speeds—and when the cab had disappeared to a speck in the distance Mr. Lorimer turned to his daughter with a sigh.

"We shall miss that boy, shan't we, Nancy?"

Miss him! Was that a word to express a daily, hourly, unsatisfied longing—a blank that nothing could fill—life without Dick!

"Yes, we shall miss him."

"And that is not all. Now Dick's gone, I don't see how we are to manage unless I advertise for more pupils."

Nancy flushed. She could not bear to tell him the truth; and yet there was no help for it. Better he should hear it from her than from others, who would have less consideration, and would not mind how they hurt his feelings.

"No, not any more, father. I think Dick must be the last."

"You mean that Dick failed," he said quickly—they were pacing the garden together. "But he is not quick, and quickness and a good memory are everything."

"Yes, I know. But oh, father, *I* know how clever you are, and how well you can teach; but they have different ways now—ways you didn't learn. You have been in this lonely village for so long, and all the time the world has been going on, and things have changed. The world is very cruel; it goes on so fast, and never gives people a chance unless they will push and struggle too."

"Yes, Nancy, I understand. The world goes on and the dreamers are left behind, and everything changes. It seems there is a fashion in learning, too, and the knowledge I was so proud of is now of no use to me. It's a little hard; but perhaps it was hardest on Dick, poor boy."

"No, father, dear father! I didn't mean that," clinging to him and kissing him, for her heart was very full.

"No, you didn't mean it, darling; but I understand." He turned into the house, and Nancy was left in the garden.

She had done her duty—had sent away her lover free and untrammelled, and had told her father the truth—and this had been almost the harder task; and yet she was conscious of nothing but a dull, aching pain in her heart. In the words of the old song, "All the joy and mirth" had "fled" from her life.

CHAPTER II.—THIS WORK-A-DAY WORLD.

"But tones, at times, in the music
Will bring back forgotten things."

"NEED I practise, Miss Lorimer? I can't make this tune sound pretty; it's a horrid, ugly thing!" And Flossy Dorman twirled round on the music-stool with an expression that boded ill for the "ugly tune" on her pretty face.

"Ugly! Oh, Flossy, it's one of the sweetest tunes that ever were written. How could anyone call 'Robin Adair' ugly?"

"Yes, it's pretty when *you* sing it, but it's ugly when *I* play it. Sing it to me now." And Flossy slipped from her seat and pulled impatiently at Nancy Lorimer's sleeve: the same Nancy that had seen the pictures in the fire, and had said good-bye to Dick in the old drawing-room at Tilworth, except that the lines about her mouth and chin had deepened, and the smiles were slower in coming. But for this, she was to all outward appearance Dick's "little Nancy" still, only now she held the dignified position of governess to Flossy and Dick Dorman, aged respectively nine and seven, and as naughty a couple as could be found in all South Kensington, she sometimes thought despairingly.

It was a year since she had parted from Dick Wynyard, and, true to promise, no letters had passed between them. But changes had come into her life. Her father's health had broken up completely, and he had had to resign his living, and was now in a small fishing village on the Welsh coast; while Nancy was teaching Flossy and Dick Dorman, the children of wealthy parents, who had an idea that a governess was a kind of upper servant, who should be "kept in her place." But Nancy never complained, even to herself. Dick and her father had represented her world, her happiness; and now that she was parted from them she did not care for any pleasures that she might have enjoyed had she been with more congenial people. She could only try to do her duty in the blank that had come upon her.

"Sing to me," persisted Flossy, who was a persevering child, and seldom failed to get her own way.

"I must set Dick's copy first," smiling, as she spoke, at the fair-haired, stolid-looking child by her side.

"Why do you say *Dick* so softly?" questioned Flossy. "Do you think Dick a pretty name? You always talk to Dick quite differently than you talk to me—kinder-like, I think."

Nancy blushed.

"Nonsense, Flossy! Dick is a little boy, and you are a big girl—nearly ten years old."

"Only nine," corrected Flossy, resenting with intuitive feminine instinct this misstatement of her age. "Sing to me, Miss Lorimer."

Nancy sat down at the piano, while Flossy, balancing herself on one leg, listened, open-mouthed, to the old song, which Nancy sang as it is only possible to do when every word comes straight from the singer's heart.

It brought back the past almost too vividly. The schoolroom vanished, and in its stead was the drawing-room at Tilworth, where her happiest hours had been spent; and Dick was with her, and listening to her singing and smiling approval in the way he had always done. Then the song ended, and instead of Dick, Flossy Dorman was by her side, ready, as usual, with a string of questions.

"Why did he go away and leave her? and why was she unhappy?"

"He was obliged to go," explained Nancy; "and she was unhappy because he had gone away. If you love people very much, Flossy, you are unhappy when they leave you."

"Not if there are other people, and you have dolls to play with, and plenty to eat," said the child, with conviction. "But if she wanted him back *very* much, why didn't she send him a telegram? That's what mamma does."

Nancy laughed. "Well, I don't think there were telegrams in those days. But, Flossy, can't you understand that she was very unhappy? and you must try to make the piano sound unhappy too—like someone crying."

"I can't. *You* can. When you were singing the other day, Mrs. Warrington said to mamma, 'How beautifully Miss Lorimer sings! Why don't you have her down to sing sometimes?' And mamma said——"

"Never mind what your mother said; she did not intend you to repeat it."

"Oh, but I must tell you, Miss Lorimer; it was so funny. Mamma said, 'I like to keep governesses in their proper place.' Wasn't that funny? and what is a 'proper place'?"

"A proper place is the place where anybody or anything ought to be, and *your* proper place is at the piano," said Nancy a little sharply, for the child's words had pained her.

But just at this moment, when her heart was full, Dick's voice was heard. "I have done my copy." And as she bent over it he wound his two fat arms round her neck and whispered, "I love you—I love you dearly." And all the bitterness died out of Nancy Lorimer's heart.

"Dear little Dick!" she said, kissing him; and her voice was certainly "kinder-like" than when she had been explaining to Flossy the meaning of a "proper place."

Dick had very endearing ways; but perhaps there was some truth in Flossy's suggestion that his *name*

was dear to her. "Did she think Dick a pretty name?"

Ah! Flossy would never know how dear that name was to her—so dear that she even experienced pleasure in saying it over and over again to herself. No wonder that her voice softened when she spoke to little Dick.

"I suppose that it is time we dressed to go down to the drawing-room," said Flossy.

Mrs. Dorman had them down every afternoon, and this was the one important hour of the day to Flossy, who loved to show herself off in her best frock; and to Nancy it was a rest to be alone.

She had sent the children off to nurse, and was lost in thought, when she heard the door open, and, looking up, saw Mrs. Warrington standing in the room.

"I am afraid I have startled you, Miss Lorimer?" And indeed Nancy was surprised at this unexpected visitor, for, unless Mrs. Dorman came to make some complaint, she was accustomed to spend her time alone. "But I heard you singing to the children just now, and I thought I should like to come and have a little talk with you," seating herself in a low chair as she spoke.

Mrs. Warrington was a middle-aged woman, with a kind, intelligent face, who was staying with the Dormans, and she had often spoken to Nancy when she had met her on the stairs with the children, but she had never before penetrated into the schoolroom.

"You must find this rather a dull life, Miss Lorimer. Do you never go down-stairs—not in the evenings, when people come in after dinner?"

Nancy flushed, for she rather resented this cross-examination, and Mrs. Warrington saw it.

"My dear, you must not be angry with me. I am old enough to be your mother, and so must consider myself a privileged person. I have taken a great fancy to you, and I can quite well see that you are not happy."

Nancy was silent. The sense of utter loneliness, of being, in very truth, a "stranger within the gates," came upon her, and raising her eyes to Mrs. Warrington's kind face, she said simply, "No, I am not at all happy here."

"I knew it; and I don't see how anyone could be happy, shut up in a schoolroom, with no one to say a kind word, and always the same dreary round day by day."

"But I cannot help myself; I am obliged to earn my own living."

"But not obliged to be a governess. Cannot you think of any other way?"

Nancy looked up quickly.

"Is it possible that you have never thought of your voice as a means of earning your living?"

"My voice? But I do not think I sing really well; and even then——"

"Not sing well? My dear child, are you deaf to the sound of your singing, as you are very evidently blind to your own interests? You have a most beautiful voice; it is true it needs a little more training. But just now I stood outside the door while you were singing 'Robin Adair' to those children, and I can tell you that I cried, you sang it so sweetly. If you can move people to tears—and I am not a very emotional woman—you have a talent for which you should thank God."

Nancy looked at her with wondering eyes. "*I* can sing like *that?*" she said. "Do you really mean it?"

"Yes, you sing most beautifully; and instead of being a governess, why not have your voice trained, and be a concert-singer?"

"But I cannot afford to be trained, even if my voice is good enough."

And then, perhaps, the *motherliness* in Mrs. Warrington's face appealed to some chord in this girl's heart, who had never known a mother's love; but, somehow or other, Nancy found herself telling her all her past.

It was a simple little story, but yet—listening to Nancy's sweet even tones and looking into the dreamy depths of her large grey eyes, that darkened now and again, or softened as memories of the past rose before them—Mrs. Warrington was touched with the pathos of it all.

It was not difficult to read between the lines, or to grasp the keynote of the situation—namely, Dick; though Nancy would have been very much surprised if she had known this, as she fancied that she had hardly mentioned his name—that universal delusion of all who are very much in love!

When she had finished her story, Mrs. Warrington felt that she knew Tilworth Vicarage and its shabby drawing-room well—had seen Mr. Lorimer, the broken-down scholar, and sympathised with him in his disappointments; but, best of all, that she knew Dick Wynyard, and was nearly as much in love with him as Nancy herself.

"And now, my dear, I have a little plan; and you must let me tell it you, and promise not to interrupt me until I have quite finished."

Nancy smiled contentedly, for she had an idea that the plan was one of which she would approve.

"I am a lonely woman, living in a house that is a great deal too big for me. Of course, I have friends; but still there are many times when I long for a companion—someone to talk to—who would sympathise with me. Now, I want to know whether you would come and stay with me for a long visit; and in the meantime you should have singing lessons, and I shall see whether the best masters do not agree with my opinion of your voice."

"But, Mrs. Warrington, I could never——" began Nancy, when she was interrupted with—

"Oh yes, you can, and you will. You must quite understand me. I do not want to make you a present of these lessons, for you would not wish me to do so. But I will have you trained as a concert-singer in return for your staying in my house and trying to lighten some of my lonely hours."

Nancy was too much overcome with this

"Dick only saw Nancy."—*p.* 191.

unexpected kindness to speak; she tried to say some words of thanks, but her voice failed her; so Mrs. Warrington said cheerfully—

"Then we will consider that settled, and I will speak to Mrs. Dorman about it to-night. And if the doctors think that a change to London would do your father good, he might come up for a time, as I should like so much to know him."

This was too much for Nancy; she was not very fond of kissing, having had no mother or sisters to encourage this feminine weakness, but words seemed poor thanks for so great kindness; and she put her arms round Mrs. Warrington's neck and clung to her, while a few hot tears fell on that lady's caressing hands. She let her cry on; then rising and kissing her, said—

"Now I will go and see Mrs. Dorman. And one thing more—I shall call you Nancy, for you will be my dear daughter." And with another kiss she was gone.

Nancy sat on, lost in a dream of happy fancies. There was a future before her to which she might look without dread; for even if Dick should forget her, and should take the freedom she had offered him, still she would have something to live for. No one knew the spell of music better than she herself, and to feel that she had within her the power to sway hearts—to soothe and elevate as only music can—was a joy that she had never dreamed of.

She was roused from her reveries by the children coming in for the school-room tea: Flossy, as usual, very much elated at the compliments paid her by injudicious visitors; Dick, much subdued, as, being a shy child, he dreaded this daily visit to the drawing-room as much as Flossy loved it.

"Such pretty ladies to-day, Miss Lorimer, and one of them wants mamma to send me to school. Her little girl goes to school, and she thinks it a great mistake to have a governess in the house," said Flossy, unconsciously reproducing the lady's languid drawl.

"It would be a very good plan," answered Nancy—too happy to care what the child might say.

But Dick, looking up, said slowly, "Don't go away; I love you." And as she kissed him she felt a pang at the thought that she must so soon leave him.

She had been very lonely and unhappy in her solitary corner of this great house, but this child had loved her from the first, and his unselfish ways had won her heart. She had not guessed till now how much she would miss him, and it was with real feeling that she kissed him again. Nancy Lorimer had learnt many a lesson of love from little Dick.

CHAPTER III.—AFTER MANY DAYS.

"Love will be found the sweetest song of all."

A NOVEMBER afternoon, and the sea-wall at Brighton crowded with people—the usual collection of fashionable loungers and delicate invalids—basking in the sunlight that seems to linger on in Brighton long after it has faded from less favoured spots. A mist, golden-tinted, hung over the sea, and made the dull grey water beautiful; and there was an air of gaiety about the slowly moving crowd and the rolling carriages that is seldom found in an English watering-place. At the very end of the "Green," resting his arms against the low wall, and gazing absently at the mist-wreathed sea, was a young man, whose slight, well-knit figure gave him a very youthful appearance, which was contradicted by the bronzed, determined face, and a certain air of quiet strength, that added great individuality to what would otherwise have been an ordinarily good-looking face. Two years had changed Dick Wynyard; and the experience he had gained on the Canadian sheep-farm—experience that it is only possible to find in a life of toil—had brought out all that was best in him; and now he was a man, with a past of which he need not feel ashamed, and knowledge to help him to face any future that might be in store. Changes had come since he parted from Nancy Lorimer in the cold grey light of that unforgotten October morning. His elder brother had died very suddenly, and Dick had been sent for home, as he was now the heir to his father's large estates; and Mr. Wynyard welcomed him back with a warmth he had not thought possible to his cold, reserved father.

And what of Nancy? He had not forgotten her, for his was not a nature to forget; and his first thought, after the sharp sensation of sorrow at hearing of his brother's death, had been that now all would be right between them. But so far all had not been right. He had gone to Tilworth to find strangers there, who had, in Dick's opinion, desecrated the well-known rooms by filling them with modern furniture, and who knew nothing of the Lorimers' address at the Welsh fishing village where they had first gone; but on inquiring, he found that Nancy had been there a few weeks only, and had then gone to London, and that Mr. Lorimer had left more than a year ago. He thought of advertising, but decided to wait for a little, and in the meantime had come to Brighton to stay for a day or two with his friend Charlie Melrose. His thoughts were still fixed on Nancy when Melrose came and tapped him on the shoulder.

"I've been looking for you everywhere, old man. What do you say to going to this concert that is on to-night at the Dome? It is something very good in the musical line, and they are bringing out a new singer. We might go."

"Yes, we'll go. It's so long since I heard any singing." And Dick sighed as he remembered the last time he had heard a song, when Nancy sang "Robin Adair" to him that last night they had been together.

"Then that's settled," said Charlie cheerfully. "And now we'll take a turn, for there's an awfully pretty girl I want you to have a look at. She has a picture sort of face"—he was an artist—"quite different from most of these dressed-up dolls," looking contemptuously at the crowd of fashionably dressed women.

Dick laughed. "I'm not a high and mighty artist like you, so I rather admire the 'dressed-up dolls'; but let us go after the 'picture-face.'"

But though they walked up and down they were not rewarded; and at last Charlie mournfully declared that "*she*" must have gone home, so they turned in to their hotel.

Charlie Melrose was right: the "picture-face" that had caught his artist's fancy had gone home, and in a pretty room facing the sea Nancy Lorimer and Mrs. Warrington were having a long talk together; for to-day they had something that occupied their thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. Nancy's training was over, and to-night she was to sing for the first time in public at the Dome—being, in fact, the "new singer" Dick was going to hear.

"If I should fail?"

"You will not fail," returned Mrs. Warrington with energy. "Don't think of the people who are listening, don't think of yourself; think only of your song, and then you *cannot* fail. Besides, Herr Schaeffer was more than satisfied with you this morning, and talked to me about your singing in oratorios. *He* has no fears."

"Yes, I must forget myself," said Nancy softly. "All nervousness is, I suppose, only another form of self-consciousness."

"Yes, that is all. And think how proud your father will be when he hears of your success." (Mr. Lorimer was in the South of France.) "I shall enjoy writing to tell him all about it. But you are looking pale, Nancy; what is the matter?"

"I have been thinking all day of Dick," said the girl softly. "I often think of him, but to-day he has never been out of my thoughts. It is more than two years since we said good-bye, and I have heard nothing from him."

"But that was your own doing, darling. Did you not tell him not to write?"

"Yes; I wanted him to feel absolutely free. But if he had cared I think he would have written to me by this time. It is the middle of November now—there has been plenty of time for a letter to come."

"But a letter might have miscarried."

"Oh no; they would forward it from Wales."

Poor Nancy! She did not know how vainly Dick had tried to find her.

Mrs. Warrington looked keenly at her. "Nancy, suppose that Dick is *glad* of the freedom you gave him, and that he has changed? He was very young, and two years is a long time at his age. Should you be sorry that you let him go?"

Nancy looked at her with eyes wide open in their wonder. "Sorry that I let him go if Dick is glad of his freedom? Oh, you don't understand. I love him so—love him with all my heart—that I am *glad*, really glad, if it makes him happy, that I should never see him again. I would give up my *life* for him—how can you think I would grudge him my *happiness?*"

Her eyes shone as she spoke, and her lips were trembling, and she looked more beautiful in her enthusiasm than Mrs. Warrington had ever seen her; but she could only kiss her tenderly, with a silent prayer that God would not require this sacrifice at her darling's hands.

In the meantime Dick Wynyard and his friend were lounging about the hotel, and lingering so long over their cosy little dinner that they were late in starting for the Dome, and Dick declared the concert would be half-over.

"Never mind," said Charlie; "anything as long as you don't hurry. The amount of precious time that is wasted in this world by people trying to be punctual is simply appalling. 'Take things easy' is my motto." And Dick inwardly agreed that it was one his friend most certainly acted up to.

That they were late there was no doubt. The first half of the programme was over, and the second part had begun, and they reached their seats amid a burst of applause and cries of "Encore! encore!" which a friend explained to Melrose were for the new singer, "who has turned out a success."

There was a little delay, and then she came on the platform, while Melrose drew a deep breath, and whispered to Dick, "The picture-face."

And it *was* a "picture-face" that smiled on the people crowding that vast hall, who renewed their applause at the sight of her. A slender, dainty figure, gowned in some soft creamy fabric that clung closely to her, the old-fashioned short-waisted bodice being girdled with a pale yellow sash; a sweet face, with large dark eyes and a very determined chin, and crowns of curly hair piled artistically on her small head.

But Dick's eyes took in none of these details: he only saw Nancy—the Nancy he had parted from two years ago—the Nancy he had vainly searched for since he came back to England—the girl he loved. Once more he was at Tilworth, with Nancy singing "Robin Adair," and her words came back to him—"It is to-morrow I should sing it, for then it will be true. This will be such a 'dull toon' without you."

And as if to make the illusion more real, Nancy began to sing the old song for her encore, though she did not guess how it thrilled *one* heart in her audience, or that, while her thoughts were with Dick, picturing him far away, he was at that very moment listening to her voice, and hanging on each well-remembered note.

She sang again—some pretty modern ballad—and was greeted with ringing cheers; but to Dick it was all a dream: he had seen her, had heard her sing the one song that was for ever associated with her in his memory, and yet she did not guess his presence; and he—how could he tell whether she still cared for him as in the old days?

He knew he could not see her that night, but it seemed an interminable time to wait until the morning to learn whether she had forgotten or whether she remembered.

He got her address from the man at the door, and, walking home, told Melrose all about it. Charlie was very sympathetic; being of a hopeful disposition, he was sure all would come right, and amused Dick not a little by suggesting that he should give him a commission to paint Nancy's picture—"for you know I spotted her to-day on the front."

All waiting-times must come to an end, and though it seemed to Dick that the morning would never dawn, it came at last—bright, fresh, and fair: a memory of summer to brighten the gloom of November.

He tortured himself on his way to her lodgings with the fancy that she might be out or might not be up; but on inquiring for Miss Lorimer, he was shown into a pretty sitting-room, and in front of the fire—looking very much as though she were reading some fresh message in its glowing depths—was Nancy!

She had not caught his name, and turned as if to greet a stranger—to see Dick!

For the first few moments she felt in a dream; she wanted to say so much—and, for the matter of that, so did he—and yet they were very silent; perhaps because love has a language of its own, and common every-day words seem strangely out of place in our happiest hour, when we are stirred to the very depths of our being.

But little by little they told each other the story of the past two years. On Dick's side there was little to tell, beyond the ordinary experiences of ranching; and yet, looking into her lover's face, Nancy saw how he had changed. The hard life had ennobled him, and from being the sweet-tempered, lazy boy, he was now a man of whom any woman might be proud.

In her turn, she told how they had left Tilworth, of the dreary year she had spent at the Dormans', and of the happy home she had found with her adopted mother.

"You must see her, Dick; she is so sweet and kind that you will love her, I know, as much as I do."

"But you have changed, Nancy; you are not the little girl I used to know. There is something different; perhaps the lines have gone out of your face, and you look so much happier."

"And the lines have come into yours," she answered; "and I like you better like this, Dick. You are a man now, and I can lean against you and trust you."

"That is how it should be," he said. "Do you remember, Nancy, that I always told you I should catch you up, and be years older than you in time?"

Then they laughed a little, and were silent again; and perhaps it was rather a relief to them both when Mrs. Warrington came in. She took in the situation at a glance; and no mother could have been more glad over the most dearly loved daughter's happiness than she was at the ending of Nancy's love-story.

"I seem to know you so well," she said to Dick, "that I can trust you with my dear child." And the pressure that he gave to her hand made her quite happy on that point. Dick Wynyard would be true to any trust, and Nancy would be safe in his keeping.

They had a merry little lunch together, and Mrs. Warrington and Dick had a long talk, while Nancy wrote to tell her father of her double happiness—her last night's success, but, best of all, of Dick's return—"For I want father to know as soon as he can," she explained, "that he may be glad with me."

Afterwards—after the cosy tea by firelight, when Mrs. Warrington had retired "to write letters," as she carefully explained, and they were alone together, Dick stood in his old attitude, looking down at Nancy so earnestly, that at last she broke the silence with—

"A penny for your thoughts!"

"I am thinking how strange our meeting has been," he said slowly. "When I was out there, I used to fancy to myself that I should come back and find you in the old home just as I had left you, and we should have one of our talks, and you should sing me 'Robin Adair.' I never guessed how we should really meet."

"Well, I did sing 'Robin Adair' to you; for, Dick, though I did not know you were there, all my songs are always sung to you. You are the only audience I care to please; and when I sing, I fancy you are there, and hope that you will like my song."

For an answer, he bent and kissed her, and held her hand in his for a long time without speaking.

"Nancy, I don't know about this singing of yours. Will you care to give it up and come to a country home with me, and leave the applause and all the excitement of a singer's life?"

"Dick!"

"Yes, but will it be right? It's the old tale, Nancy; I'm not clever, and can't easily put my thoughts into words; but I mean—as it is a talent, and if you can give pleasure to so many with your voice—ought I to ask you to give up this life you have chosen? is it selfish of me?"

"Dick dear, I'll tell you just what I think. A wife's place is with her husband; he comes first, before everybody and everything, and if my voice gives *you* pleasure, I shall be satisfied. But then, Dick, I can do more than that. I can sing for charity, and help in so many ways. I shall get up a choral society for the winter, and try to *educate* the people; for that is the only way to make them happy—to show them that there is a higher side to life. I have so many plans, Dick, for the people on your estate; you must help me to carry them out."

"And will you never regret taking me, Nancy? You might have found a better man, perhaps."

"Never, never, never! You don't understand, even yet, how much I love you, and I shall have to be teaching you all my life! I don't know how I lived without you, but I think it was that I loved you so much that I could bear anything for your sake."

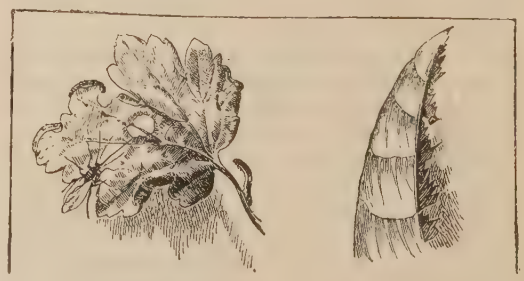
"Thank God for giving you to me!" he answered: and was content.

From that moment Dick Wynyard and Nancy Lorimer set their lives in the key of peace and harmony, to the same sweet tune of love.

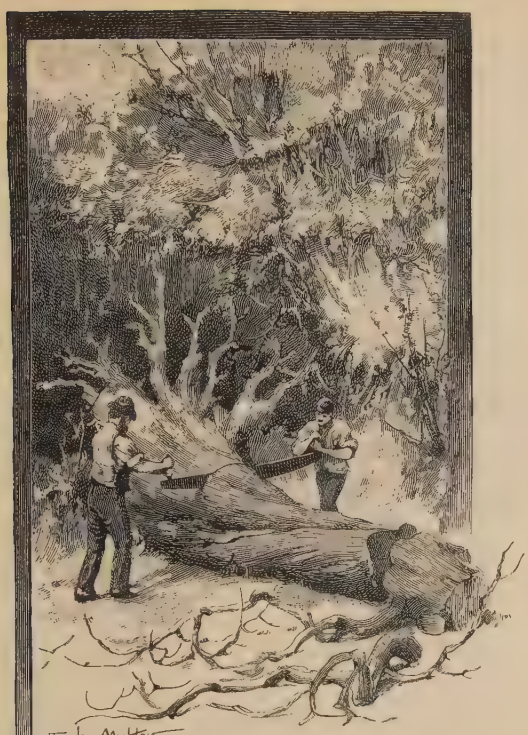
TOOLS AND WORKMEN AMONG THE WOODS.

BY THE REV. B. G. JOHNS, AUTHOR OF "GOD IN THE BOOK OF NATURE," ETC. ETC.

EVERY page in the book of Nature has a wonder and a beauty of its own, and many of the pages most full of strange and curious interest are just those least known and often passed by unnoticed. Most of us have watched a carpenter busily engaged in sawing a piece of wood, and seen how cleverly and keenly the sharp teeth of the saw cut through the trunk of a tree, or divide it up into long thin planks. Perhaps we may have tried to use the saw ourselves, to cut off some great branch that seemed in the way, or to fashion a small plank for the roof of the summer-house in the garden. If so, we have soon found out



SAW-FLY ON A GOOSEBERRY LEAF. PART OF THE RASP OF SAW-FLY.



AT WORK IN THE WOODS.

that sawing is no easy work: that the teeth of the saw are apt to become choked up with dust, or that the tool itself easily gets stuck fast in the wood or stone, not to be moved without great difficulty. All this is because the saw is not a perfect instrument, and that to learn how to use it aright requires time and careful teaching — in some cases, a long time.

If you will but walk with me into the wood, just beyond the meadow where the farmer's men are so busily at work, I will show you where you may find a clever and industrious little worker who has learned her business without a day's apprenticeship, and knows how to handle her tools without trouble or fatigue; while her saw is more complete and perfect, in its way, than was ever turned out of the finest factory in the world. This clever little workman, or, rather, workwoman (the female Saw-fly), has had for a teacher the same wise and good God who taught the honey-bee to build her cell of wax, and every bird of the wood to fashion her own special nest; and by Him it is that she is provided with the very exact tool best fitted for her work.

If you look at a carpenter's common saw, you will find it made of hard steel, the cutting edge of which is notched into sharp teeth, all pointing in one direction: and by means of these teeth the fibres of wood or stone are torn into small pieces or dust, and so the solid mass is cut through. The tool of the saw-fly, however, consists of two saws fitted back to back, and so arranged that while one is pushed forward the other is drawn back, until a cut of sufficient depth has been made. These saws have teeth not only at the edge, but scattered over the whole surface, so as to serve not only for cutting, but to act as files that clear away the opening. When not in use, the saws slip back into a case with two hinged flaps, and so are kept safely and out of the way.

The little saw-fly, indeed, has not to cut through anything harder than a tough leaf, the thin bark or rind of a tree, a bud, or a young shoot; but she does her work neatly, quickly, as with a cunning hand, and when the opening is made, into it she carefully drops her eggs. Not long after the cut is made, and the eggs are in their place, that part of the stalk or twig around it begins to swell, and a small lump is formed, as you may often see in the leaf or stem of a willow or a rose-bush. In a few days the eggs are hatched into tiny grubs, which pass into the chrysalis state, and shortly after become four-winged flies, all furnished with saws, and knowing how to use them like good workmen, as their all-wise Creator made and meant them to be. Nor, when the mother-fly has so far completed her task, does she forget what the meaning and object of it all is. She has been known to remain patiently on the leaf or twig where her eggs rest for days together, waiting for her young brood to

GREAT SAW-FLY (*Sirex gigas*), AND SECTION OF PINE-LOG PERFORATED BY GRUB.

appear, that she may duly feed them, and cover them with her wings from the heat of the sun, or against the attack of any stray foe that flies or crawls among the leafy boughs.

And if the work of the saw-fly is wonderful, no less extraordinary is that of a large two-winged fly (*Sirex gigas*), who may fairly be called a worker in metal.

NEST OF THE MASON-BEE IN AN IVY-CLAD STUMP.

This curious creature is actually furnished with two drills sharp enough and hard enough to pierce through a solid piece of lead; and it is said that during the war in the Crimea thousands of cartridges belonging to the French troops were found to contain bullets pierced in this extraordinary way. And the wonder in this case is all the greater because *Sirex* generally works on wood, and, as yet, we know not for what purpose the lead was pierced.

But if the work of *Sirex gigas* is hard to understand, there can be no doubt as to the beauty and meaning of the busy and ingenious toil of a whole tribe of wild bees, who well deserve the name of "Masons," who build solid houses of artificial stone. These, too, like the saw-flies, are masters of their trade before they begin to practise it. The wise instinct planted in them by the all-wise Author of their being is theirs from the first.

The first step of the mother mason-bee is to fix upon a proper situation for the abode of her future offspring—generally some quiet sheltered corner on the sunny south side of a wall. The next is to provide material for the building—a careful mixture of fine grains of earth and sand, which she gathers one by one, and then makes into a sort of cement with the saliva of her own mouth. This cement she moulds into tiny morsels about as big as small shot, and carries away to form the foundation of her house. Next come the walls of the cell, slowly built up of the same material, an inch high and half an inch in breadth, in shape somewhat like a small thimble. Into this cell she inserts one egg, with a few drops of honey, and pollen enough to feed the young grub when hatched; and then, having covered in the mouth of the cell and made all secure, proceeds to build chamber number two, of exactly the same size and shape. When complete, the mansion may contain from four to eight cells, some parallel to the wall and others at different angles, but all of one material, which soon becomes almost as hard as stone. The spaces between the cells are filled up with the same cement, while over the whole outside surface the clever little mason spreads a covering of coarser sand, in general colour and texture so like the wall itself, that any passing observer would take it for a chance daub of mud or mortar, instead of a model lodging-house, with every room occupied.

Other bees of the same family use different materials for building their nests; some taking fine dusty earth, chalk mixed with earth, or clay with sand. But each kind of bee chooses her own special dust, and works it up into glue or cement in her own way, according to the kind of house she is going to build. One selects a hollow in a large stone; another picks out a rotten post or paling, through which it is easy to bore; while another has been known to make use of a deserted oak-gall among thick boughs, or an empty snail-shell lying at the foot of the tree. But, whichever is chosen, the wise little mother never forgets the safety of her future children, but does all she can to secure it by covering up the nest from all prying eyes. Round the gall, among the branches, she carefully glues on a cluster of oak-leaves; while down among the dead leaves on the ground she cleverly decks the snail-shell with blades of grass, all cut to the right length and fastened securely to the house, like a tented roof.

Thus, turn where we will among the countless varieties of the insect world, in all alike will be found traces not only of the same Divine Power which planned all these curious details in creating each living thing, but planted in them also powers of skill, beauty, fitness, perception, and even of affection for their offspring, which could have come to them in no other fashion and by no other means. Nothing is more wondrous or more excellent of its kind than the nest of the mason-bee or the cosy cell of the saw-fly. And this for the best of reasons, in both cases alike—the skill, the beauty, the intelligence, and the fitness, either of workmen, tools, or work, spring first from one supreme Source: Him who made the earth, and man to rule over and enjoy it as in His sight.

"I AM COME."

A THOUGHT FOR THE NEW YEAR. BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A.

I.

THESE are very simple, common words, such as one might hear oftentimes any day in ordinary life; but, as spoken by Christ, they are of the deepest moment to man.

Jesus Himself said these words on several occasions, and said others in connection with them; and now, when many of us are thinking of His advent, will be a good time to think of what He Himself taught us about this coming of His.

There have been many utterances upon which even the fate of empires has depended; but these words, "I am come," might be truly said to be more important than them all.

Jesus tells us, in various places where He uses these words, "I am come," whom He came from, and whom He came to, and what He came for; and in this order let us think over some of these utterances now.

Jesus came from the Father, and to us. "I am come in My Father's name," He said in St. John v. 43; and, alas! He had also to add, "and ye receive Me not." "I am not come," He said, "of Myself; He that sent Me is true." And it was to that Father He was to return. "I am come into the world; again I leave the world and go unto the Father" (St. John xvi. 28). And when He returned to the Father He would tell Him how He had fulfilled all His mission. "Think not," He said, "that I am come to destroy the law . . . . I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (St. Matt. v. 17). Ah, yes! to fulfil it all for us poor creatures—for you, good reader, and for me; so that as years pass by we may not fear their ending; for at the end of this short life is the life eternal; and the life in the soul now shall be coupled with life eternal in the body hereafter. "I am come," said Jesus, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (St. John x. 10).

Jesus says, "I am come in My Father's name." Jesus always disclaimed an independent self. He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him" (St. John vi. 38); the works which He did were not His own (St. John xiv. 10); He was God's Servant, as well as God's Son (Isaiah xlii. 1). And so, Jesus did the very thing which the first man did not—He waited, and lived, and moved, in dependence on God. His actions, His life-plan were not outside God, but all carrying out the will of God. He moved in harmony with His Father in everything. His Father willed the salvation of poor sinners, and He was carrying it out.

Jesus does not come to us and say, "The Father is your enemy, and I am your friend; I am come to save you from Him. I am acting on my own account." Oh, no! what He says is this, "I am not come of Myself; I am come in My Father's name; I am come that you may have life."

The Father and the Son are one, poor sinner, in your salvation; they are going, if I might so speak, hand in hand together in it; in the Father's name the Son brings the message of love and peace. If Jesus had only Himself to consult, if He were living only just for Himself, if He had no work of the Father's to carry out, which of necessity involved His death, I am sure He would never have submitted to it. He would have claimed the privilege of sinless obedience, and never died. We know that He shrank from death; we know that He cried, "Not My will, but Thine be done," as though He said, "My part is to die; and I am one with the Father in this great work which is being carried on."

If Jesus had come of Himself He would have had no standing-ground as a Saviour for us; but as He has been sent by the Father, that makes the matter a different one altogether. Jesus says, "I have been sent;" "Lo, I come; in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, 'I delight to do Thy will, O My God.'" "God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved by Him" (St. John iii. 17). As a "sent One," He spoke the words of God; "for God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (St. John iii. 34). Jesus was a raised-up Servant of God, sent to bless in turning men away from their iniquities (Acts iii. 26).

The thoughts of Christ about Himself were that He was a "sent One;" He was always on the Father's message, carrying out something about a work in trust from another; His words to us are, "The Father sent Me, and I am come." And if we think of the Son as being sent, does not our mind go back at once to the Father as sending? When we send anyone on an errand, or to do anything, we send that person to be the instrument of ourselves—to tell something which we want to have told, or to do something which we want to have done; but we ourselves are, so to speak, in the messenger and his message. And the Father, the Sender, is with the Son, the "sent One." God must have wanted us, to have sent after us; there is a deliberation of thought, a determination in action, in this sending, which should greatly confirm us in our trust. When we send a messenger, there is something uppermost in our mind about which we send him. And there was something uppermost in God's mind, even the revelation of His love, and His desire that poor sinners should have the offers of His grace.

God felt the love, and He sent Jesus to tell men that He felt it. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4).

And so, we may comfort and strengthen ourselves by thinking that we have been in the Father's mind—that we are people not met with casually, and shown pity when our sad case was seen (though perhaps we

might not have been met at all, and so have been left just as we were), but that we are people who were well known to be in sad condition; and a Messenger—a Special Messenger, a Messenger whom God could trust with His greatest treasure—is sent by Him, with all His riches, to help us.

If the Father had not sent Jesus, He never could have said that He had come to do anything for us—to give us life. By His perfect holiness, He could have saved only Himself, He would have had nothing to give for us.

Think this, then, good reader, of yourself—"I have been sent after—I have had a place in the Divine thought, in the Divine action—something has happened between God and me."

To send, is to part with a messenger—to send him away; do you ever reflect that that is what God did with His only Son? He sent Him away—down into this world of sin and sorrow, away from that home in which there was holiness and peace. Jesus left heaven and came to earth. God parted with Him. He stands in our world of sin, and death, and pain, and conflict, and many a grief. He says, "I am come."

"What doest Thou, O Holy One, in a world like this? A holy world becomes Thee—the Holy One." "Had it been holy," is the answer, "I need not have been sent; an unholy world must have for its Saviour a holy Christ."

Did you ever reflect how the fact of Christ's always realising that He was in the world as a "sent One" must have been to Him a continual element of trial? No doubt, it was His delight to do His Father's will, and to be about His Father's business; but He had the cross ever before His mind. He knew that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected and crucified at last. He knew that "therefore had He come;" He had before Him always the terrors of anticipation. We know what this would be to us; we have no reason to suppose that it was any otherwise to Him. For He was true man, "of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting"; and when death really came, we know what horror filled His soul. It was death unlike all other death; and He knew that it would be death unlike all other death, for it was a curse-bearing death, such as none other had ever died; and seeing it was in His mission, it must have many a time perturbed His soul. Surely never was anyone sent on such a message as this; never had the words, "I am come," such meaning in human mouth, as they had in Jesus' soul, when He stood in the presence of His cross—sent—come.

And when we think of Jesus as coming from the Father, let us think of Him as coming from One who is true. "He that sent Me is true" (St. John vii. 28). We may get many a message in life, and yet not be able to depend upon it. Whom does the messenger bring his message from?

The importance of the messenger depends greatly on the one by whom he has been sent; and the One who sends here is "true." So then, when Jesus says, "I am come to tell you all the wonderful things of God," we know that they are true.

But what about God's law in all this message of free grace—how can God be true to His law, and yet save me? Jesus stills our fears with His words, "I am come"—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, but to fulfil."

The true God is true to His righteous law. His "sent One" fulfils it all; and then He offers Himself as a spotless sacrifice for those who had broken the law, who, by reason of the weakness of their fallen nature, could not keep the law, but who have to be made holy, and to be made keepers of the law, in the new power which He would give them. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 3).

And so, when Jesus comes to us—when He says to our hearts, "I am come, I am come with My hands full"—we know that He has the Father's full sanction in all that He offers sinners. He is not self-sent—"I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true" (St. John vii. 28). And although the offers that I make are beyond all understanding, yet let them not be beyond all acceptance. They are not, as is said in the proverb, "too good to be true;" they come from the One who is Truth itself—"He that sent Me is true."

"He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar," says the Apostle John (1 St. John v. 10); and the way that he has done this is by not believing that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. We must believe big things indeed—the biggest things, indeed, which can possibly be believed; but they come from the One who is absolute Truth—and by "the hand of His Messenger—His Son."—who says, "I am come—the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

II.

THUS has Jesus come; and now arises the important question, "Whom has Jesus come to?" He tells us Himself: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (St. Matt. ix. 13). "I am come," He says, "to call poor sinners." He has come to call you, and to call me. He has condescended to the highways and the hedges, and there He has found us, and there He has given us a call.

Ah, what a call it might have been—a trumpet-call to judgment—no invitation, but a summons. The voice might well have been one of thunder, and not the pleading one of love.

But the One who has said, "I am come," tells us by another "come" wherefore it was He came. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He came that we might come, and that we might have someone to come to. For had He not come—come as He did, and for what He did—how could we have come? Who would there have been to come to but the God we had offended? What access would there have been in grace? We might have been dragged, but we should never have gone of our own accord.

But Christ's word—the word which the Father sent Him to speak—was "come:" "I am come;" now you come. There is to be willingness in it all. There was willingness in Christ. "I lay down My life; no man taketh it from Me." Now He seeks for like willingness in us, that we should draw near to Him—come quite close up to Him—touch Him, yea more, lay hold of Him, and find life in Him. We should have called those who appeared to be worthy. He calls the unworthy; and the more unworthy we feel, the more sure may we be that He says to us, "Come."

Some ladies called to pay a visit to Lady Huntingdon, and during the visit her ladyship asked them if they had ever heard Mr. Whitefield preach. Upon their saying that they had not, she expressed a wish that they should hear him, telling them that he was to preach the next evening.

The ladies called again the following Monday, and Lady Huntingdon asked them if they had heard Mr. Whitefield preach the evening before, and how they liked him. The reply was—

"Oh, my lady, of all the preachers we have ever heard, he is the most strange and unaccountable. Amongst other preposterous things—would you believe it?—he declared that Jesus Christ was so willing to receive sinners that He did not object to receive even the devil's castaways. Now, my lady, did you ever hear of such a thing since you were born?"

To which Lady Huntingdon made the following reply:

"There is something, I acknowledge, a little singular in the invitation, and I do not recollect ever having met with it before; but as Mr. Whitefield is below in the parlour, we will have him up, and let him answer for himself."

So Whitefield was taxed with what he had said, and he owned to it all.

"I certainly, my lady, must plead guilty to the charge; whether I did what was right or otherwise, your ladyship may judge from the following circumstance: Did your ladyship notice about half an hour ago a very modest single rap at the door? It was given by a poor, miserable-looking, aged woman, who requested to speak with me. I desired her to be shown into the parlour, when she accosted me in the following manner: 'I believe, sir, you preached last evening at such a chapel?'—'Yes, I did.'—'Ah, sir, I was accidentally passing the door of that chapel, and hearing the voice of someone preaching, I did what I have never been in the habit of doing—I went in. And one of the first things I heard you say was that "Jesus Christ was so willing to receive sinners that He did not object to receive the devil's castaways." Do you think, sir, that Jesus Christ would receive me?'"

Mr. Whitefield answered her, there was not a doubt of it, if she was but willing to come to Him. And this was the case, and it ended in the poor woman's conversion.

Oh, we make too much about bringing something with us when we come to Jesus. We should make nothing at all. He says, "I am come," and He might add, "bringing with Me everything that a poor sinner can want, bringing it with Me to give to him, without money and without price."

We, too, may say—nay, if we are to be saved, must say, "I am come;" but it is bringing with us nothing at all.

> "Nothing in my hands I bring—
> Simply to Thy cross I cling."

A gentleman used to teach a class of poor boys in Philadelphia on Sunday evenings. One evening a newspaper-boy met him in the street and said, "Oh, captain, I'm mighty glad to see ye; there's poor Billy, he's so badly, and so wants to see ye!" So the gentleman went with the little boy, and found Billy lying on some rags in the corner of a wretched room, very ill. Billy was so delighted when the captain went in. The room was dark, and Billy, with a feeble voice, said, "I'se here, captain; I am mighty glad to see ye." The gentleman was filled with pity for him, and asked him if he could send him a nurse, or some medicine, or some nice food?

"No, captain, it wasn't that I wanted ye for; I wanted to ax ye two questions. The first is, Did you tell us the other night as how Jesus Christ died for every feller?"

"Yes, I did; for Jesus Christ tasted death for every man."

Billy then said, "I thought so. Now I've another question. Did you tell us as how Jesus Christ saves every feller that axes Him?"

"Yes," said the gentleman; "for every one that asketh receiveth."

Then, in a very feeble but happy voice, poor Billy said, "Then I know that He saves me, for I axes Him." Billy's head dropped back on the pillow of rags, a fruit of one of the "I am comes" of Jesus. Had Jesus never come, whither would poor Billy have gone?

Let me tell you of another child. We can learn from children, as well as from grown-up people, in Divine things. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God perfects praise, and there is many a thing hidden from the wise and prudent which is revealed unto babes. To many it is the best day of their lives when they become as a little child. I tell you this, because you may be one of those who are intending to meet Christ's "come" by your "come," when you have made yourselves better and, as you think, "fit." I quite believe in the honesty of the intention of many who truly desire to make themselves more fit, more presentable, as they think, before they come to Christ. I do not think that the idea of *merit* is of necessity uppermost in the mind of everyone who thinks he must make preparation before he comes to Christ. They think they must in some way be prepared for Christ, before He will take them.

A little boy said to his mother, "How am I to be saved, mother?"

"By taking God at His word, and believing what He has said concerning His Son."

"But have I nothing to *do?*" said the boy. "I thought I must *do* something; for I was once told that I must be good, or else God would have nothing to do with me."

"My child, Jesus has done what was needed; and you are saved by knowing that all is done."

"But I am not good," said the boy. "Will God have nothing to do with me unless I am good?"

"My boy, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; He receives the bad, not the good, else none would be saved. It is your badness, not your goodness, that you are to bring to Him."

"Well, that is good news," said the little fellow. "Oh, how cruel to tell me that God would have nothing to do with me unless I was good!"

"Yes, it was; you can't be good until you have come and given your badness to Jesus."

How strange it would sound to some if I were to say to them, "Jesus says, 'I am come,' and is calling to you to bring Him your badness!"

What! has He come from heaven for that? Yes, for that. Jesus takes it, and all the giving is on His side; He gives *Himself* to us, and we fall down and worship, and say, "We give *ourselves* to Him."

III.

AND now that Jesus has come this long, long journey from heaven to earth, what has He come for? To give and to get. First to give, and then to get. He is to get the Kingdom, and glory, and honour, and power, and all things are to be put in subjection under His feet; but it is to be all by giving. As the husbandman gives the seed to the ground before he can get from it any harvest, so Jesus gives Himself before He can receive anything for Himself. We are glad that Jesus will receive; we are glad that as He once said, "I am come into the world," so also He said, "I go unto My Father." We are glad for His own sake that He should be crowned with glory and honour (Heb. ii. 9). We are glad for ours, because He has gone to prepare a place for us; and He has said He will come again and receive us unto Himself, that where He is, there we may be also (St. John xiv. 3).

But now, if we say to Him, "Wherefore art Thou come, O Jesus?" He says, "I am come a light into the world" (St. John xii. 46). "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (St. John x. 10). "I am come from the land of light, and I must needs be a light." Jesus could not help being a light—from His very nature He must shine. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; and He was the brightness of the Father's glory (Heb. i. 3); in Him was life, and the life was the light of men—and that light shone in darkness (St. John i. 4). It was into a dark world that Jesus came when He said, "I am come a light," and it is a dark heart into which He shines when He first comes into your poor heart or mine.

And now, are we willing to hear Jesus saying, "I am come a light?" Christ tells us that there are some who love not the light, and will not come to the light, because their deeds are evil. Perhaps they would be pleased enough to have Jesus for a Saviour, just to deliver them from the punishment of sin; but they do not want Him for a Saviour to deliver them from the power of it.

But if Jesus come to us as a Saviour, He must come as a light. By His very presence He must reveal; we look upon Him who knew no sin, and the contrast between Him and us reveals that we are full of sin. Light means revelation, and the sin is there to be revealed. Do I want to hide it, O Jesus? Do I want to say, "Do not shine so brightly, for then I seem to myself too vile even to bear the sight?" Nay, I am willing to seem vile; I am willing to accept Thy revelations of what I am, for with them come the revelations of what Thou art. Thy light is the light of life; let the darkness of my heart flee before it.

To be cast into outer darkness would be to be cast into a condition or a place in which would never be heard those words of Christ, "I am come a light."

But is this all that Jesus brings when He says, "I am come a light"? Let us never think of Christ without bright thoughts. Christ's light always reveals in fulness. All the comfort, all the safety, all the warmth, all the healthfulness connected with light, are ours in Him. My soul wants all these—"in Thy light shall we see light." I find I am groping everywhere, and must, apart from Christ. He is the only light both *of* life and *in* life; and from Him only can I hope for anything in the valley of the shadow of death.

A lieutenant in an Iowa regiment was brought into the hospital, wounded in the shoulder. At first it was thought that he would recover; but after a few days he rapidly declined. Just before his death, a lady nurse said to him, "Lieutenant, you have but a few moments to live; if you have any word to send to your wife and little one in Iowa, you must speak it very quickly."

He looked up at her, his face shining like an angel's, and said, "Tell my wife that there is not a cloud between me and Jesus."

Christ was at that death-bed; and surely His voice might have been heard speaking there, and saying, "I am come—a light."

And Jesus says, "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"—abundance of life. Jesus came to death, in order that He might bring life. The life which He came to bring had to travel by the road of death. He partook of the abundance of death—death in all its fulness—that we might have abundance of life—life in all its fulness. Life all round—life for the body in the resurrection day; life for the soul until then, and after then.

We take scanty views of the life-giving powers of Christ. We act and think as though He doled out life in drops, instead of flooding the soul with it in a stream. The word is that "whosoever is athirst" is to come and "take of the water of life freely." Many of us take of the water of life, but we do not do so freely. We bring a little vessel, and do not come with faith to have even that filled. We are straitened not in Christ, but in ourselves. When the prophet was going to do a kindness to the widow-woman, and to give her oil with which to redeem her son, he told her to bring vessels not a few; and when she did so he filled them all. We bring Christ a small capacity of faith, and so cannot receive all that He would

give. The six water-pots of stone at Cana in Galilee contained two or three firkins apiece, but Jesus's command was that they should be filled. One water-pot full would have been a great deal to turn into wine; but He was ready to fill all six. The people filled them up to the brim, and wine was drawn out as it was needed. That abundance was an earnest of His after life and work for man. When the Apostle speaks of the grace of Jesus and of the life that comes by that grace, "abundance" is the keynote of it all. They that "receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life through Jesus Christ." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 21). There is sin abounding, but there is grace abounding more exceedingly, for Jesus says, "I am come that they might have life abundantly."

Alas! how few there are who can say that "their cup runneth over!" Even small as it is, they do not let Christ fill it. It is not held up to Christ until He pours into it all that it can contain. Perhaps during the coming year we shall understand Him better. When He says to us, "I am come that you may have life abundantly," we shall say, "Fill me out of Thy fulness, O Jesus; make my heart a larger vessel to hold more of Thee; let the life that comes from Thee be stronger and stronger in me. I want abundant life. I want to feel its vibrations, its powers, its vitality, the capacity that it gives for enjoyment, for action."

Ah, we are living too feebly—living indeed it may be, but, so to speak, merely dragging along in life. Our vitality is low, and we are feeble all round. We want the abundance of life. We want to feel it so strong, so invigorating, that even the feebleness of natural life shall not be able to cast us down and make us miserable, and stale, and flat.

Jesus says, "I am come that it may be thus with you. However large your hearts may be, I am come to fill them." But He can only fill what there is there to be filled; and who can enlarge our vessels? The Holy Spirit. He can make us hunger and thirst for Christ. He can empty out what hinders the capacity of the vessel now; He can make us open our mouth wide, and Christ will fill it.

It is a large-minded Christ and a large-handed Christ that meets us at the beginning of a new year. It is One who says, "I am come with both My hands full—with life, and all that belongs to life—that you may have abundantly."

But we must not forget another aspect of Christ's coming. He has come for conflict with evil, for the destruction of the works of the devil, for the working out of practical righteousness.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (St. Matt. v. 17). "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." "For judgment am I come into the world."

And in the conflict with evil, and the setting-up of the Kingdom of the Cross, there must be warfare. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father," etc. (St. Matt. x. 34). "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division" (St. Luke xii. 52).

And this we have found. The true conflict never begins until sin and Satan meet with a Christ who has come into a man's heart. It was feeble fighting before, it is strong fighting now; and how often we have felt our hearts almost rent in twain by the bitterness of the strife! We cannot perhaps account for it; we say, I wanted all peace, and I expected all peace; but Jesus says, "I am come as the Captain of your salvation, and under My banner you must strive with sin as you never strove before."

When Jesus says, "I am come," we must look at His words all round; it must be enough for us that it is He.

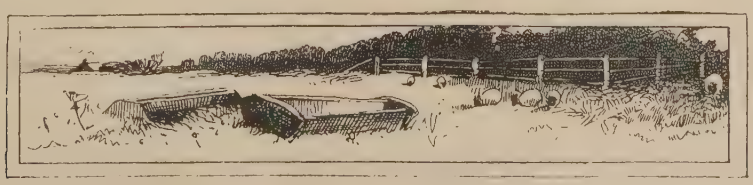
"Wherefore art thou come?" was the question of Joshua to the one he saw with a drawn sword in his hand; and the answer was that he had come as the Captain of the Lord's host.

To us, now at the commencement of another year, let the one grand thing be to hear the voice of Jesus, and to hear Him saying, "I am come." Is it Thou, Jesus—Thy very self? Yea, it is Jesus that has come.

Then let us say, "Welcome! in what form Thou wilt, to do what Thou wilt, to have what Thou wilt; my word concerning all is 'Welcome.'"

Voices, O Jesus, there are upon earth, which are soft, and sweet, and low. Loved ones there are whose footfall across our threshold is like music to our ears; they have come to us—we longed for them, and they are here; but, O my Lord, above them all let me hear Thy footfall within my heart, Thy voice whispering there. No music to my heart like Thy words of presence, saying,

"I AM COME."



PICOTÉE: A SKETCH.

"God hath His small interpreters. The child must teach the man."

SHE was standing on a seaweed-covered rock, with the waves splashing up over her feet and bathing her little brown legs; her blue bodice, snowy-white shirt, and short scarlet petticoat, making the tiny erect figure stand out against the background of grey cliff; a ruddy-brown little face, crowned with a curious little top-knot of brown hair, both her sunburnt hands clasped over her brow, shading her eyes as she strained them first in one direction, then in another, over the calm blue sea. It was perfect in its loveliness, but there was a thick white line on the horizon which seemed to be regarded with some anxiety by the searching eyes; for Picotée leapt from her rock with a sigh, and hurriedly climbed the track on the cliff behind. The little feet carried her quickly over the short hot grass to the point which jutted out into the sea, and from which there was an open expanse of view. Two young Englishmen were lying on the grass close to the edge of the cliff. A little way back was an old grey pillar, raised on some rough stone steps, which the younger of the two was sketching carefully.

"Hulloa! Dennis; a lady-bird has alighted on your sketch! What a picturesque little figure—the scarlet petticoat and whole turn-out!"

"My friend Picotée, I declare! I have a chance now of getting her portrait."

"Catch her quickly, while that red contrasts with the grey stone. Look at her, stretching herself to the extreme of her great height against the steps! She shifts like a kaleidoscope. But, I say, Dennis, that 's startling!"

"What 's startling?" said Dennis, who was bending over his colour-box; and, looking up suddenly, exclaimed, "That 's *beautiful!*"

The grey stone column stood clear against the blue sky, and by the foot knelt the little figure, all the queer little bravado look gone, the small brown hands raised with a gesture wholly unchildlike, the sunny head bent reverently. The two young men were silent, and Dennis paused in his sketch.

"Aren't you going to catch her?" asked his companion.

Dennis laid down his brush and waited.

"Not till that earnest little prayer is over. I feel more inclined to take off my hat than paint."

"You must do her from recollection, then. It 's a lovely little picture."

Picotée herself, who was totally unconscious of any spectators, got up and vanished. The sketch was finished, and Dennis and his friend strolled home. Home at present was in the small village auberge, where Picotée acted as general help to her grandfather and grandmother, who kept it and took charge of the child; the father being proprietor of one of the large fishing-boats, and frequently absent for long periods at a time. She was grilling fish for their supper as the two strolled in, and Dennis, who attracted all children, and was attracted by them, stopped to watch the operation.

"When do you expect your father home, Picotée?"

"To-morrow, monsieur, I hope; but there 's a bad look on the sea—we shall have a storm. I don't like the sky." And Picotée shook her head with the air of a sage.

"Do you think so? I thought it looked well."

"Ah! monsieur does not know the signs as I do, after years here;" and Picotée turned her comical little face, reddened by the embers. "It takes *years* to give experience, monsieur!"

"No doubt," laughed Dennis. "And your years here are how many, Picotée?"

"All my life, monsieur, of course! and I was ten on St. Peter's Day."

"Well, that is some experience, certainly, Picotée; but let us hope you will be wrong this time."

Picotée, however, was not wrong, for by midnight there was a perfect tempest, and the auberge was thronged by all the stay-at-home male population, most of whom were past fishing days, but keenly alive to the perils of their sons and younger brethren.

Dennis and his friend joined the party, and at about two in the morning they proposed to adjourn to the cliff, to see if there were any signs of the returning boats. As Dennis mounted the stairs to get his overcoat, he was suddenly confronted by a white-robed Picotée with very wide-open dazed eyes.

"Monsieur, the storm has come, you see; and father—what will become of father? He will be safe, won't he, monsieur? for I prayed to the good Father in heaven to-day for him. *Say* he will be safe, monsieur!"

The little brown hands were clasped together again beseechingly, and Dennis laid his hand kindly on her head.

"Yes, Picotée, yes. I think he will. Now you go to bed."

"And monsieur is going out in this storm?" as he reached down his coat. "Ah! monsieur, I must stay awake a little longer, and ask the good God to take care of you, then. Do be careful, monsieur!" And the little face was a curious mixture of anxiety and trust.

Dennis and his friend strode out into the darkness, and battling with all their strength against the wind, reached the stone obelisk, where was gathered a host of anxious watchers. The remembrance of Picotée's kneeling little figure flashed into Dennis's mind, and

"He saw two perfectly unlikely figures sitting opposite each other."—*p.* 203.

he understood now the reason of the earnest little supplication. He sprang on to the rock and strained his eyes through the darkness, and, sure enough, there was a light rounding the point. If it rounded it, and could keep out for a short while, it would be all right; but with that wind, and the tide as it was, there was but little chance. He leapt down from the rock and explained to the men, and in a moment he, his friend, and a crowd of the able-bodied were rushing down the cliff. The light was gone now; again, there it was, and, alas! flashing nearer every moment. "There's no hope in this wind; they'll be on the rocks in a moment!" No! Again the boat righted itself, but only again to be furiously driven by the tempest, and in a few moments it was near enough for the sailors to be seen. Dennis looked round on his companions, and, after a short confabulation with a stalwart middle-aged man, tore off his coat and tied a stout rope round his waist.

"Look here; take this," handing his watch to his friend. "Someone must make an effort; and you mustn't, with all you have depending on you. Nothing will harm me; and if anything happens to me it doesn't matter to anyone."

Dick was slightly slow in his movements and his comprehension, and before he had taken it well in Dennis and his companions had advanced to the foaming waves, while the men on the shore grasped the rope. They were not a moment too soon: the boat struck and heeled over, and the four fishermen were struggling in the waves.

"Courage! mes amis, courage!" shouted the barber from the shore. There is something in shouting, if one feels unable to do anything better.

In a short time three were safe, one still clinging to the boat.

"One more attempt!" shouted Dennis. "Who will help?" and dashed again into the foaming surf, but this time with rather failing strength. A little child's prayer seemed sounding in his ears, and with a mighty effort he swam forward, grasped the man, and, giving one shout to those ashore to pull, struck out bravely. The fury of the tempest was at its height, and as the two were drawn through the waves they were dashed against a rock, and reached the shore unconscious.

"Picotée's father!" exclaimed the barber. "Why, and he the best swimmer! and yet he would have been lost but for monsieur."

By the time the doctor arrived, Picotée's father had revived, but Dennis was still unconscious, and the old doctor shook his head over him. "Monsieur has sustained an injury on the head; he must have been thrown against the rock whilst saving Jacques." It was impossible to discover more; perfect quiet was the only thing at present, and monsieur his friend must have patience.

It was dreary work for some days. The storm continued, Dennis lay unconscious, and Picotée and her father, whose broken arm did not hinder his waiting on monsieur, looked graver and graver.

Five or six weeks after the accident, Dick had left his friend under Picotée's care, while he took an airing at the door of the auberge.

The diligence from Dinan rattled up, and Dick turned carelessly to watch it, too sadly anxious to take much notice; but, wonder of wonders! what perfect type of Englishwoman was descending from "la banquette"? Grey alpaca dress, black shawl, black bonnet with lilac bow, cotton umbrella, and that most unmistakable English basket with two lids, both of which gaped open, and newspaper wrappings protruded. The rather stout figure reached the ground, and grasping her belongings, was advancing to the door.

Dick suddenly sprang forward: "Mrs. Parsons! How in the name of wonder have you got here? and what a welcome and delightful sight you are!" and Dick seized both her hands. "You are the very person I should have most wished to see; but how did you know anything about where we were? and do you know Mr. Dennis is ill—has had an accident?"

Mrs. Parsons was never flustered, and, spite of her surroundings, and her perilous descent from her lofty seat, she retained her usual calm, made a sort of combination of bow and curtsey, and replied—"If you please, sir, it was hearing of Mr. Dennis's accident from your sister that brought me to these foreign parts, the which I never have approved of, nor of his travelling so much about them; but if my master is ill, wherever it is, it's my duty to come."

"Well, Mrs. Parsons, let me assure you you are the most welcome sight I've had for long. He's had a serious accident, saving a sailor, and he's unconscious still; but the doctor holds out hopes. Come along in to him."

Mrs. Parsons followed Dick through the kitchen, up the narrow stair, into a long low room, with a curtained recess at one end, behind which lay Dennis in what Mrs. Parsons rightly described as a "strange bed" for "my gentleman." And she opened her eyes, and readjusted her spectacles as if to make sure she saw aright, for by the said "strange bed" was a still stranger little nurse—Picotée, with the little brown top-knot of hair, with one hand waving a green branch to keep the flies off monsieur, and with the other gently bathing his head. Her little wooden sabots were in the middle of the room, and she stood with rosy feet on the bare tiles.

"Bless my heart!" ejaculated Mrs. Parsons; and at the sound Picotée turned with a warning finger. Then seeing the dignified personage, she desisted from her cares, and making a profound but rather comical curtsey, whispered—

"Pardon, madame! It is no doubt monsieur's mother?" with a questioning glance at Dick, who with difficulty suppressed a smile.

"No; not his mother. An old friend of monsieur's. Took care of him when he was a boy," explained Dick.

"Ah! oui! oui!" said the little French girl, with ready comprehension. "Madame must not be so vexed! He *is* better."

Two days later, when Dennis opened his eyes from a real sleep, with a confused feeling of being back in the noise and heat of London, he saw two such perfectly unlikely figures sitting opposite one another that he closed them again, feeling sure he was dreaming or wandering, and lay quiet till the softest and most melodious of little voices, gently singing a quaint Breton lullaby, made him open them again.

Sure enough there was a figure he knew well in his London house—Mrs. Parsons just as she always was—only more so: the cap with shaded purple ribbon, the little shawl, the grey gown, the big apron, and the spectacles in which it was supposed Mrs. Parsons slept. However, Mrs. Parsons was *looking* nearly as surprised as Dennis *felt*, for her spectacles were perched on the end of her nose, and she was gazing over them. Her work lay on her knees, and her scissors were at full cock, with the interrogative expression of her countenance fully reflected by them. Dennis slowly and quietly moved his head on his pillow till his eyes could reach the point of Mrs. Parsons' vision, and there sat an upright trim little figure on a wooden stool—a little sabot near—one pink bare foot perched on tiptoe, the other gently beating time, little scarlet petticoat, white shirt, rounded pink arms, and a brown face, with ruddy-brown hair in the quaint top-knot, long dark eyelashes resting on her cheek, and a sweet rosy mouth from which came the warbling notes. She sang gently on, each verse ending with a plaintive little refrain. No; this was not London.

Dennis closed his puzzled eyes again, and lay peacefully enjoying the soft warbling; the little singer's voice grew softer and softer, and just as she was letting the notes die away she raised her brown eyes, and in one instant was on her knees, with her little hands clasped, and her brown eyes raised. "Oh see! he lives! He is awake!" Mrs. Parsons' spectacles dropped off, and the scissors dropped down with a horrible clatter on the tiled floor. "Did anyone ever see such a child?" But the cause of this sudden little act of devotion was soon apparent, and Mrs. Parsons' own "Thank God!" was as fervent as Picotée's.

Dennis's recovery was rapid after this, and six weeks later Jacques and Picotée conveyed him and Mrs. Parsons in the fishing-boat to St. Malo, where they were to cross to Southampton. Picotée's gratitude and devotion to Dennis had increased daily; she had toiled late and early to make monsieur happy and comfortable. Flowers which she went far to get, fruits which she saved up her little earnings to buy, Breton songs—all were brought as little offerings to her friend, and with such simplicity and brightness, such fun and merriment, that Dennis, who had come to Brittany tired of all the world, and more tired of himself, with thicker fogs over his spirit than the worst of London ones, had by degrees been brightened into a new existence by the sunny child. He felt quite mournful at leaving the quiet auberge and Picotée's grateful devotion; but he was English enough almost to wish to lose the last hour or two of her company rather than have any demonstrations of grief at St. Malo. She exceeded herself in merriment in the boat, sang all Dennis's favourite songs, and made Mrs. Parsons laugh till the tears ran down her cheeks and the spectacles had to be resumed.

"Such a child for fun, and yet so good and pious, though French," had been Mrs. Parsons' frequent remark, and she had been obliged to acknowledge that these weeks had been very pleasant, in spite of being spent in foreign parts, and "amid strange ways."

Picotée, with her ten years, was more of a woman than Dennis gave her credit for. Arrived at St. Malo, she sprang out with Mrs. Parsons' portentous basket, but further than the quay she had no intention of going, and Dennis, laden with his artist's "properties," suddenly found a little womanly grave face raised to him, with the old gesture of the little brown clasped hands.

"Adieu, monsieur! I pray for monsieur always. Adieu!" and with one profound *révérence*, she turned and sprang back into the boat. Dennis need not have been afraid of tears. In a moment she turned up her laughing face. "Father will see monsieur on to the boat, and I stay here and sing. Adieu, monsieur!"

Half an hour later the boat steamed out of the harbour, tossing Jacques and Picotée in its "wash," and though it was impossible to hear the child's voice then, she stood at the end of the little vessel, an erect, small, brave figure, with the brown top-knot and the scarlet petticoat waving in the breeze—Picotée, who had the grateful devotion of a woman and the undoubting faith of a little child, whose simple prayers would be offered for him, the fashionable London man. He turned to see after Mrs. Parsons' comfort, but finding her established with her umbrella over her head and the double-lidded basket at her feet, with an expression of immovable endurance suited to the perils and sufferings of a sea voyage, albeit on the smoothest of seas, he raised his glass for a farewell look at the boat and Picotée. It was not quite fair, for she had not counted on the revealing power of glasses, and, secure in the impossibility of monsieur seeing more than a limited distance, the bright little figure was crouching down by the mast, with the little hands over her face in a passion of tears.

Dennis felt he was seeing what was not meant for his eyes, but it was only another of Picotée's silent little lessons.

In Dennis's studio hang two water-colour sketches—one of a Breton child kneeling by a grey stone column; the other of a Breton "interior," and the same little child perched on a stool sewing.

"It's a curious thing," remarked Dick one day, "how much improved Dennis's pictures are! Altogether different—more soul."

"Naturally," responded his sister; "he's a much nicer man altogether. He was disappointing before.

I like him now. Brittany and his accident did him a lot of good. I must ask him to let me come to his studio some day."

About a year after she went.

After a careful inspection all round, a good deal of fun, a good deal of chaff, she returned to the two sketches opposite the window, and remained transfixed before them till she was roused by Dennis.

"You seem to like those?"

"I like them better than all the rest put together! Is it some real child, or just a fancy thing?"

"A *very* real child! My first teacher."

"Teacher! of what? Very bad French, I should think."

"You always did say my French was execrable."

"And so I say still. Seriously, Dennis, what did she teach you? I've dated a great improvement in you from the time you were half-drowned in Brittany—in your character, *not* in your French. Tell me—*how* did she teach you?"

"*Just by being what she was*, Lily. This," pointing to the little kneeling figure, "and *that*—that's my view from my sick-bed of my Breton nurse!"

"*Oh!* now I know. Picotée! I see—I understand, Dennis. *I* owe Picotée a great deal. If you had come back from Brittany like what you went, I——"

"*Well!* what?" But a sudden gravity had come over her and him. "*Some day* I shall take you to see my friend Picotée!"

"Some day" was the next summer, on their honeymoon.

TWO WAYS OF SPENDING TIME.

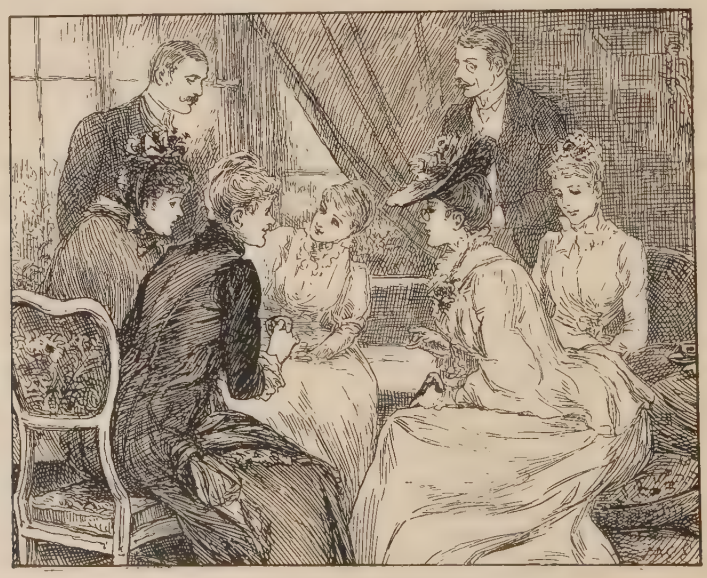
A SKETCH.

RS. MANNERS was a very busy woman—so busy, that, to quote her own words, "she never had time for anything."

Every night she either gave or attended some entertainment, therefore was, of course, too tired in the morning to leave her room before twelve o'clock. After that there were a hundred things to attend to before luncheon: her dressmaker or her milliner to be interviewed—and very long and very frequent were the interviews—invitations to be issued or answered, as well as innumerable letters to so many "dearest friends" to be written, flowers to be arranged, who was to pair with whom at dinner, who must take precedence of whom, and the *menu* to be concocted for the next grand dinner.

Probably there would be at least one guest to entertain at luncheon, if Mrs. Manners were herself at home. On the departure of this guest a brief rest, solaced by some highly spiced novel, must be had if possible. Then calls must be made, or shopping be done. Then the long gossiping entertainment of afternoon tea, mostly barely ending in time to dress for dinner.

The lady was far too weary, when her day's work



"The long gossiping entertainment."

was over, to pray, excepting occasionally, and in the most perfunctory manner. She "never had time" to read her Bible, nor to superintend the religious training of her children. In fact, these latter were relegated to the care of a fashionable governess and an injudicious nurse, and were comparatively strangers to their mother. Occasionally one of them, beautifully dressed and unexceptionally behaved, accompanied her to church, when she had time to go there, or sat by her side in her pretty victoria when she drove in the park. But that was all. She knew that her eldest girl was pretty and the younger plain, that one was clever and one dull, and that the youngest was growing dreadfully quickly; but she knew no more about them than just that. She had no time to gather them round her knee, and tell them stories at "the children's hour." No time to play with them, no time to win their confidence, no time to teach them their baby prayers, nor even to ask if they ever said them. She had no time to visit the poor, nor to see after the spiritual welfare of her servants. Poor Mrs. Manners! No wonder was it that her hair was turning grey, her face showing premature marks of age. No wonder that, worn out in the service of self and the world, she was becoming more and more discontented, fretful, and bad-tempered.

"Face-joy's a costly
mask to wear,"

says a famous poetess; and the mask which Fashion compels its votaries to wear sooner or later becomes a torment to body and soul.

No time to prepare for Eternity! No time to learn the manners of the Heavenly City! No time to make ready for that one only day which is *certain* to come—the day of death.

Poor Mrs. Manners! Shall we not pity her?

* * * * * *

Mrs. Seyton was also a very busy woman—so busy that she could not afford to lie abed in the mornings, but, like the "virtuous woman" of the Proverbs, rose betimes. Thus she secured the first, freshest time of the day for prayer and quiet meditation on the Word of God. She never left her room without dedicating the day to the service of Him who gave it.

"Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

This was her constant aspiration.

"Her children loved and trusted her."

The good old rule of "early to bed and early to rise" makes a sunshiny breakfast-table, and very seldom indeed was there to be seen a cross or bored face at the morning meal at Seyton House. After breakfast business began. Business it was, for there was a large household, and its mistress looked "well to the ways" thereof, but was never either bustling or hurried. The calls of the fashionable world were unheeded by Mrs. Seyton, therefore she had time for every necessary duty, and many quiet, homely pleasures too. She was no anchorite, and did not think it essential to Christianity to wear dingy clothes or ugly bonnets; but such things were subordinate. They occupied but little either of her thoughts or her time, and were powerless to tempt her to dissipation or debt. The care that furrows many a woman's brow and sours her temper—the knowledge of secret debts and the inability to pay them—was unknown to Mrs. Seyton.

Her servants knew that she was their friend, and did not hesitate to come to her for advice or help. Her children loved and trusted her. In her fond arms they had wept their baby tears and told their baby griefs. At her knees they had learned to pray. The sound of "mother's" approaching step and gentle voice was always hailed with delight. "Mother" must be told all their secrets and answer all their questions. The hour of dusk was their own. Who could tell such wonderful fairy tales, such sweet Bible stories, as mother? Who could teach them such merry rhymes, such pretty games? The nurture and instruction of her children was an occupation very dear and important to Mrs. Seyton. Then she had to hear her husband's account of his day's work, often to advise or to cheer him.

Then there were her Bible-classes—one for men and one for women; also a singing-class for the latter. Twice a year she gave a good dinner at her own house to all the poorest, most joyless, most suffering people that she could find. At all times she considered herself the servant of all those who needed help of any sort, and, for Christ's sake, was ever ready to give up her own pleasure to the need of another, feeling the Master's words, "Ye have done it unto Me," the sweetest of rewards.

No life is devoid of trouble, and the followers of a crucified Lord must suffer.

Mrs. Seyton had her troubles; but recognising that they were the loving chastenings of her Lord, she could endure them patiently, and "worry" was unknown to her. At fifty she was still quite a young woman, and her face was bright with the joy and peace that the service of Christ gives even in this changing world.

Dear reader, there are always two ways of spending time. Either for self or God; either for this world or the next. How are you spending *your* time?

S. W.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

JAN. 17TH. PRIDE AND INTEMPERANCE REBUKED.

To read—Isa. xxviii. 1—13. *Golden Text—Prov.* xx. 1.

INTRODUCTION. This chapter contains the first of five woes pronounced upon Samaria, Judæa, and Assyria. This woe upon Samaria (the land occupied by the tribe of Ephraim) was spoken at an early period of Hezekiah's reign, and fulfilled in the taking of the city of Samaria by Sargon, successor of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 6). The chapter threatens Ephraim for their pride and drunkenness and their slowness to learn, while the residue will be advanced in the Kingdom of Christ.

I. THE WORLD'S KINGDOM (1—4, 7—13). What is to be the end? Read and explain each verse.

1. *The crown of pride.* Samaria, a beautiful city, built by Omri, son of Ahab, as the capital, standing above *fat* (or fertile) valleys, shall be destroyed.

2. *A mighty and strong one.* The King of Assyria, irresistible as a flood, a heathen monarch, used by God as His instrument to punish the ungodly nation.

3. *The drunkards.* National sin. (See Amos vi. 6.)

4. *The hasty fruit.* An early fig ripening before the summer, and considered a delicacy. So shall Samaria be to Assyria.

7. *They have erred.* Samaria ruined by drunkenness. Let men of Judah be warned. *Priest and prophet* have alike set bad example. What hope can there be for others? Priests not allowed to drink when performing their duties. (See Lev. x. 9.) The effect of strong drink is to ruin sight and mind.

8. *Tables* for eating and drinking.

9, 10. *Whom shall he teach?* The drunken priests and false prophets taunt Isaiah. Whom does he want to teach these elementary truths?

Will he speak? Isaiah's answer. They will not listen to simple warnings—therefore, God will teach them by barbarous lips and foreign tongues.

12. *Rest.* God had offered His people rest for themselves and others, but they despised it.

13. *Precept upon precept.* This *is* God's method of teaching. Revelation is progressive, as man can bear it. Kings and prophets desired to see much not revealed till time of Apostles—they, in turn, only saw through a glass darkly. Future revelation will be perfect. (St. John xiii. 7.)

II. CHRIST'S KINGDOM (5, 6) shall be glorious.

5. *Residue.* Hezekiah when attacked by Assyrians made God his refuge and crown (Ps. xlvi. 1), and not an earthly city.

6. *Judgment and strength.* Skill in warfare and boldness in battle are both God's gifts.

The same applies to Christ's spiritual Kingdom.

Many go in the broad gate to destruction.

Few find the narrow path to heaven.

The Lord giveth wisdom and discretion.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things.

LESSON. Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

JAN. 24TH. HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER AND DELIVERANCE.

To read—Isaiah xxxvii. 14—21; 33—38.

Golden Text—Ps. xxxiv. 17.

INTRODUCTION. To-day's lessons concerned with Sennacherib's invasion of Jerusalem. He came up first in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, and took forty fortified cities of Judæa. Hezekiah, weak in faith and in great fear, bribed him to depart (2 Kings xviii. 1—14). Sennacherib afterwards sent a great army and an insulting message by the hands of three officers (xxxvi. 22). Now fear yielded to faith. Hezekiah prayed earnestly for deliverance, and was heard. Isaiah the prophet sent him a message from God that the enemy would retire, and so they did (xxxvii. 7, 8). But again he sent a message to Hezekiah, boasting of his past exploits and threatening to destroy Jerusalem (ver. 10). This brings us to to-day's lesson.

I. DANGER (14—20). See Hezekiah's conduct.

Receives Sennacherib's letter.

Takes it with him to the House of God.

Lays his great trouble before the Lord.

What does he say in his prayer?

The address. God is the Lord of all hosts.

The special Friend of Israel, His people.

God's power is almighty and infinite.

The prayer. Will God hear the blasphemous words of an idolater reproaching the true God?

Will He look upon His people's distress?

Sennacherib has destroyed other lands.

But their gods were but idols.

Will God save His people out of his hand?

Result. The world will know that He is the Lord.

II. DELIVERANCE (21, 33—38). An answer by the prophet.

Hezekiah's prayer of faith has prevailed.

The enemy shall not come into the city.

No mound or shield shall protect the assailants, nor fiery darts be hurled; he shall return as he came, for God will protect the city which He loves (Ps. xlviii. 1, 2), for His faithful servant David's sake. So it came to pass.

God's angel smote them with a pestilence.

One hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers died in one night.

Sennacherib returned home without striking a blow, dwelt some years at Nineveh, and was then slain by his sons.

III. LESSONS. 1. *The mighty power of God.*

Death, life, success, failure, all in His hands.

2. *The need of faith.* Hezekiah trusting to bribes—powerless; trusting to God—victorious.

The same truth applies still to all.

For daily duties want God's help.

For special troubles need His power.

What deadly enemy assails us?

Need "whole armour of God" (Eph. vi. 16).

Then resisting devil, he will flee.

Seek help where Hezekiah sought it: in house of prayer. Shall find, like him, God is with us, our refuge (Ps. xlvi. 11).

JANUARY 31ST. THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.

To read—Isaiah liii. Golden Text—Verse 6.

INTRODUCTION. In chapter li. Isaiah had begun six short addresses spoken by the Messiah to the people generally, raising them to prepare for His coming. They begin with the words "Hearken to me." At the end of them (lii. 9), Jerusalem, itself laid waste by the Chaldeans, is bidden to rejoice, because of the glorious prophecy just about to be revealed of the Saviour. In it Christ is set forth as the appointed sacrifice for sin, and it is followed by an invitation to all mankind to accept the free promises of the Gospel.

I. CHRIST'S LIFE OF SUFFERING (1—9). Message of the prophet despised.

Gentiles believed (lii. 15). Jews received coldly.

His person. Altogether lowly, as follows—

Parentage—humble, born in despised village.

Education—lowly; never learned, hence scorned by Jews (St. John vii. 15).

Appearance—nothing esteemed by men.

Christ emptied Himself of Divine glory.

Took the form of a slave (Phil. ii. 7—8).

His reception. Despised and rejected of men.

Life full of sorrows from enemies.

Even forsaken by friends and disciples.

His object. All borne for us.

Vicarious sacrifice indeed—for our peace.

Man's sin brought about such salvation.

His sufferings. Borne in meekness, as a sheep.

Borne willingly—because laid on Him by God.

Borne silently—He answered nothing.

His trial. Taken from one court to another.

Caiaphas, Herod, Pontius Pilate—three judges.

No one spake for Him. Did not have a fair trial.

No witnesses to His character appeared.

His death and burial. Crucified between thieves.

Buried by rich man—Joseph (St. John xix. 28).

Thus His burial testified to His blameless life.

II. CHRIST'S SUCCESSFUL END (10—12). All is well.

Not the Jews, but God, brought all this about.

God is just; acts not without reason.

Three reasons for the Messiah's sufferings—

To be an offering for sin of all mankind;

To have numerous spiritual offspring;

To reign in His Church gloriously.

Christ will be satisfied with His work (Heb. xii. 2).

Will rise victorious from the grave.

Will conquer the world won with His blood.

III. LESSONS. 1. Christ bore all for us.

What have we borne for Him?

2. Christ's death saved the world.

What are we doing to make Him known?

FEBRUARY 7TH. THE GRACIOUS CALL.

To read—Isaiah lv. Golden Text—Verse 6.

INTRODUCTION. Last lesson told of the Messiah's sufferings for the whole world, and subsequent victory. The next chapter (liv.) tells how the Jewish nation will become the mother of all Christian nations. This chapter contains an invitation to mankind generally to come and enjoy the spiritual banquet purchased for them by Christ's sufferings.

I. CALL TO FAITH AND REPENTANCE (1—7). Notice the call.

Universal—every one that thirsteth.

Personal—hearken unto Me, the Saviour.

Free—without money or charge.

Also a call *to taste* the good things offered.

To hearken to the gracious words of Christ.

To come to the living Saviour.

To follow Christ, the Leader of His people.

To seek the Lord while He may be found.

To repent, and God will abundantly pardon.

See the result of obeying the call.

Spiritual gifts will flow as a river.

The blessings given will satisfy and last.

David's covenanted mercies assured to all.

Christ will be a Leader and Captain of His people.

The whole world will worship the Lord God.

Who will refuse these gracious promises?

II. RESULT OF OBEYING (8—13). Prosperity.

God's nature far surpasses man's.

Therefore His dealings in love and mercy surpass man's highest thought.

Nature teaches lessons about God to all.

Rain and snow fertilise the earth.

Produce buds, flowers, fruit, corn and wine.
All these given as food for man and beast.
So does God's Word produce effects.
Lodges in heart—brings forth good fruit.
Develops man's spiritual life in two ways.

1. *Deliverance from sin*—like freedom from bondage in Egypt, when Israelites burst into joy at Red Sea (Exodus xvi.).

2. *Development of spiritual graces.* Noxious weeds of sin give place to fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace (Gal. v. 24).

III. LESSONS. 1. Invitation to all. Who can refuse?

2. Christ's gifts satisfy. Shall they not be tried?

3. Christ's blessings last—everlasting peace.

FEBRUARY 14TH. THE NEW COVENANT.

To read—Jeremiah xxxi. 27—37. *Golden Text—Verse* 34.

INTRODUCTION. Shall have three lessons from this prophet. He prophesied during reigns of Josiah the good and Jehoiakim, his son, the bad king of Judah, and till the carrying away captive of the Jews in the reign of Zedekiah. In this chapter he foretells the restoration of Israel, and their spiritual growth under the new covenant.

I. THE NEW NATION (27—30). God's forming.

He has watched over them for destruction because of their sin; now watches for fruitfulness.

They shall be sown with life.
They shall grow up with fertility.
They shall understand God's dealings.
Each shall stand for himself alone.

All this fulfilled after their restoration to Palestine from Babylon. They prospered as a nation till they forsook God again, and rejected Jesus Christ.

II. THE NEW COVENANT (31—34). (See Heb. viii. 7, 8.)

Notice the difference between the two covenants.
The old covenant given by Moses.
The new covenant given by Christ.
The old covenant one of works—"this do."
The new covenant one of faith—"believe and be saved." (See Acts xvi. 31.)
The old covenant forbade sin.
The new covenant inculcates holiness.
The old covenant was purely moral.
The new covenant is spiritual.
The old referred only to outward acts.
The new appeals to the inward conscience.
The result of the old was death.
The result of the new is life.
Notice the blessings of the new covenant.
Sin pardoned, remembered no more.
All have law of God in their hearts.
All, young and old, know the Lord.

III. THE NEW OATH (35—37).

Sworn by God's own almighty Name.
As firm as the sun, moon, and stars are these ordinances of the Lord of Hosts.
As impossible as the measurement of heaven is God's casting off of His people Israel.
A first fulfilment in history of Jews.
Other nations have vanished—they remain.
A second fulfilment remains.
God's spiritual mercies never fail.
His redeemed shall dwell for ever in heaven.

LESSONS. 1. Old things are passed away, all things are become new.

2. The Word of the Lord endureth for ever.

3. This hope we have as the anchor of the soul.

POWER—WISDOM—LOVE.

WHEN God from chaos formed the world
Out of the cloud of vap'rous flame
Which from the central sun was hurled
With perfect and unerring aim,

What vast, mysterious, awful "Power"
This primal miracle revealed!
And, when we think upon that hour,
We know to Him all things must yield.

But when He planted in the mind
The deathless sense of truth and right,
And to the souls of men, else blind,
Brought the first gleams of Heaven's light;

When conscience flashed from soul to soul,
And emulation first inspired
Each man to seek some noble goal,
By grand examples grandly fired;

When love of country, justice, peace,
Aroused and purified men's hearts,
In virtue's slow but sure increase,
In splendid deeds—exalted arts:

How brightly doth His "Wisdom" shine
In guiding thus His children higher,
Through deserts dark by Light Divine
Vouchsafed from His eternal fire!

But when, these earlier epochs ended,
The fore-appointed years all run,
The Word itself to Earth descended,
Brought near to man by Christ His Son—

Then in that last, best revelation,
All other gifts far, far above,
We own with grateful adoration
The consummation of God's "Love."

WM. A. GIBBS.

Lord, from Whom all Blessings Flow.

Words by Charles Wesley, 1740.

Music by F. Bates, Mus.D.
(Organist of Norwich Cathedral.)

1. Lord, from whom all bles - sings flow, Per - fect - ing the church be - low,

Stead - fast may we cleave to Thee; Love, the mys - tic u - nion be.

Join our faith - ful spi - rits, join Each to each, and all to Thine;

Lead us, through the paths of peace, On to per - fect ho - li - ness. A - men.

2. Move, and actuate, and guide;
Divers gifts to each divide:
Placed according to Thy will,
Let us all our work fulfil;
Never from our office move;
Needful to each other prove;
Use the grace on each bestowed,
Tempered by the art of God.

3. Sweetly may we all agree,
Touched with softest sympathy;
There is neither bond nor free,
Great nor servile, Lord, in Thee.
Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
Rendered all distinctions void;
Names, and sects, and parties fall,
Thou, O Christ, art All in all.

THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE.

BY MARY HAMPDEN.

CHAPTER IX.

THE one great event of Edith Weir's quiet country life became so much a reality, once it had taken place, that it was strange to her to think she had ever been without it.

Hector and Lilian, the new-comers whose arrival had produced quite a revolution in her home surroundings, were no sooner settled at Abbeylands than she accepted them as her brother and sister, according them that place in her heart which close and dear relations alone could occupy. Hector had faults: he was sometimes passionate, and often sarcastic; he was easily offended, too, and not ready to pardon; but she did not care for him less because of these failings: she was indulgent to them, and appreciated the sunshine of his habitual temper all the more because it was sometimes obscured by anger.

Lilian, also, was far from perfect. Even Edith recognised that she was fickle and frivolous—one day in radiant spirits, the next moody and silent; and all this, apparently, for no particular reason. Edith endeavoured by coaxing little attentions, by sympathy, to dissipate the cloud from her cousin's brow; but more often than not her best efforts were in vain, or their success was but partial. "You foolish child!" Lilian would reply to any such endearment. "Leave me to torment myself, and go to Hector in the garden: he is always at a loss how to live in your absence." Or if her angry feelings were less soothed than usual, the command "Leave me alone!" would be the sole answer she would vouchsafe.

Mrs. Weir's consistent gentleness did much to preserve peace among the young people, for she was most anxious that the Bristols should learn to look upon Abbeylands as their home, and be happy amid its quiet surroundings. Often a quarrel was nipped in the bud by her tactful remonstrances.

Mr. Ford had not advanced very far in the friendship of the Bristols—a fact which was in no way due to his fault, for he had constantly tried to win their regard and confidence. Hector, who was always on the watch for any sign of dislike to his presence in his aunt's home, could not bring himself to believe that Cousin Arthur *felt* as amiable as he appeared; Lilian obstinately persisted in looking upon the clergyman as a possible suitor for Edith's hand, and disliked and avoided him on this account; Edith herself was a little vexed at the way in which he persistently praised Lord Henry Wynn to her. She would listen to the description of that young man's many good qualities with a slight impatience, which she did her very best to conceal; but after a time, some incautious word which Mr. Ford let drop revealed to her his motive for thus praising the absent; and then, with many blushes, and in the privacy of her own room, Edith learned, for the first time in her life, to feel constrained and awkward. For a while she did not dare to go down-stairs and face the family: she wished with all her heart that she had been allowed to remain a child, liking and disliking with all the freedom of youth, and troubled by no thought of possible lovers, other than the ideal heroes of her secret thoughts. By degrees, however, she grew accustomed to her new enlightenment; *he* was no longer at Aberstone, and in his absence she tried not to remember all that was involved in the alarming questions—"Would he propose?"—"How could she answer?" The reply would have to be "No," but how to say that "No" so that it should be at once final, and yet kind? Poor little Edith! Thus brought face to face with one of the serious problems of a girl's life, she longed unspeakably to confide all her troubles to the mother from whom she had never had a secret until now; but a shy reserve which had taken possession of her mind prevented the confidence which would have been so soothing. Again, her sense of honour made her shrink from telling anyone of the disappointment which she would have to inflict upon her first lover. "Lord Henry is very kind: I have no right to let *anyone* know that I cannot love him." This had been her first thought, and she had been true to the generous instinct which it expressed.

And so the weeks and months passed at Aberstone, as they pass elsewhere, bringing many awakenings, some regrets, some quarrels, and sinking away into the past, only to be revived by memory. It is a strangely rapid process, that change of "what is" into "what was." How much do we know to-day of which we were ignorant a year ago! How do we alter, even in a week or a day!

The June which witnessed the arrival of the Bristols gave place to a July which saw them fully installed in a home of luxury; August, in its turn, found them growing rapidly accustomed to their new position; September, October also passed; and November, the herald of winter, had grown to middle age by the time at which our story recommences.

Abbeylands, with its quaint lofty rooms, heated by giant fires which glowed out of old-fashioned chimney-corners, was an ideal house in which to live through the season of frost and snow. The library was chosen by the family as a sitting-room on account of its warmth and cheery aspect, looking on to the terrace.

It was in this room that Edith was sitting, crouched on a fender-stool, and all alone, as it happened, one wet evening. It was quite dark, with the exception of the ruddy firelight, which leaped in gay flashes,

illumining the girl's face and figure as she bent over the glowing wood. She had grown more beautiful during those four and a half months since the arrival of her cousins; her expression had gained that power of self-command which marks the woman; her eyes had acquired a thoughtfulness which had come to her with her first and, as yet, unfinished love affair. She was thinking of it even then, piecing together the romances she had read, selecting from among them now one, now another, of the proposals of marriage, blushing at herself for thus dwelling upon such a subject, but yet wondering if words such as those would ever be addressed to herself.

So absorbed had she become in those reflections that she did not hear the opening door, nor was she aware that Hector was standing beside her until the sound of his voice woke her with a start from her reveries.

"Dreaming, little cousin?"

"Oh, Hector! You have been out in all the rain. How cold and tired you must be! Come close in near the fire."

He smiled at her invitation, but accepted it readily enough, drawing up a chair near her stool, and stretching forth his hands to the cheering blaze. He had been into Aberstone to send off a telegram; for he was true to his determination to seek for occupation, and was negotiating, with a friend's aid, for a Government appointment for which he had been studying.

"Why are you playing Cinderella?" he asked.

"I was thinking—of many things; and it was so cosy and comfortable in the dark. Would you like lights, cousin?"

"I? Oh, no; it is enough for me to be allowed the light of your eyes!"

"You are laughing at me again. But tell me—were there any letters at the post-office? Have you had any good news?"

"No, I have not heard from town; but I have no great hopes, Edith. I am afraid you will have to put up with my society at Abbeylands a little longer, after all."

"I am so glad," said the girl simply.

"You are very good to me. It is very sweet to know that you will always care what becomes of me. I do not deserve it, Edith. If you knew what a wild, careless fellow I have been: how many times in my life I have approached perilously near dishonour, and never more so than when I was tempted to deceive you into believing me more of a hero than a spendthrift, I fear you would turn away your head, and give me no more of those smiles for which I have learned to watch."

His tone had become very low and earnest. She could barely hear his words as he almost whispered them in her ear; and she fancied she could notice a faint vibration in his voice—an emotional tremble, which touched her at once and aroused all her woman's wish to comfort. Raising her head to look at him, so that the light fell full upon her sweet uplifted face, she pressed his hands in her own, saying—

"I should never want to turn away from you. You are so brave, so noble, to own your faults to a little girl like me. But if it ever does you any good to think that we are very, very proud of you, you *may* think so; for it will always be true, dear Hector."

"You will hope for me, will you not, Edith? You will encourage me to face the world and its difficulties?"

"Yes, if I can."

"Ah! do you know how dear you are to me, my—my little cousin?"

"And I was so much afraid you might never be able to care for me! It was very good of God to let us find each other. Brother Hector, did you ever think how it would have been if we had never met? You would always have disliked me in your thoughts because I am a Weir and have all the money, which ought never to have gone to a girl. I wish you had had that money!" she exclaimed abruptly.

Hector started a little further back into the shadow. He had forgotten all but a sense of something in his heart—some feeling which was springing up there for her. She had been only "Edith" to him these last few minutes, but she had recalled him to the remembrance that she was also "the heiress." And what did that mean? Did it not remind him of the purpose for which he was working? of the promise which he had given his sister that he would do his utmost to win Edith for his wife? And why? Not for her own sake, not because he loved her, but because his position was embarrassed: because fresh debts were constantly falling due: because, unless he married a rich wife, the future had no great promise even for his abilities. He called back to memory the day when Lilian had pressed her scheme upon him; he recollected her eager entreaties and his own unwilling assent; he recalled the countenance of old Bassett as he had seen it when, pulling back the curtains, he found himself face to face with the old gardener, who must have overheard the concluding words of their conversation. There was not one incident of that agreement which he did not remember with loathing; and yet, there the position remained. Had he the courage to face life as a poor man, and to throw off this guise of falsehood which he felt to be so unworthy of himself? Could he give up his dream of some day being master of Abbeylands?—Yes; he felt strong and brave; he would face all rather than live under a sense of deception. But then—if he relinquished his plan, he must leave the home which had grown dear to him: he must give up all thought of asking Edith to be his wife.

A few short months had effected a most momentous change in his feelings. In June he had entered that home, expecting to find it intolerable: he had agreed to woo his cousin, with the sense that he was making a great sacrifice; in November he felt that separation from the one and renunciation of the other was a trial which honour had no right to exact from him. He had learned to love the girl who had welcomed him with such frank candour, and love was not to be gainsaid.

"Do not let us speak of money. If it had come to me, I fear I should have squandered it," he answered her. "If I had never come here, Edith, I should have missed the happiness of my life."

"The happiness of your life! Ah, Hector! it is what I longed for, to hear you say that. Have I helped mother to make you feel less lonely? We are so glad that you don't want to go away from us, that your ambition does not make you restless. Some day, when you are great and famous, will you learn to look down upon our love and admiration? Oh, I hope not, dear, for we have put our trust in you from the very first, and know that you will make us proud of you."

"*Trust in him*"! Hector's handsome face flushed with shame, but he could not restrain the emotion which her words aroused within him. He lifted the little hand which was resting confidingly on his arm, and passionately kissed it again and again, forgetting all but his newly discovered love for her.

Edith blushed, but had not yet attempted to speak, when they became aware that the door of the library had opened behind them, letting into the room a blaze of light; while midway between the chimney-corner and the hall old Bassett was standing, holding a silver salver, his keen eyes watching Mr. Bristol with a vengeful scrutiny. In old Ben's mind it was an unpardonable liberty for the "Lunnon man" to be found kissing little missie's hand.

Hector started angrily to his feet, demanding—

"What are you doing here, Bassett?"

"It was a telegram I was bringin'; maybe you 'll prefer to wait for 'un till Thomas has come from the kitchen."

"Give it me at once! And another time, remember to knock at the door before you enter the room."

A smile of disdain passed across the old man's weather-worn face; but he replied, with a strong ironical emphasis on the last word—

"I did knock at the door, but maybe you was too much occupied for to notice. Any ways, your orders 'ull be obeyed for the future, so don't be oneasy, MAISTER!"

CHAPTER X.

"No, Lilian; I have made up my mind that no power on earth shall ever make me deceive Edith. I am not worthy of her love, and I dare not seek it. If Aunt Mary knew that I had further debts, which I have never owned to her—larger even than those for the payment of which I am indebted to her kindness—she would look upon me as a mere adventurer: one who had entered her house under false pretences: a man upon whose honour no one could rely. I can bear anything but that. Better a thousand times be poor than be untrustworthy."

"Do you mean that you have decided to go back from our compact?"

"Our compact! I am ashamed to think that I ever consented to such a plan!"

Hector had lost no time in telling his sister of his altered views, for it was the morning following his fireside talk with Edith, when her gentle trust had roused him to rebellion against the deception he was practising. He had sought out Lilian in the garden before breakfast, determined that she should know at once that she could no longer depend upon his co-operation in her scheme. He was looking pale and agitated, as though—as was indeed the case—his night had been passed in wearying thought, in still more wearying struggles of conscience.

Lilian was seated by his side on a bench under the leafless limes; and pressing his arm, with a return to the old caressing ways by which she had been accustomed to persuade him before they had left their life together for this new home, she said—

"Tell me, dear, what is the meaning of all this? Am I to understand that you find Edith altogether intolerable? If so——"

But he interrupted her.

"You had better not try to anger me, Lilian, or our quarrel might go farther than you imagine. You are a good girl; you stood by me when I had no other friend, and I do not forget all I owe you; but you could never appreciate Edith's character—her sweetness and innocence, her——"

"She is only a child. She knows nothing of the world; and is sweet and innocent just as that violet is—because it is natural to her. She has not been tried as I have been; if you were to place her in any position of difficulty—such as poverty, for instance—you would find that her sweetness would change to peevishness—her innocence would be little more than stupidity. My dear brother, do be warned in time! What is the use of refusing to pluck the violet? It would be infinitely better cared for than if it were left to be a prey for the first careless hand. You have never regretted taking my advice hitherto; let me persuade you out of these foolish fancies."

"Come, Lilian; you must not sit here in the damp air. Let us walk towards the house."

"Then you love this girl, and yet refuse to marry her?"

"Yes," he repeated firmly, yet with a contraction of the brow which showed that the mere words were a pain to him. "I love her; but it is my duty to refuse to marry her—at least, to make no attempt to win her. I do not think she has ever thought of me except as a brother. It must be so, Lilian, until I have retrieved my position. Some day, perhaps—ah! who knows?—she may learn to love someone else while I am away working to gain her."

"It is not likely that she will think much of you when you are absent; Mr. Ford will take care to fill her head with other thoughts. A child like that will care for the first man who says a word of love to her; and that first man——"

"Don't torture me!" cried Hector, abruptly turning away from her. "I will go and tell Aunt Mary that I have to go to town to see about my appointment. I received a telegram last night from London: that shall be my excuse. I *must* go away for a time. I cannot stay here, or my resolution may give way, though, you know, it was not lightly made."

"Think once again before you throw away the one chance of your life!" she cried impetuously, as she followed him towards the house. "How can you bear poverty?—how will you be able to live?—you who always hated the meanness of your former home? Why do you give up so much? You are wasting your best opportunity for the sake of a mere sentimental scruple! Edith is not worth——"

"He bent down his forehead to receive her motherly kiss."—*p.* 214.

"Silence!" he exclaimed, turning to face her, with a look so stern that even Lilian was awed. "Do not speak of her. You are not fit to mention Miss Weir's name!"

And walking rapidly away, he disappeared within the porch, leaving his sister to follow, if she cared to do so.

But she did not feel sufficiently mistress of her passion to face her aunt and cousin at the breakfast-table; and, too miserable to care for the inquiries which would be made as to her whereabouts, she crossed the lawn to the carriage-drive with the one impulse to get away—anywhere to escape from those whom she considered her enemies.

The grass was sparkling with the white rime of yesterday's frost; the trees were waving their stark boughs under the influence of a bitter wind; but she did not heed cold or damp: her anger was making her heart beat furiously, and wringing stormy tears from her eyes.

Was this the return for all her sisterly love? Was this to be the end of her jealous advocacy of Hector's claims?

Reader, do not let your judgment be too hard on Lilian Bristol. Her faults were many, her disposition was an unhappy one; her sense of right was stifled by her passion; but at least, wrong as she was, it was no selfish motive—it was the cause of another, of the brother to whom she had been devoted all her life—that gave the impulse to faults, disposition, and passions. She loved him with all the vehemence of her nature. No thought of self had influenced her hitherto, although the exclusiveness of his new love for Edith had come upon her now with a shock of pain; as she had said, she would have been contented to spend all her life with these relations, with whom she had no sympathy, if by so doing she could have gained for him a wider, happier sphere of action. Her plan had been conceived in this spirit; and just at the moment when success seemed about to crown her efforts, they were frustrated by Hector's determination to leave Abbeylands.

"It is cruel!" she cried aloud, pausing in her walk as she reached the end of the path, and leaning her head against the rough bars of the paling. "It is cruel—it is ungrateful!"

She did not know how long she remained in that attitude, her face bowed in her hands, and her frame getting rapidly chilled by the wintry air; for the bitter thoughts which were thronging through her brain allowed her to take no notice of time or cold. She was wretched, sick at heart, and bewildered by the suddenness of the disappointment which had come upon her.

At last a splash of rain falling around her roused her to a sense of her own imprudence in thus awakening the curiosity of her relations. Pushing back her disordered hair from her eyes, and dashing away the tears which she disdained but had been unable to check, she was turning from the paling, resolving to make the best of her way back to her own room, hoping to enter the house unseen; but as she looked up her eyes encountered those of Mr. Ford.

The Vicar was standing in the road, with one hand upon the handle of the gate, as though with the intention of opening it; but he had evidently paused at the sight of her affliction, in doubt whether to enter or retire. As Lilian's eyes met his she was surprised to see with what sympathy he was regarding her; a look of real concern, whose truth it was impossible to doubt, was visible on his face. Unable to carry out her first impulse of flight, she awaited his approach without speaking.

"You are in trouble, I fear," said Mr. Ford. "Is there nothing you can trust me to do to help you?"

"No—but yes. You can keep silence on the subject. I have no wish to have my own affairs canvassed here."

They turned and walked towards the house. Finding herself unquestioned, some impulse made Lilian seek consolation from the man whom she had hitherto mistrusted. Looking up at him, she asked abruptly—

"Why is life so disappointing?"

He left off scrutinising the rain-cloud, and gravely answered her—

"Because our motives are not as noble as they should be. The objects for which we are striving, even if gained, will disappoint us, unless we can feel that there is *one* grand motive underlying all our minor schemes."

"You good people are always striving after unattainable heights, and over-reach yourselves as well as those whom you seek to lead."

"I am sorry you think so; and yet, existence is such a simple problem when it is rightly viewed."

Lilian did not reply as they crossed the wet lawn, and ascended the steps to the house. She did not despair, even now, of bringing about Hector's marriage. She would not give up her plan now that so many circumstances tended in the direction she wished. No; she would implicate her brother so deeply that he would not be able to draw back. She would play the game unfairly rather than lose the stake on which her heart was set.

Re-invigorated by these ideas, she felt herself once more hostile to all the Weirs. Mr. Ford fell back from his place in her esteem—he was a good man, but too good to be wise—one of those who would strive against her wishes for Hector's good, and therefore her enemy. Her pride and love still smarted at the recollection of her brother's latest words, "You are not worthy to mention Miss Weir's name." But it is easy to feel magnanimous towards those whom we are about to benefit. She could look forward to a day when he would beg her pardon for those cruel words, acknowledging that to her he owed his all.

In the meanwhile Lilian's absence from the breakfast-table had, of course, excited remark; but Hector endeavoured to offer some excuse for her strange conduct.

"My sister has a bad headache this morning, Aunt Mary, and hopes you will excuse her."

"A headache? Oh, I am so sorry!" cried Edith. "May I not take her some coffee, cousin? She will think we are all forgetting her."

"She would prefer not. When Lilian has a headache it is wiser to leave her to herself. She will probably be better soon."

Mrs. Weir's keen ears caught the sound of some lingering anger in his voice, which led her to form a right conclusion: namely, that the brother and sister had quarrelled.

Later on, when she was rising from the table, her nephew startled her by announcing, in a tone which he vainly strove to render nonchalant—

"I am obliged to go to London, aunt. I am anxious to catch the 10.30 train."

"To London!" said Mrs. Weir, sincerely surprised at his sudden determination.

"To London!" echoed Edith, in a tone of despairing wonder.

"You will not leave us for long, Hector?" inquired his aunt.

"I received a telegram last night from my friend in town, which assures me that I have no chance of winning that appointment unless I am on the spot."

The excuse, when at last it was made, sounded most unreal, even to his own ears. Mrs. Weir assuredly was not deceived by it. Laying her hand gently on his shoulder, she looked searchingly into his face; but Hector was thankful that, for the first time, he could that day meet her gaze unflinchingly.

"No," he answered, as he bent down his forehead to receive her motherly kiss. "I will not be away longer than I can help. *You* would not wish me to stay at home if I thought it wrong, Aunt Mary?" he added, in a lower voice. "It is no mere scruple on my part—it is not the result of any quarrel" (answering the questioning glance of her eyes); "but you must let my determination stand. May I ask you not to thwart it, nor to ask its reason?"

"I trust you, my dear boy," said Mrs. Weir simply. "Only remember that we shall all long for your return—this will always be your home."

"You are too good," he answered.

Edith, during this conversation, had been standing at the other end of the room, watching with sorrowful eyes. She felt that something was being said to which she was not supposed to listen; but her mind was fully taken up with the question: "How long would it be before Hector returned?" She accepted the proffered reason for departure with childlike faith in its absolute truth; but she regretted his going none the less.

She had been startled at first by his strange behaviour on the previous evening, by his passionate words, by the kisses which he had showered on her hands; but it had not occurred to her that here was a real lover, such as she had read of in books. A hero she *had* thought him ever since she had welcomed him home; but then it took time for her old ideas to be banished by the new discovery—that a half-cousin is not necessarily a brother. She had never foreseen the probability which had been so clear to old Ben Bassett. She was even surprised at the sinking of the heart which she experienced on hearing of Hector's proposed departure. Dear as he was to her, she had never supposed that she could keep him for ever at Abbeylands. And yet this first departure seemed to take from her all that made life enjoyable—the skating parties which they had planned for as soon as the frost came, the rides along the hard crisp roads in the bracing air, the pleasant walks—all these would lose their charm without his society.

CHAPTER XI.

As Mrs. Weir left the room, satisfied with his assurances, Hector turned towards his little cousin. He did not think it would be so easy a task to persuade *her* of the necessity of his journey, and his opinion was confirmed by the wistful gaze which met him. Edith was looking very pretty, standing in a gleam of wintry sunshine which had just struggled through a storm-cloud. She wore a simply made frock, dark grey in colour, relieved by touches of scarlet at the throat and wrists; a ribbon of the same bright shade caught back the masses of her brown hair. The improvement which had marked her appearance during the last few months was largely due to the increased dignity of her carriage; the slim neck held itself so erect, the small head was poised upon it with such grace, that Hector thought she made the sweetest picture he had ever seen, and wished that he possessed the artist's skill to make a lasting copy of that which pleased him so well. It would have been a delight to him if he could have carried away with him some portrait, other than that engraven on his memory, of the girl who had won his love.

So engrossed was he in thoughts which were not without pain, that she was already growing surprised at his silence. He could see an expression of distressed wonder passing across her face, and feeling that his self-restraint would not suffice to keep back the words of affection which he was longing to speak, crossed the room and affected a joke by way of cheering her.

"You will have to prepare another welcome for me against the time when I come back, little cousin."

"It will not be very long? You will not have to *stay* in town?"

"I can only make the same answer which I gave your mother—I will not be away longer than I can help."

"But *must* you go?"

The words were spoken most entreatingly; but Hector was true to his determination, in spite of the fascination which her pleading possessed for him.

"I must go, Edith; I have many reasons, although I cannot explain them to you just now. I shall not forget Abbeylands, though I am obliged to leave it, and I shall never cease hoping for the day when I may return to it and to you, my—little cousin."

"But, Hector," cried Edith, thoroughly alarmed by his gravity, "you will come back in a few days, will you not? You do not *want* to leave us all, you say; and surely, when you have arranged about your work you need not stay away? Say you will come back next week."

"No; duty will keep me from home for some time to come. I have my way to make in the world, you know, and you must not try to hinder me. I believe you will be able to care for me better than you do now, perhaps you may even learn that you can be proud of me, if I do not shirk the bitter part of life. You will help me, won't you, Edith? You will not make me even more cowardly than I feel at present, when I think of leaving all—all who are dear to me."

Edith was awed by the signs of trouble in his face—a face which she had hardly ever seen under the influence of strong emotion. Hector was handsome, and never more so than when he was feeling acutely.

She looked lovingly into his eyes, which were watching her with an intensity she did not understand. Her beseeching gesture spoke volumes as she laid her hand upon his arm and drooped her head till it almost rested on his shoulder. But she did not trust herself to speak at once in answer to his question, for she did not feel sure that she might not disappoint him by crying like a child if she ventured too soon upon words. At length, however, she overcame the obstinate sob which was rising in her throat, and raised her head with an April smile. Her words were not very brave, and they were marred by many a falter, but she spoke them out resolutely to the end.

"You must go, if you think it right, and I will try not to make it worse for you. You have to leave Lilian as well. I know you will be sorry; but we too will hope for the day when you will come home again. Don't think me very silly, Hector. We have been so quiet always, that when anyone is going away it seems like losing part of life itself. You would not think much of going to London, I know; but to me it seems almost as bad as though it were the other end of the world. It is only because I am ignorant and silly; but you will forgive me, won't you? I will try to be very brave: you shall not hear one word of grumbling: but I do not think you can *know* how I shall miss my dear new brother."

Hector might have found it somewhat difficult to reply, had not the necessity of answering been spared him by his sister's entrance. Lilian was followed by Arthur Ford, who had, in his turn, to be made acquainted with the sudden change in his cousin's plans—a change which caused him no small amount of cogitation. It was the last thing which he had expected to hear—that Mr. Bristol was about to leave Abbeylands, thereby throwing away all immediate opportunity of winning Edith; and he was at a loss to interpret its meaning.

Had Hector ventured upon a proposal, he wondered, and suffered a refusal? That supposition was hardly supported by Edith's behaviour; she was as innocently affectionate to him as ever.

Again, Mr. Ford asked himself, had Hector asked Mrs. Weir's permission to pay his addresses to Edith? and had the mother, for the sake of testing the truth of his sentiments, insisted upon his temporary separation from her daughter? This, too, was scarcely to be credited; for the Vicar knew Mrs. Weir to be by no means adverse to a marriage between Edith and her nephew, by which the old family quarrel would be healed for ever. Mr. Ford was sincerely puzzled, too, by Lilian's grief, as well as by the new phase of affairs which was passing before his eyes; but, like a wise man, finding that the problem did not admit of immediate solution, he left it to time to unravel the mystery.

"This is a very sudden determination on your part, is it not, Hector?" he queried.

"Yes. I only made up my mind last night, and you see I am losing no time before carrying out my resolution. I hear wheels: that warns me that there is indeed no time to be lost. Good-bye for the present. If ever you come to town, I hope you will look me up."

"I shall not be likely to do so; but in case I should be obliged to visit London, I should certainly come to see you," answered Mr. Ford, wondering at his cousin's brusque manner, which so belied the pained look which he wore. "Good-bye. I wish you every success."

The two men, as they shook hands at parting, probably felt better friends than they could have imagined possible; departure, as well as absence, sometimes works a charm.

"'Come, tell me. I will not say a word to anyone else?"—*p.* 219.

"You are sure you would rather go alone, dear? I am very willing to accompany you, if you would like me to do so."

It was Lilian who spoke, and Hector fairly started at the sound of her voice: it was so different from that in which she had passionately combated his arguments not more than an hour ago; he could hardly recognise in her the sister with whom he had almost quarrelled. Still, he was most unwilling that she should feel as though he were angry with her, although her want of conscience had certainly displeased him; so he bent to kiss her as she followed him to the hall in company with the rest of the family, and answered—

"No, dear; I could not wish to take you away from *home* on my account" (laying a special emphasis on

the word "home"). "You and Edith must take mutual care of each other, while I am away. I shall think of you constantly, and wish myself with you; and you will expect some letters, I suppose? Ah! you must be easily satisfied on that head, for I do not intend to allow myself many leisure moments. You will write to me, won't you, so that I may not feel utterly forsaken all alone in London?"

"Oh yes, Hector; Lilian will write, and so will I. You will not seem so far away when we hear news of all you are doing."

The carriage was at the door, and Hector's portmanteau had already been placed within it—a task which old Ben Bassett had been only too ready to perform. He was the only one of the inmates of Abbeylands who regarded Hector's departure with feelings of unalloyed satisfaction; for even Mr. Ford, strange though it was to him, was conscious of a vague sensation of regret. He had never regarded his spendthrift cousin with favourable eyes; he had wished him to earn his own living; but still it seemed like a break-up of the family that even this newly elected member of it should be setting off to find his fortunes in the wide world, and it brought something like a feeling of sorrow to the kind heart of the good Vicar.

As Hector bent his head to kiss her, Lilian found the opportunity for which she had been waiting.

"Look at the child," she whispered in his ear; "see how she cries! I am sure she loves you!"

"You are mistaken," he answered quickly. "You must be wrong. I am no more than a brother in her thoughts; and I will never believe that she loves me as I love her, unless I hear it from herself. Good-bye, Lilian. Remember that your plan is forgotten for ever, and be good to Edith."

A few grateful words to his aunt, in acknowledgment of her kindness, another handshake from Mr. Ford, and Hector's farewells were at an end—save one: the most important of them all. He saw beside him a sweet little face, just flecked with a tear. Lilian had exaggerated when she had declared that Edith was "crying"; it is true the tears were there, almost brimming over in her large grey eyes, but she resolutely held them back, determined to help Hector, not to make his task harder. Fearless of any misconstruction which might be put upon the action by other members of the family, he drew Edith slightly aside from the group to speak his farewell words to her alone.

"Hector," she pleaded, "you will come back for Christmas?"

He could not say "No" to her.

"Yes; we must all be together then, come what may. Try to be very happy while I am away. My dearest thought will be that I am working to please you, little cousin. Good-bye, dear; good-bye."

"God bless you!" she whispered.

In another moment he had torn himself away, and was being carried swiftly from the home which he had learned to love. Mrs. Weir, Lilian, and Cousin Arthur were standing waving their hands to him as he looked back; and above their shoulders, his quick eye caught sight of another face—that of old Ben Bassett. Hector could smile now at the thought of the old servant's watchful guardianship of his young mistress, at the remembrance of his mistrust of himself as a "London man." Now that his conscience was clear of all blame, the recollection did not inspire him with feelings of enmity; he wished to feel friendly towards all at Abbeylands.

He reached the little country station full ten minutes before the up-train was expected, and, feeling chilled by his long drive through the cold air, sauntered into a waiting-room, and crouched over the fire. There was no longer any need to keep up an appearance of cheerfulness; and as he spread out his hands to the blaze, his face regained its tired, worn look. Even when someone entered the room he did not turn his head, feeling no curiosity, and only thinking of those whom he had just left. But the newcomer walked straight up to the fire, and he, seeing a lady, was about to move his chair out of her way, when, with no slight feeling of annoyance, he recognised Kate Burnside. He would far rather have been left alone, but his politeness would not allow him to show a disinclination for her society; so he extended his hand, and greeted her with the best air he could assume.

Kate did not need to be told that something had happened at Abbeylands; she could see by his face that all was not well, but wisely refrained from any question.

"It is very cold this morning," she remarked, looking pityingly at his numbed hands; "there will be skating very early this year, my father says. Do you skate, Mr. Bristol?"

"I shall not be here," answered Hector, a sigh escaping him against his will.

"You are not going away for long, I hope?" Kate ventured to say, encouraged by a look in his eyes which seemed to invite sympathy.

"I shall not come back till Christmas, and then only for a very little while. I am going to seek work in London, Miss Burnside."

"Ah! then you *must* be away. Well, everything happens for the best; you will find Abbeylands all the happier when you come home, and Miss Weir will be counting the days till Christmas."

Her cheery smile, even more than the mere words, encouraged him; he felt that this kind-eyed girl, who had probably known trouble, was able to understand his regret.

"I will try to think it is for the best; besides, I must not grumble at my own action. You will go and see my cousin, will you not, Miss Burnside?"

"Yes, that I will!" said Kate heartily, as the train steamed up to the platform.

"Thank you; good-bye. I shall be glad to think that she has a friend in you"—an incautious speech, considering that his own sister was living with Edith; but Hector had not implicit faith in Lilian since their quarrel.

As he sprang into the carriage he had barely time to hear Kate's parting words—

"Good-bye, Mr. Bristol. It is hard to leave them all, I'm sure; but there is truth, after all, in the old saying, 'There's a silver lining to every cloud.'"

The girl's face, as she smiled at him, was full of kindness, and as Hector Bristol went on his way he felt comforted by her words. True, he was leaving Abbeylands; but was it not in order to return to it some day, freed from debt, to win his little cousin for his bride?

CHAPTER XII.

"OH, Kate! I know that only four weeks have passed; but it seems *years* since he went away."

"*Years* would have been harder to bear, though, Miss Weir."

"Yes, of course they would; am I not unreasonable? But I am sure you never had a brother, or you would be better able to understand how I miss Hector. You are an only daughter, are you not, Kate?"

"Yes; but though I never had a brother, I had a cousin once, Miss Weir—and Mr. Bristol is not your real brother."

"No; but that does not make any difference, does it? I love him just as well as though he were. I sometimes think that I love him all the better because we are not *obliged* to be fond of each other. It would not be wrong if I could not care at all about such a distant relation. Was your cousin very dear to you, Kate?"

"Yes, he was very dear to me, for he had no one else to talk to, so we were thrown very much together; besides, I had grown up with him; we had played together as children, and had never been parted until he went to school."

"And so you were left all alone. Poor Kate! What a difference it must have been in your life to lose him! Did he never come home for good?"

"Yes, he came back to the farm when his education was finished, and stayed with us six months—until he went to Australia. He had always been a very enterprising boy, and when he expressed a wish to go, father did all he could to help him; then, when he was twenty-three, he came back to England and married a neighbour of ours; but he could never be happy long in one place, so he took her to Canada, and I have never seen him since."

"How sad for you to lose him altogether! What should I do if Hector were to go away and never come back? Oh, Kate! do cousins always dislike staying at home?"

"No, Miss Weir, certainly not always; but most men like to travel; they think that the world offers them more opportunities of distinction than they could find in a dull country place. It is not to be wondered at."

"I am sure Hector was *sorry* to go. Don't you think he looked unhappy about it, Kate?"

"I thought he was looking very sad about something when I met him at the station; he seemed quite miserable and down-hearted. I think Mr. Bristol is the sort of man who would care very much about home, Miss Weir; I don't think he likes to be alone."

"No; I am sure he prefers being here to going to London. In all his letters he says how much he is longing for Abbeylands. It is very good of him, I think, for there is not much here to interest or amuse him."

"But Mrs. Weir is so kind; and he must be thinking of coming home to you."

Edith's grey eyes glistened with pleasure.

"I am trying to make everything look nice to welcome him. I want his first Christmas at Abbeylands to be very happy."

"I think *you* would find it very easy to make Mr. Bristol happy at any time."

"Oh, you dear Kate!" cried the girl impulsively, nestling her head close to Kate's shoulder, and stealing a hand through her arm; "I know you would not say anything just for the sake of pleasing me, so I may be sure that you truly think so. Is it not strange what *real* friends we have become, you and I, when you think that we have lived so near each other all our lives, without meeting till this year? I don't think there is anything in the world I should mind saying to you. There is only one thing which I don't like. I wish you would not call me 'Miss Weir'." Is 'Edith' such a very ugly name that you cannot bring yourself to use it? or is it that you dislike me too much to call me by my Christian name?"

She looked so prettily coaxing that Kate wished Hector had been there to see her.

"You must not try to make me forget that we are very *poor* people, compared with you; but I cannot refuse anything you ask."

"Kate," interrupted Edith, restlessly fingering her friend's sleeve, "how did you feel when *your* cousin married? Were you very unhappy?"

Kate was silent for a few moments, and then said simply—

"Yes, Edith; but then, dear, we had been engaged to each other; and it was not till he had gone away and come home again that I found he was falling in love with someone else. I *was* very unhappy at the time; but that was long ago, when I was quite a child. He made his fortune in Australia, and was able to ask whom he liked, so I was glad for his sake; and now I am quite contented. It was all for the best, no doubt, though I could not think so at first."

Edith flung her arms round her friend's neck and lovingly kissed her.

"Did he give you that ring which you always wear?" she whispered.

"Yes, dear; he asked me to keep it always, and forgive him if I could. Poor fellow! it was not his fault. Love comes when it is least expected; and it was not his duty to sacrifice his life's happiness because of a childish vow."

"How good, how noble of you to speak so kindly of him when he has behaved so badly!" cried Edith, with energy. "Oh, Kate! if I had been you I could never have forgiven him."

"It *was* quite a long while before I could forget that he 'jilted' me, as people say; but you see he was my cousin—almost my brother—and I could not blame him long."

Edith did not answer, but slipping from her seat on to the hearthrug, laid her flaming cheek against her friend's knee. Poor little girl! Her heart was beating painfully fast—bounding with transports of alternate joy and sorrow; her mind had received a new impression, and was possessed by an idea which had

been utterly strange to it. Kate had loved her cousin—surely that was a simple thought to produce such an awakening result. But Edith heard the words ringing again and again through her brain with bewildering sameness: "Her cousin; he was Kate's cousin!" She had thought of him at first as a brother, but she had grown to *love* him. Was it possible that she, Edith, might grow too fond of Hector? Was it right for her to feel that all the quiet home-life was darkened by his absence? Ought she to long so much to see him again? Might she allow herself to go on growing fonder of him day by day? What would happen if *he* should learn to love someone else—should marry and go away for ever? Would she not rather die than lose him?—had she not already learned to love him better than all the world beside?

Yet Edith was spared any feeling of humiliation at finding that, unawares, she had bestowed the treasure of her love upon a man who had never seemed to seek it; for was he not her ideal hero as well as her beloved? She could not feel ashamed of devoting her best to him, even though as yet he had not expressed a wish for it. But would Hector never care for her as she cared for him? That was the one terrible doubt which she had to face. Would he be like Kate's cousin—go away for ever and marry someone else? It was hard for Edith to experience any doubt or sorrow which she could not at once confide to her mother—that mother from whom she had promised never to have a secret; but she shrank with all the sensitive delicacy of a young girl to whose imagination love has just become a reality from speaking of her anxiety. It was difficult to seem just the same to everyone when at heart she felt so different—when the whole aspect of life was changed for her by the sudden enlightenment which had come to her; but Edith made a brave fight, and succeeded as she deserved to do.

Neither Mrs. Weir nor Lilian guessed that she was not the same careless, happy child which she had been in reality until that day; and if Kate Burnside was not so sure of the genuineness of Edith's gladness, she was careful in no way to betray her suspicions.

But it was decreed that a further awakening should come to the little heiress of Aberstone.

That night, as she was sitting over the fire in the privacy of her own room, her cousin Lilian entered without ceremony.

"Not in bed, Edith!" she exclaimed. "You must have a great deal to think about, that you sit up so late. What will become of your roses? Hector will quite miss them when he comes home!"

Her words, though uttered with apparent carelessness, brought a blush to Edith's cheek, and she answered hastily, with a forced little laugh—

"I wasn't sleepy to-night, Lilian, and I couldn't tear myself away from the warm fire. Doesn't it look cheerful?"

"Then we may as well have a talk," said her cousin, drawing another chair to the hearth. "I had a letter from my brother this evening, and he says that if he has time he will write to you to-morrow. Isn't he becoming a model correspondent? I do not quite know, though, what to make of his last few letters, they are so dispirited and nervous—quite unlike Hector. I can't help thinking that he must be worrying over something."

"Do you really think so? Oh, how I wish we knew what it is, so that we might try to help him!"

"He does not tell *me* everything; but I thought *you* would probably be able to give a guess at what is troubling him. You sly little one! You look so quiet and grave now—as though you could not speak a word to save your life; but I fancy you know what I mean. Come, tell me. I will not say a word to anyone else!"

She playfully lifted Edith's head, and looked at the many blushes which played on the girl's cheeks.

"Cousin Lilian, you ought not to speak of—— You should not say anything that Hector might not like!"

"Not like it! He would be charmed to think that I had prepared the way for him—that I had given you 'a preliminary intimation,' as the newspapers say. I hope you are not going to break my brother's heart, you little witch! It is very wrong to be so sweet and lovable if you only use your powers to flirt with! What! You would never flirt? Well, I hope not, for I think Hector is very much in earnest; and I also think that if you can only forgive him for not being a rich man, you might do worse than consent to become Mrs. Bristol. Now, child, don't get so angry! You are positively alarming when your eyes flame like that!"

"Money could never make any difference!" cried Edith; "but he has not told you—you cannot know! Oh, how dare you speak so to me?"

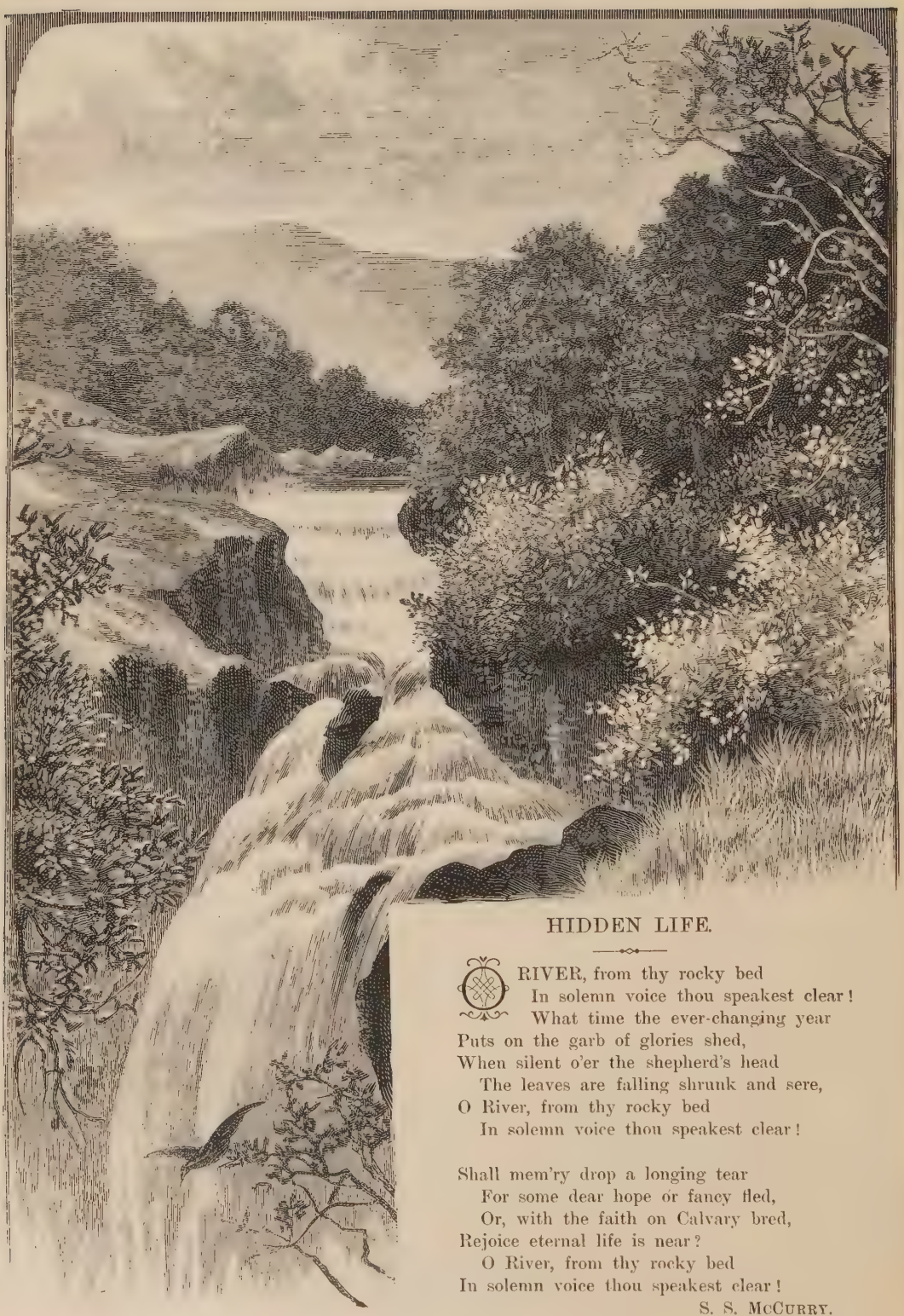
Edith, overwrought and bewildered, felt that she could not bear to have Hector's possible love for her so laughingly discussed. If it were ever to be hers, she would regard it as a treasure beyond all price; if he should never care for her except as a sister, she could live uncomplainingly, bearing her sorrow by herself; but now, when nothing seemed clear to her eyes except her own devotion to him—when all the future was lost in obscurity—she could not allow its possibilities to be speculated upon so lightly.

"I am tired," she said, rising from her chair; "I will not sit up thinking any more. Good-night, Lilian."

"Oh, good-night, my dear little goose! I won't risk the consequences of staying chattering any longer. You will find out some day that I was quite right, though. Give one kind thought to his worries, poor boy, before you go to sleep!"

And with a mischievous laugh, she left Edith to her own reflections.

(*To be continued.*)



HIDDEN LIFE.

O RIVER, from thy rocky bed
In solemn voice thou speakest clear!
What time the ever-changing year
Puts on the garb of glories shed,
When silent o'er the shepherd's head
The leaves are falling shrunk and sere,
O River, from thy rocky bed
In solemn voice thou speakest clear!

Shall mem'ry drop a longing tear
For some dear hope or fancy fled,
Or, with the faith on Calvary bred,
Rejoice eternal life is near?
O River, from thy rocky bed
In solemn voice thou speakest clear!

S. S. McCurry.

ON KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES FROM A CHILD.

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG PEOPLE. BY THE REV. HENRY ALLON, D.D., LL.D.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—2 TIMOTHY iii. 14, 15.

IN this incidental way, St. Paul lays down for us a true canon or rule of life. Nothing can be more important. Character is not an accident. A well-ordered, efficient man, pure in feeling, wise in thought, capable in conduct, is not the product of miscellaneous forces, of accidental impulses. Character is a moral formation, a carefully built structure, depending upon its purpose, its plan, its foundation, and its workmanship.

It were easier to think that a material structure like St. Paul's Cathedral could be produced by miscellaneous thoughts and influences than that the greater, more subtle and complex structure of character can be so built. Upon the wisdom of parents, who lay its foundations and determine its earlier formation, and then upon the docility and wisdom of youth when it builds for itself, the entire result depends. Hence the momentousness of a true canon of life. What are the ends of life to be realised? What are its true formative influences? What are the means whereby the end is to be attained? What kind of instruction is to be imparted? And what are the best conditions for imparting it?

These questions vitally affect the conduct of life. They are of supreme importance not only to the individual himself, but to the social organisation of which he is a part. If the individual man misses the true end of life, seeks an end that is false, debasing, and corrupting, not only is it disastrous to himself, but it is disastrous to society. Society is simply the aggregate of individual men; its character is determined by individual characters, and by their interaction. The predominant character of the nation, the neighbourhood, the family, the church, is determined by the predominant ideas and habits of its individual members.

Nothing can be more vital to national life than true conceptions concerning the great end of life, and the means of realising that end. If experience can prove anything, it is that righteousness alone can "exalt a nation." The history of nations, and the comparative conditions of the peoples of the earth, just now demonstrate that, in its elevating and gracious influences, the religion of Jesus Christ stands supreme.

Even the character of a solitary individual is of great social importance. On the lowest and most selfish ground we cannot afford to be indifferent to it. Moral qualities are contagious. "One sinner destroyeth much good." A licentious writer, an unscrupulous statesman or merchant, a godless scoffer, a profligate workman, a vicious parent, an abandoned child, destroy much more than their own souls. "No man liveth to himself." No contagion is so disastrous as that of moral evil.

Hence the right ordering of individual life becomes of supreme moment not to parents only but to society itself. Society seeks to aid the parent by imposing a social and religious responsibility upon the teacher. Then come strong impulses of Christian benevolence, which elevate our feeling of responsibility far above the standard of mere social expediency. Every individual, therefore, is under a responsibility to "do good to all men as he has opportunity."

The Sunday-school is one of the embodiments of this sentiment. Scarcely could one instance a nobler Christian inspiration than the fact that every Sunday in our British Sunday-schools many thousands of teachers quietly and persistently consecrate themselves to this great work, seeking to mould and direct the hearts of children in the ways of Christian life. So noble is its aim, and so wise its method, that even a political and social philosopher like Adam Smith declared that, since the days of the Apostles, no agency has affected a greater change of manners with equal ease and simplicity. Disencumbered of the early necessity for teaching the rudimentary elements of secular education, which was imperative, our Sunday-school teaching now simply seeks the supreme end of human life—the building-up of moral and religious character; and it adopts the most philosophical, the common-sense way of securing this: it seeks to make the whole life religious by moulding it at its very earliest stages.

What then are the true formative influences of life? How are we to deal with human beings so as to perfect in them the highest and noblest character, and so to fit them for a life of godliness here, and for the fellowship of God hereafter?

Here St. Paul tells us what had been the training of Timothy—the formative influences which had developed his singularly pure and pious character.

All that we know about Timothy is derived from two or three incidental notices of him in the Acts of the Apostles, and in St. Paul's letters. He was a native of either Derbe or Lystra, where, on one of his apostolic journeys, St. Paul found him, a pious and intelligent youth, whose qualities attracted his attention. His mother was a Jewess converted to Christianity, his father a Greek, probably a Christian proselyte also—at any rate, both were well reported of by the Christians. St. Paul tells us that both his mother Eunice and his maternal grandmother Lois were women of unfeigned faith and piety.

Piety, then, has its natural development. The pious improvement of the old Jewish dispensation leads to Jesus Christ. The Syrophœnician, Cornelius, the Roman centurion, the Ethiopian eunuch, Joseph of Arimathæa, and many others, found faithful piety under the old dispensation a moral preparation for the new.

Timothy, we are further told, had been carefully instructed in the Jewish Scriptures. Only womanly piety is mentioned; as when David appeals to the God of his mother: "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant and the son of Thine handmaid;" even though his father, Jesse, was a pious man, and the very name of his mother is unknown. It is the recognition of that subtle law of our being that binds a child to its mother, and attributes to her nurturing care the tender and distinctive influences that mould early character. It is the prerogative of the maternal relation, of the closer companionship, of the more absolute dependence, of the more tender sentiment, of the more loving ministry.

Whether there be more than this; whether among the mysterious instincts of our being there be any that bind us more closely to the womanly affections and self-sacrificing ministry of the mother, we can scarcely know; perhaps the closer and more tender nurture and companionship of mother and child sufficiently account for it. About the fact there can be no doubt; the earliest and most formative influences on a child's character come from the mother. It is her solemn charge and mysterious joy that it is so. So that the great law of heredity wrought in Timothy. There is a law of moral descent in good as well as in evil. Here is the piety of three generations—a pious grandmother, living and dying a Jewess, but, like Simeon or Anna, "waiting for the consolation of Israel;" a pious mother, converted to Christianity, probably on St. Paul's first visit to Derbe some years before he found Timothy. Whether by calling Timothy "my own son" St. Paul means that he was the means of his conversion to Christianity, or only the child of his religious nurture, is not quite clear. What is certain is, that Timothy had been religiously brought up, and had eminently rewarded the pious care bestowed upon him. He was a mere youth, so young as to be in danger long afterwards of being slighted as a Christian preacher—"Let no man despise thy youth"—but a youth of uncommon piety and promise, giving special indication that, as a religious man, he would rise to distinction and exert great influence. Such was the impression that he made upon St. Paul, that St. Paul made him his travelling-companion in his preachings and in his planting of churches; his faithful and affectionate colleague, whom he loved beyond any of his fellow-labourers—a marvellous distinction for a mere boy.

The two influences that are specially mentioned are, first, the nurture of a pious home; and, secondly, the moral influence of Scriptural teaching. Timothy had before him in his home a holy example in the piety and rectitude of his parents. He was surrounded by helpful influences, familiar from childhood with sanctity of character, of feeling, of speech, with household prayer, and with Sabbath reverence. He saw piety where it is purest and most beautiful—in a mother's character and heart. Many a time he had listened to her anxious solicitudes and counsels, to her fervent personal prayers for him. It was the manifold spiritual power of a pious home.

Is there a blessing more incalculable? Think of the differences in the moral atmosphere of young life; of homes in which no vestige of piety is seen, no single influence of it felt; some in which there is the manifest presence of almost every form of moral evil. Suppose Timothy had resisted the pious influences of his home, had become contemptuous, hard, cynical—the very influences of piety deadening his susceptibilities and making him defiant. Many do; they become ungodly in spite of every godly influence; how utterly without excuse they are; how ominous of future development is their character. If a young, tender heart so resists, what will not a hardened, practised heart do?

"From a child, Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures." Many questions are suggested by the record—about the Scriptures which he knew, and about his means of knowing them. I notice only one: the moral and religious effect of the great ideas of the Bible upon youthful character. Somehow or other, these great ideas about God and Jesus Christ, about holiness of life and immortality, about piety, and worship, and righteousness, do make men good. Who ever knew the Bible to work moral injury? Upon the sources and nature of its influence, and the effects which its special teachings have—what is called "the sufficiency of Scripture"—for building and perfecting a godly and noble life, I cannot even enter. It must suffice to note the fact that Timothy learned these Bible lessons, and made practical use of them. Had St. Paul questioned him, as he probably did, he would not have found him ignorant of the great histories and characters, and of the moral and religious teachings of the sacred books. And clearly he had tried to conform to these his own practical life. Who can think of Timothy failing to kneel at his bedside, or scorning Sabbath worship, or using bad language, or telling lies? This would have been a strange and sad issue of his pious training; and yet sometimes we see even this—evil, even in childhood, overpowering all teachings and influences of good.

This, then, was the canon of Timothy's life—the education of a pious home, and a loving and practical knowledge of the Scriptures. These are the essential conditions of a noble manhood: "the child 's the father of the man."

If we would be noble in manhood, we must begin to mould and attemper character in early youth. It is God's eternal law; it is the manifest natural law of things.

Now let me urge upon you the momentousness of early piety.

1. The natural fitness of it.

Everything is beautiful in its time. Nature has its spring-time of sowing, and quickening, and early growth; without which the full corn in the ear and the harvest reaping can never be realised. Youth is the spring-time of life; its learning, and its training in right thoughts and feelings and habits, prepare for manhood. So the physical body grows in health and vigour, so the mind is educated to intelligence and thinking power. Neglect these in youth, manhood will be maimed and incompetent. All qualifications for mature life are begun in early years. You do not wait until you are young men and women before you acquire habits of health and of intelligence.

Can you think that moral and religious character has any other law? Religious thought, and feeling, and habit, must be cultured and developed, just as faculties of the body and the mind are Indeed, we are so made that religion seems to begin with our very being. What strong religious instincts there are in a child! It is easier for a child to love God than to learn arithmetic. How reverently it feels when you tell it about God. How naturally it prays. You have to teach it to disbelieve. If then in the spring-time of life religion be neglected, the natural season for its beginning passes away. Summer-time and harvest-time may be given, and God's grace may change the heart in mature life; but what a scant and damaged reaping it will be. No second spring-time is given: the damage of a neglected spring-time can never therefore be repaired. Early habits are the most abiding. The twig is more easily inclined than the branch. It is not easy to change old habits. It is not easy to forget evil things. Even a man converted later in life can never be so natural, so perfect in his goodness, as a man who has grown up in goodness from his childhood. He is "born out of due time." In the spring-time, good seed if sown will grow naturally and vigorously. If he does not sow until summer-time, he has first painfully to clear the field of noxious weeds, to dig up the gnarled roots of old bad habits. There must be a kind of forcing process if there is to be any fruit at all. He must "cease to do evil" before he can "learn to do well." And, oh! it is often hard work.

And then early piety most accords with what is right as well as what is wise. If God has any claims at all, upon what principle are His claims to be deferred until we are grown up? Is it not as wrong to rob God in childhood as it is in manhood? Will you not always regret the days of early sin? Will you not be ashamed to bring to God the shreds of a worn-out life—your powers in their feebleness and decay, when youthful enthusiasm and summer strength are gone?

If ever piety is natural and beautiful, it is in youth; where it is seen in those whose whole life is blossoming and developing. Piety is the crown of all other beauty, the girdle of all other goodness, the glory that transfigures and etherealises our entire being. It is beautiful in its sincerity and its spontaneousness. You give yourselves to God when all the possibilities of life are before you. God looks upon you with favour; good men with gladness.

> "'T will please us to look back and see
> That our whole lives were Thine."

2. Then you get the full advantage of whatever blessings there may be in piety.

If religion be good at all, it is surely desirable to realise its good at once. It needs only a very short experience of life to learn that religion is the truest and highest happiness. It avoids the conscious degradation and misery of sin. And only those who do sin know what its misery is—its remorse, its shame, its sorrow. We do not willingly delay other happiness. We shorten as much as possible whatever is evil and painful. Sin is a disease of which Christ, the Great Physician, will cure us. It is bondage to evil passions and habits from which He will set us free. It is deterioration of character which He will counteract. The only reasonable alternative is either to deny that religion is happiness, or to seek it at once. There is no other path of which it can be said, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

If you do not give your heart to Christ, to what do you surrender it? What else can satisfy its affections, fill its desires? In youth it is most susceptible, plastic, ductile; it waits to be directed. It will soon harden into character, strengthen into habit. Every child is already beginning to be holy or to be sinful, happy or unhappy, a servant of Christ or a servant of the devil. The selfishness, the falsehood, the dishonesty, which now take insignificant forms, are the bent, the mould of character according to which the future life will be. It is mournful indeed to see a youth growing up without God's fear, without God's smile, God's guidance, God's love. But how it gladdens all hearts to see in growing years growing strength and goodness—every year adding to your grace; until an honoured manhood of respect and influence is closed by a hoary head which is a "crown of glory, because found in the ways of righteousness." Is there anything in human life so beautiful, sacred, and reverent, as a saintly patriarch who can say, "O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works"? Carried by God to hoar hairs—a shock of corn fully ripe for the garner of God—children and children's children, the children of the home, the children of the Church—"rise up to call Him blessed."

Early piety secures all possibilities of religious life. Piety is *easiest* in early life. Repentance after years of sin is hard and bitter work; to reform strong habits of evil is an arduous thing. Passion has grown strong, the will has grown stubborn, moral power is disabled. Polluted affections are a terrible capital to begin with.

> "'T is easier work if we begin
> To serve the Lord betimes;
> While sinners that grow old in sin
> Are hardened in their crimes."

Suppose a later life is not given you! How many die young! How many young people whom I now address will never reach the full years of manhood! Many over whose little graves the green grass has grown were last year as full of joyous, unapprehensive life as you are to-day.

There are differences in Heaven. "One star differeth from another star in glory." We enjoy most of God when we are most like Him; understand most of Him; have largest and longest experience of His love. To give yourselves to God early will be to make the most of life, to attain to the most mature excellence, to have the most thankful retrospect. The memories of a life of holiness are blessed. Oh, with what rapture they will sing, who, "early in Christ," have never known a life of sin; who have improved their talents, perfected their character. The more bountifully we sow, the more bountifully we shall reap: "Nearest the throne and first in song." "Come, ye children, hearken unto Me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Will you not from this time cry unto God, "Thou art my Father, and the Guide of my youth"?

THE SNOW TWINS.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," ETC. ETC.

THERE are a good many big houses and a good many little ones in London town; and the big houses do not know what is going on in the little houses, and the little houses do not know what is going on in the big ones. When by chance they each get to know something about the other, they are very much astonished, and the one party keep on thinking a great deal about what they have seen, and the other forget about what they have seen as quickly as they can. Thus is it in London town, with its houses great and small, and its people rich and poor.

There is sometimes a little break in this state of things at Christmas-time; but the break is not very big, and it does not last very long. The worst of it is that it is not general; if it were general, I should be telling you this Christmas-time about something other than the twins Startcomb and the twins Umph, and how they all became white together, only the Startcombs in one way and the Umphs in another. What strange things do happen, and I suppose will happen, to the people who live in these houses, great and small, in this wonderful London town!

Amongst the great many people who lived in this London town was Mr. Hilary Startcomb and his twins, and John Umph and his twins. John Umph had never been accustomed to be called "Mr.," so I don't see why I should call him so now. Between the two there was a great gulf fixed—a gulf which Mr. Hilary Startcomb *would* not, and which John Umph *could* not pass. When I say the gulf was "fixed," I do not mean to imply that there was an unalterable law by which such as Mr. Hilary Startcomb and John Umph should not be able (let them wish it never so much) to come together; I only mean to say that there it was, and that it divided Mr. Startcomb and John Umph by a tremendous gap.

These two touched humanity at one common point: each was the parent of twins. If I had my choice, I should prefer "touching humanity" in this line in the singular number; but Mr. Startcomb was immensely proud of what the Greeks would call the "dual," but what we call the plural number, at which his family commenced. It never went any farther; but that he did not trouble himself about. One was a boy, and one a girl; so the taste for variety was completely gratified—the most butterfly fancy could desire no more.

As it was with Mr. Startcomb, so also was it with John Umph. Though he did not want to attach himself to humanity by, so to speak, a hook and eye (the hook or the eye singly being as much as his means made him feel warranted in possessing, so to speak, at a stroke), still, down in his gulf (after his first surprise of *two* fingers being held up by a kind neighbour, from which he was to draw, and did draw, his own inferences) did John Umph say, "Bless the little dears!" And that very night did he cut off the salt-spoonful of brown sugar which he had hitherto allowed himself; for, as a prudent man, he felt it incumbent on him to lay by for his children, and provide for them betimes. There were many queer little things of this kind done down in the bottom of the gulf—not as many as there might have been, for there was a demon there called "Drink," one of whose great delights is that there should be as little as possible—if possible, nothing at all—for little children. But good little Umph would have fought this demon, if necessary, with the poker, tongs, and shovel, and finished by hurling the scuttle at its head, rather than forego that little bit of self-

denial. Never, from the hour that those two fingers were held up, was that salt-spoon seen in the cup from which John Umph drank what he called tea, but what Mr. Startcomb would have called such, only on the understanding that he was attempting to perpetrate a very ludicrous, though somewhat lugubrious, joke.

So then, Mr. Startcomb and John Umph started fair in life in the matter of twins, but with this little difference: that John Umph and his twins were at the bottom of the gulf, and Mr. Startcomb and his were on some lofty eminence outside it.

John Umph was a cobbler, and "John Umph: Repairs Neatly Executed," was what was over his door and in his window; the "Umph" was written small, the "Repairs" large, "Neatly" larger still, while "Executed" sank back to the dimensions of "Repairs," thus giving a centre and two sides, and preserving the symmetry of the thing. As to "John Umph"—the name—the man who owned it felt himself a humble individual, and thought that neatness in repairing was the great point to keep before the eye of the public. What was it to the public *who* repaired? the public would not give one penny more because it was John Umph who did it.

As to the twins, their names were "Toby" and "Kitty"—Kitty after the mother, and Toby after a certain Tobias Umph, famed in the family for being the journeyman who made the top-boots in which Eclipse's jockey rode in the fastest race on record. There was a vague notion in the Umph family that those boots were an important element in the success of the horse; and so perhaps they were, if one takes into account the spurs which were on the heels, and the use the jockey made of them.

Mr. Startcomb was a colonial broker. Mincing Lane was his abode most of the day; and, when

JOHN UMPH AND HIS APRON.—*p.* 226.

business was done, he betook himself to the West End, where he had a palatial mansion. Whereas John Umph's ideas as to sugar were limited to salt-spoonfuls—or rather, now, not to having even salt-spoonfuls—Mr. Startcomb went in not only for hogsheads and bags, but for whole cargoes; for even in the matter of sugar there may be a great difference between a man at the bottom of the gulf and one at the top, or rather, not in the gulf at all. Out of these hogsheads and bags came great riches, with which, in due season, little Richard Startcomb and Mary, his sister, were to be endowed. When Mr. Startcomb senior could not keep these riches any longer himself, then they were to go to his son and daughter. Meanwhile, the father was to enjoy them himself, and in his own way. He wished to be a somebody—he was ready to pay for being a somebody—and in their small way Dick and Mary were to be somebodies also. And so the children, so far as their tender years would admit, were brought up and put forth upon the world as a rich man's children. Mr. Startcomb would be horrified if the sugar-casks did not, as he thought, sweeten their lives, entering into their dress and food, and everything else.

There are parallel lines in geometry, and parallel lines in human life. The only reason why we don't see these latter is, because we cannot always bring them together before our eyes—one line running its course at the top, and the other never swerving from it, only running underneath—it may be very, very much underneath. In this case, however, it so happens that we can bring them together—never to touch each other, but to be at the same time within our view. And so, as I have had to tell you of a parallel in births, now I must tell you of a parallel in deaths; and when I have told you this, the parallel must still run on. Mrs. Startcomb and Mrs. Umph, or rather, Catherine or Kitty Umph (*i.e.*, the mother), died almost at the same time; and to make the parallel complete up to this point, when they died two *good* women then died. Oh, good women! why did you die? For we want you all in this wicked world of ours, and especially in this London town. There are plenty of bad ones in high estate and low. Oh, Mary! (*i.e.*, the mother) why did you not stay to see whether you could not do something with Startcomb? Oh, Kitty! why did you not stay to comfort poor sugarless Umph? Ah me! It is a sad moment for this poor world when a good woman dies.

The Startcomb twins and the twins Umph were each eight years old when their respective mothers died; and Mr. Startcomb and John Umph each mourned in his own way. Mr. Startcomb grieved in broadcloth and crape, and coachmen and footmen were also craped, and wore black gloves; and all the West End paper and envelopes were edged deeply with black. The little Startcombs, too, were veiled in gloom (*i.e.*, their bodies); but their little faces often wore pleasant smiles when they were alone, and they held each other's hands, and looked up into the blue sky, and nodded lovingly to someone whom they believed to be there, and said, "Yes, mother, we *will* be good, and perhaps we'll go and see you soon." They would sometimes do this quite suddenly, and then turn to their play again. As to the earthly resting-place of Mr. Startcomb's wife, it was made very magnificent with marble—not only that it might be befitting *his* wife, but also because he intended some day to be laid there himself. He was in no immediate hurry, but it was more satisfactory to know that everything would be to his liking, if circumstances had permitted him to be consulted.

Poor John Umph mourned too; only he had to do so at the bottom of the gulf, and he acted accordingly. Down in those dark parts where the cobbler lived are hosts of "things" (can I call them "things"?) which are wonderfully akin to human feelings. For my part, I believe that they really are such; and though many might think that the people at the bottom of the gulf would be happier without them, and though many who live down there have succeeded in almost stifling them, still there they are; and some will tell you that they will flourish there better than on higher ground, and produce more luxuriantly both in flower and fruit.

John Umph could not do much in the way of symbolism of woe. He could not put Toby and Kitty into black, but he got a kind neighbour, who gave him a morsel of crape, to stitch it round the boy's half-ragged cap, and to put a bow of the same in the girl's hat. As to himself, many and deep were the cogitations which he held in the very innermost of both his heart and brain, how to do honour to the memory of a woman—a noble woman; even though her destiny had been cast in "a gulf." Some day, perhaps, if the world went well with him, he might be able to put up a stone at the head and foot of her humble grave. But this was a prospect too visionary and too remote to be any comfort to his wounded heart; he must do something now. Down in the gulf there are many serious ideas welling up in one mind and another, which would never come into the heads of the people who live higher up. And one came into John Umph's. Necessity is the mother of invention; and it was so with him. As he was thumping away at the lapstone one evening soon after his tremendous loss, he was thumping away at his brain too, trying to hammer something out of what he felt to be a very leathery skull. Presently he paused. He had it! The idea was an original one, even from the gulf. There was his leather apron. Was not that a part of his daily raiment? Nay, was it not, so far as his working life was concerned (and all his life was working), the chief part of his clothing? He all but slept in it. To make that an emblem of mourning would put him, in his way, on a level with the grand people who had cockaded servants, with black gloves and crape. He would put a black line all round that apron, and he would draw a circle in the corner, and in it put the

letter K., not C. No. "Catherine" was her name, no doubt, but he knew her as "Kitty"; and as he had known her in life, so should she be remembered in death.

Ladies, wives—gentlemen, husbands—do you all wish this? Is there a life-love amongst you all which you wish to run on into death, through death?—

> That which not even Death can sever—
> Oh never, never! 't is for ever:
> That which runs on, oh! whither, whither?
> To ocean bound, like some fair river.

But if I go into rhymes I do not know whither they will carry me; they may float me out of my depth, so I shall come back at once to John Umph and his apron in the gulf. The folk who live there put things to strange uses, and to such did our friend put the solitary skewer of which his establishment boasted. I should have told you that John Umph had some larger thoughts in the way of mourning than those which centred around this skewer. The skewer was only a friend in need, a makeshift, and so was the apron, until some happy day in the future—if, indeed, he could now look forward to "happy days"—when he should put on a full suit of mourning for Kitty. "It may be ten years hence," said John to himself—"it may be twenty, but perhaps the day will come when I can buy a full suit of black—even if it is only second-hand—and wear it on Sundays, at least for two whole years. I should like Kitty to be mourned for as a gentlewoman," said John Umph to himself, in his solitary musings; "she is worthy of it. If her spirit can move about in this lower world, I should like her to see me in black; but I daresay if spirits can move about in this lower world, they know something of what is passing inside us; and Kitty's would know that I have crape on my heart, and she could see plainly enough that I have crape in my life. But until I can get the black I will put up with the skewer." And John Umph, like a wise man, at once set about using such means as he could command, and put the skewer into the fire. The line was drawn easily enough round the homely apron, but what remained to be done required some thought. "It won't do," said John to himself, "to put the letters of her name where everyone can see them." John had some idea of the heart's knowing its own bitterness, and a stranger's not intermeddling therewith. There are some fine feelings here and there down in the gulf, and I should be inclined to count this as one of them. He did not want everyone who came in to do business, or to gossip, to see that which was his wife's name, or the initials for it, in such a strange place; so at last he hit, down there, in the bottom of the gulf, upon a plan which was no novelty indeed in the higher regions, but which was decidedly new and original to him. John Umph determined to make a monogram. He would twist K and U together, so that folk, at first sight, at any rate, could not see what was meant. He himself could, alas! always know it only too well. I am a little bit of a hand at making monograms myself, and I am bound to say that U. K., or rather K. U., are not easy letters on which to try this kind of matrimony—to be joined, as it were, together and made one. No doubt the people at the top of the gulf could get them so twisted together and stamped in gold, and it would be impossible for all the powers of earth to get them asunder again; but, down in the gulf, people have to do themselves most things which they want to have done; and pre-eminently, such an extraordinary thing as this.

John Umph made several trials, more or less uncouth. Even the sea-serpent seemed to be represented in one of them. If John Umph's attempt—I mean this particular one—had been duly enlarged and been seen at sea, we should certainly have had an affidavit by the master of some ship, confirmed by that of the mate, and an able-bodied seaman or two, that, in latitude so-and-so, and longitude so-and-so, weather moderate, atmosphere foggy, the ship going so many knots, had been seen a monster, etc., etc.

At last poor John gave up the complicated and the ornamental, and contented himself with something—a copy of which I am fortunately able to supply. It was as nearly as possible this—

It was, as far as the monogram goes, quite original; the ornamentation was borrowed from frequent visits to the cemetery, and a study of the tombs and tombstones there. Underneath the circle containing the monogram he put an anchor. He had studied anchors in the cemetery, and found out what they were the emblem of—and was he not full of hope and security about Kitty?

Then there were two angels—or bits of angels, with wings all complete—a trifle high-shouldered, but still as good as any of the gentry had. Skulls and crossbones John Umph would have none of. His Kitty had always been beautiful in his eyes, and he had no doubt she was beautiful still; he would surround the thoughts of his dead with what was suited to what they were in life. And so the whole was completed; and I have already shown you exactly what it was like.

Thus was honoured brave, and noble, and loving Catherine Umph—honoured more than many a noble lady whose body lies beneath sculptured marble, and whose likeness hangs upon ancestral

walls; for it is a fact, that down in the gulf some people are honoured, and it is to be believed that the high-up eyes are able to look into correspondingly deep-down depths, and can discern these honoured folk, and look upon them with many an admiring glance and many an approving smile.

For some time John Umph got on pretty well as regards worldly matters. Work was plentiful, and the children were good—the neighbours, too, were kind; and many a thought of how happy Kitty now was, and how high she was out of the gulf, cheered his mind; when trouble suddenly came upon him, and with the trouble came want.

And it all came through the monogram, the thoughts from which had been John's comfort for many an hour.

John Umph had committed the unpardonable sin of going out of the common path—of making himself singular—of becoming different from his neighbours. It was only now that he was found out. Of set purpose he had made his little monogram small, so that as he bent down to his work he could see it; but it was not likely to attract the notice of anyone else. Moreover, when the cobbler went out any distance from home, he was in the habit of folding up his apron, and putting it on one side. No one was likely to take it up—much less to examine it. But as ill-luck would have it, one Saturday afternoon he suddenly remembered that, if he did not start off as quickly as he could for some materials which he wanted that very evening for work he had promised before Sunday, he should not be in time—for Saturday was early-closing day; and if he did not go at once he would be too late.

Up jumped John Umph, and threw his apron down by the stool, never thinking of folding it as usual; and hence came all his grief.

In the court where the cobbler lived there also lived a certain wise woman. She was not exactly a gipsy herself, but she was of gipsy lineage. She was a 'strology woman. She was on familiar terms with the planets; though in a general way she had not much to do with the sun and moon. Comets she only dealt with on special occasions, and they could not be said to form part of her regular stock-in-trade. But Saturn, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, the signs of the Zodiac, were as common as red herrings, and indeed, like them, entered a good deal into her daily food. Eclipses, conjunctions, oppositions, she worked these all in her daily business. Somewhere or other the 'strology woman had picked up something about "Uranus" and its satellites and the ecliptic; but these she was chary of, and charged extra for. She never did them under three-and-six, and sometimes went as high as a sovereign. With nursemaids "Mars" was always good for a couple of shillings. She went to half a crown if she gave indications in the direction of "the Guards." The 'strology woman remembered "Mars" always with gratitude; for on one occasion she was led by a planet to promise a young lady the colonel of the First Life Guards for a husband, for which she was paid down two pounds on the nail. For privates, she had got a couple of shillings by the score; and many a drummer had gone to little nursemaids with perambulators at a shilling a head. On one occasion, however, the 'strologer had not found it so easy to satisfy a customer. This was a minute girl, who had the charge of twins in a perambulator. Possibly the responsibility which she felt laid upon her in rolling about two children in one perambulator turned her head a little, or it might be she had the vanity which sometimes belongs to very small people. But so it was: when she found she got only a drummer for her shilling she was very much enraged. The high-shouldered morsel of humanity flew into a tremendous rage—if anything tremendous could come from anything so small—and demanded back her money, or something better for it. "And what do you want?" asked the 'strologer. "I want a Grenadier," answered the poor mite. "I want the biggest man in the Guards. I want a man six feet four in his stockings, if there is one; and, six feet ever so much more in his boots and cap. That's what I want; and if I can't have that, I want back my money."

"Well, let me see," said the 'strologer. "Of course, I can't promise. It's all with the stars. If the planets like to give, why of course I can; and if they don't like, why of course no one can make them. But cross my hand again, and we'll try. There's nothing like trying. I've known a fair-haired young man with no moustache come out the second time almost a black, and moustache that you could almost work with a curling-tongs, and whiskers, too, were tremendous, and a beard was coming."

Hereupon the mite fumbled in her pocket, and produced a shilling, and asked for change; for sixpence was all she was going to pay.

"It was lucky, my dear," said the 'strologer, "that you had a shilling, for now we can be pretty sure to do the trick. This other sixpence will buy off Saturn, a tremendous old planet, who is always in the way of good luck when extra-tall men are wanted. Now I think we'll do. I'll throw in a couple of parallaxes, half a dozen conjunctions, and all the twelve signs of the Zodiac; but it will be tremendous. Men six feet four aren't to be had every day. But don't look up; you might be frightened, and lose your head, and then those blessed babes might be overturned, or overrun. Now it's beginning," said the 'strologer, as she put her hand over the girl's eyes. "Now it's going on. There's a comet switching the lot of them with his tail. That's a sure sign of something good. Now it's ended. And what have we got? A man the exact height—at least, I'm sure he must be, though I didn't ask him to take off his boots. His name is Hicks—Michael Hicks—and you and he will show off every Sunday afternoon, my dear, in the Park; and the stars say that there are three duchesses who'll say that 'they wish they were you,' and three

dukes who 'll look at Mr. Hicks and wish that they were he."

Which of these two prospects gratified the poor little creature's vanity the more I cannot tell. I only know that she spent every spare moment she had for the next week in writing on every stray bit of paper she could get, in pot-hooks and hangers, in very large round hand, "Jane Hicks," "Mrs. Hicks, Grenadier Guards."

(To be concluded.)

PRAYER BY THE RIVER-SIDE.—*p.* 231.

THREE CONVERSIONS.

BY THE REV. J. TELFORD, B.A.

"Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium."—ACTS xvi. 1, 2.

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptised, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."—ACTS xvi. 14, 15.

"Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."—ACTS xvi. 29—31.

THOSE who are familiar with the Journals of George Fox and John Wesley will remember how long both men struggled with doubt and fear before they were able to rejoice in the sense of God's forgiving love. We speak sometimes as though such cases were rare to-day, and congratulate ourselves on the clearer teaching of the pulpit and the Sunday-school, as well as on the numberless helpful books which are ready to hand for every sincere seeker after Christ. Yet, notwithstanding this more evangelical teaching, no one can have much experience of the workings of the human heart without discovering that in every Christian circle, whether it be the home, or the Sunday-school, or the congregation, there are some who are seeking rest. They are not unmindful of either private or public means of grace; they are not unwilling to fulfil the great condition: "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." Still, they do not walk in the sunshine of God's peace. They have not reached the joy of that hymn:—

"The opening heavens around me shine
With beams of sacred bliss,
If Jesus shows His mercy mine,
And whispers I am His."

It is not only the loss which they themselves sustain which makes one desire to help those who thus stand on the border of their Canaan. They suffer, it is true, but the Church and the world suffer also. What increase of zeal and love would be witnessed if every worshipper in our churches who longs for Christ were able to say: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*." The Wednesday before that memorable Whitsunday of 1738, when Charles Wesley was able to rejoice in acceptance with God, found him poring over Luther's Commentary on the Galatians. "I spent some hours this evening in private," he writes, "with Martin Luther,

who was greatly blessed to me, especially his conclusion of the second chapter. I laboured, waited, and prayed to feel 'Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.'" Luther had said, "Accustom yourself to grasp this little word *me* with sure trust, and apply it to thyself; and do not doubt that thou art among those who are named in the little word *me*." When Charles Wesley grasped this vital truth of Christianity, it found its way into one of his earliest hymns :—

"O Filial Deity,
Accept my new-born cry!
See the travail of Thy soul,
Saviour, and be satisfied;
Take me now, possess me whole,
Who for me, for me, hast died."

That last line, the fruit of his study of the German Reformer, soon bore fruit in the conversion of his friend, Jack Delamotte, of Blendon, who "found the words sink into his soul; could have sung for ever, being full of delight and joy."

To take home to one's own heart that sacred word of St. Paul's is indeed the secret of personal peace. Why, then, do we not cast anchor here? How is it that we fail to see and find our blessedness? We all realise that God's provision for our salvation is made. He "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." We know that the Christ who "poured out His soul unto death" is exalted "a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins." Yet, knowing all this, we do not "enter in." One great barrier lies in a feeling that all conversions are alike. With that we wish to deal. Look around you. Is not diversity the great law of Nature? Can you find bird, or beast, or flower which has not its individuality of form or colour? Are there two blades of grass in the meadow which are the same in every line and shade? God has stamped on Nature the law of diversity, and thus it becomes a great book which fills us with never-ceasing themes for wonder and for praise. To stand outside some great railway terminus and scan the faces of those that speed forth to their daily duty is to learn the same lesson. Is not this true also of human minds and hearts? What, then, must be expected when we attempt to study the way in which God leads men to Himself? All hearts are open to the Spirit's voice, all consciences feel the touch of His finger, but the circumstances of that working are various beyond our widest thought, and we must allow God to move in His own way, and learn to recognise His hand whatever the method may be. It will perhaps help us if we examine three cases of conversion which are found in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts. The very fact that they lie side by side in one chapter, and that one man is the means of blessing both to Timothy, and Lydia, and the Philippian jailor, makes the lesson more impressive. The three types seem almost as though they were chosen to teach us how various are the circumstances of conversion, and yet how closely all agree in some leading characteristics. Let us study the three conversions, and then try to ascertain the points in which they agree.

Here is an idyllic scene. The Jewish lad, far away in the uplands of Asia Minor, becomes a lover of the Great Book. "From a child thou hast known the Scriptures." Mother and grandmother set themselves to win the boy for God. Their "unfeigned faith" was a pattern which he was not slow to follow. Into this family circle St. Paul came, with Barnabas, on their first missionary journey. The whole town was stirred by a notable miracle. A cripple there who had been lame from his birth was one of Paul's congregation. To the Apostle's steadfast gaze it was evident that this man "had faith to be healed," and with a loud voice he bade him take the blessing of which he had never dreamed. Paul's estimate of the man was right. As he heard the command, "Stand upright on thy feet," the cripple "leaped and walked." That deed of grace made the crowd turn to each other in amaze. The gods seemed to have come down in the likeness of men, as once before tradition asserted that they had done in that very region. The Lycaonians would fain have paid religious honours to the strangers. Even when the preachers rent their clothes and declared that they were men of like passions with themselves, they were scarce able to restrain them from offering sacrifice. What an impression such a scene must have made on the boy Timothy! It was followed by a sudden revulsion of feeling in the fickle crowd, which rendered it still more impressive. The hostile Jews from Antioch and Iconium appeared in Lystra. Paul, who had just escaped the worship of the crowd, was now stoned and left for dead. Timothy was probably six years old at the time of these memorable events. He was no stranger to them, for St. Paul in his latest letter

THE DAWNING OF DAY.—*p.* 231.

reminds him that he had fully known the persecutions St. Paul had endured at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra (2 Timothy iii. 11). The Apostle had returned to Lystra shortly after his escape from martyrdom; now, on his third visit, he took Timothy with him as his companion and helper in the work.

What encouragement such a history gives to those who labour for the conversion of the young! Home training and godly example prepared the boy of Lycaonia for the Apostle's appeal. Thus in early life he was gently drawn to the love and service of God. We read of no violent awakening here. Timothy has learned the truth at his mother's knee, and gladly obeys the call to share a wanderer's life. Someone has spoken of those who expect all conversions to be of one type, like that of the Philippian jailor, and forget the better type "which comes to light in the Christian household, when the child of many prayers and of intelligent Christian nurture yields to the drawings of the Holy Spirit so early and so sweetly as never in later life to know when it began to love God and to lead a life prayerful and Christian, and of ever-growing beauty and strength." This is, indeed, the type of conversion which we hope may become universal by-and-bye. Not yet—for there are many Philippian jailors to be brought into the light—but gradually, as every home becomes a nursery for Christians, and every Sunday-school and church learns to do its part more perfectly. The training may not bear fruit at once, nor in the same way, but there is much in that assurance which sustained Monica in her bitter anxiety for Augustine: "It is impossible that the child of so many prayers should perish." In many a quiet home to-day God is training the future workers of His Church. Let all who have part in this blessed service seek to win the young in earliest days for the Saviour.

We pass on with Paul and Timothy to Philippi. Established in business here was a prosperous woman from Thyatira. Her native town was famous for its dyes. Its purples and crimsons were as renowned as those of Tyre and Miletus. She was already a worshipper of God. It would appear that in Philippi she had met with some devout Jewesses, and had quickly recognised in their faith a truer and loftier worship than her own. She was now one of their little company that met for prayer by the river-side. The Old Testament, the delight of Timothy's childhood, was a new book to Lydia. In its Psalms, its prophecies, its histories, she found food and guidance for her soul of which she had never dreamed. There can be no doubt that such a woman had been a noble heathen, reverent and candid, eager to know what was right, and prompt to do it; she was a noble proselyte, rejoicing greatly in the new light which shone around her. But God had not finished Lydia's training. She was yet to become a Christian—one of the noblest Christian women of the New Testament.

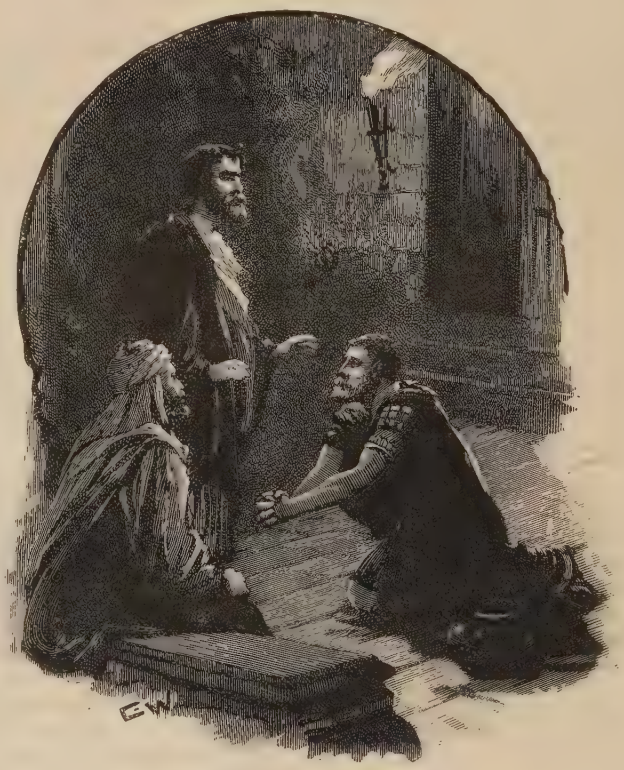
As she listened to Paul's words, God opened her heart. She heard of Jesus and the Resurrection. She saw the one way of peace, through living faith in the only Saviour. There was no fighting against the truth, no stifling of conviction. The message was just what she longed for. She received it with unspeakable gratitude, this "glorious Gospel of the blessed God." There was no terror about her conversion. Lydia's gently opened heart was made for God's own temple meet. How thankful we are for this firstfruits of St. Paul's labours in Europe! Does it not remind us that there are such converts waiting for the Gospel to-day far off among the heathen, that we must speed our messengers that they may share our blessing?

> "Far and wide, though all unknowing,
> Pants for Thee each human breast;
> Human tears for Thee are flowing,
> Human hearts in Thee would rest.
> Thirsting, as for dews of even,
> As the new-mown grass for rain,
> Thee they seek, as God of heaven,
> Thee, as man for sinners slain."

Many conversions are like Lydia's. Grace gradually unfolds its message and gently draws the true seekers after God. There is no night of despair, no heart-breaking penitence; simply that yearning, which draws them closer and still closer to our Father. Some may not admire such conversions. They may contrast them unfavourably with that of the jailor. But is not the dawning of day as glorious as the earthquake? is the gently falling dew less beneficent than the great thunderstorm which shakes the forest? Nature has room for all modes of operation, and our theories of the work of grace must not venture to speak lightly of any of the methods by which God wins men to Himself.

We now reach the memorable type of conversion given in the story of the Philippian jailor. The town had been in an uproar. "Vested interests"—disturbed by the cure of the poor girl who had a spirit of divination—were seeking revenge. The masters of the damsel were clever enough to approach the magistrates on their weakest side. Philippi was a Roman colony in which "the pride and privilege of Roman citizenship" greeted the stranger at every turn. The cunning libel on Paul and Silas roused a tempest of indignation against them in a moment. "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans." There was no inquiry; the charge was enough. Paul and Silas found themselves in evil case. They were severely beaten and cast into prison. The jailor thrust them into the inner cell, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But, as Tertullian said: "The leg feels nothing in the stocks when the mind is in heaven." The midnight found these two men praying and singing praise. What did they sing? "God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble"? The prisoners heard and wondered. They wondered still more when the earthquake shook the prison, and every man's bands were loosed. These particulars help us to understand the jailor's panic. The disturbance of yesterday, the charge against the two new prisoners, the special orders he had received to keep them safely; and now the earthquake and the open doors! All this goes far to explain the jailor's terror. But when the rash attempt at self-murder is stayed by the ringing shout, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here," we can well understand the

jailor's attitude as he comes in before Paul and Silas. Conviction is written in every phrase. The man's soul is shaken to its very depths. He is utterly broken down and become as a little child. These prisoners may help him, and he is not ashamed to ask for guidance, nor will he hesitate to do their bidding. All this, and more, is written in his bearing and in his question. "He called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Lords, what must I do to be saved?" There was no need to speak of repentance to such a man. His repentance is written in every feature, in every gesture, in every word. Such an inquirer is ready for the healing balm, for the counsel which may lead to perfect peace. St. Paul and St. Silas recognised this in their reply. Salvation was his if he would take but another step. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The man took that step, and was soon at rest in the love of Christ.



"'What must I do to be saved?"

The rapidity of this conversion startles us. How long John Bunyan wrestled with conviction! How nearly George Fox was driven to despair by the workings of his troubled conscience! With the jailor this process was concentrated into a few moments; yet who can fail to see that it was a mighty work of the convincing Spirit? We must not disparage sudden conversions. Is not God able to work in ways that are far beyond our thought? Miss Ellice Hopkins gives a notable case of sudden conversion in her "Work among Working-men." She had been engaged in a mission, with blessed results. "One man in particular I remember, so wild a fellow that, on taking his wages, he would sometimes drink all Saturday night and Sunday, and return to work on Monday morning, never having set eyes on his starving wife and children, and having spent all the money which ought to have gone to their support. He came into the Abbey schoolroom a drunken blasphemer; he left it a Christian man. His own simple account of his sudden conversion was, 'I heard that my Saviour lived and died for me, now I mean to live and die for Him.' That man, with all the force of evil habit on him, never had a fall!" What a blessed testimony to the power which can both save and keep! Those who are thus suddenly brought to Christ will need special care and counsel, but God is able to make them to stand.

These, then, are the three types of conversion. Timothy represents the ever-growing company of young disciples led from the cradle to the fold; Lydia is the illustration of those who are never strangers to the workings of the Spirit, but are led on from step to step till they fully rest under the covert of God's wing; the jailor is a glorious illustration of the might of that hammer of conviction which rends the rock in pieces before the Lord. Christianity would be less than Divine if it could not deal with such a case as the jailor's. Every true worker and seeker must learn that God fulfils Himself in many ways. It has been said that "a preacher or other Christian whose conversion was consciously sudden will almost always speak of conversion as sudden. One in whom the work was gradual and slow will give a corresponding description. We are prone to forget that Christian experience, like the human countenance, will in no two persons be precisely alike, and often presents many and striking differences, though the great characteristic features are always the same."

What, then, are these great characteristic features of every true conversion? Let us try and trace them in the three cases recorded in Acts xvi.

1. All HEARD. The message of salvation was brought in various ways. Timothy heard it at his mother's knee, and then from the lips of the Apostle in his native city; Lydia listened to it at the riverside, among the good women of Philippi; it was spoken to the jailor at dead of night in the prison. But all heard of Christ and of salvation. Can there be faith without truth on which it may lay hold? What is St. Paul's teaching? "How then shall they

call on Him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." God's voice is heard in many different ways. Some hear it in the cottage, some by the wayside, some in the House of God. It may reach us through a casual word from the lips of a child, or in quiet reading, or through convincing speech; but whatever may be the way, it is heard; faith grasps the promise, and fixes here its anchorage. So far we have all gone towards conversion. We are ready to take another step.

2. The three conversions agree in this—that all OBEYED the voice of God which spoke to them through His servant. Timothy was almost insensibly led to obey; Lydia rejoiced to accept the truth; the jailor expressed his perfect readiness to obey, in words that must have recalled to St. Paul his own question on the way to Damascus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" These true converts proved the reality of their conviction by prompt and perfect obedience. They put no obstacles in their own way; they allowed none to stand between them and the blessing they coveted. All was pushed aside that would keep them out of Christ. This is surely of supreme importance. What is conviction worth if it does not lead us to obey? If God have to say, "All day long have I stretched out my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people," there needs some earthquake to shake men from their slumber and make them cry to Him for mercy. Unless God's will be our law—that is, unless at all costs we are ready to obey in His strength—there can be no conversion.

3. These three converts proved the reality of their faith by WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. Timothy forgot himself in his service for the Great Apostle. His constancy of love brightened the dark hours of imprisonment and impending death for St. Paul. He has written Timothy's biography in that tribute which still keeps the memory of the young disciple fragrant after the lapse of eighteen centuries: "Ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel." Lydia's faith found expression in her hospitality. Her ministries began as the new light shined into her heart. "She besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide. And she constrained us." She broke down Paul's fence of independence—she only, and the Church which she inspired with her own spirit. What relations there were between Paul and his converts at Philippi! Read again the closing chapter of his Epistle, sent to them from his prison-house at Rome. The old man still keeps alive the sacred memory of their kindness. Listen to those words, "Now, ye Philippians know also that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity." What is the key to this? Is it not Lydia? The Church to which she belonged caught the woman's spirit. It was in literal fact Lydia "writ large." Paul's imprisonment did not tempt her to hide her friendship. The two sufferers for Christ went from the prison doors into the house of Lydia. Nor was the jailor wanting in the same spirit. To see him who but a few hours before had fastened their feet in the stocks now washing their stripes and setting meat before them in his own house—that itself is a sign of the happy change which had come over his spirit when he stepped from darkness into God's marvellous light.

Is not this also a crucial test of true conversion—that it is followed by humble labour for God and His people? There is much to be done for Christ; let love prompt us to do it. The smallest effort will be accepted and approved by our Master. God *waits* to be gracious. Faith accepts His invitation, and rests on Him alone for salvation. It must part with everything that keeps it from its good, and when it rests in the one Saviour it must find expression in true service. That service will have its reward, for it will help us to grasp the promises of God more clearly, and more fully to understand that perfect blessedness of which our Saviour spoke: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

CONSOLATIO.

(IN MEMORIAM.)

SONNET.

OH, in our anguish at Thy dread decree,
When loving friend and true from earth is fled,
And tears of deepest blood from heart be shed,
Grant, Lord, restraint from over-grief to see
His spirit cherished better far than we
Its shell could guard in air with sin inbred;
We early lower it in earth as dead,
But quickened 't will more surely be—like Thee!

Oh, Nature's ways are best, for God is wise,
And sleep in Him is best when eyelids close,
E'en as our hope is this our brother sleeps.
Oh, may He, then, our length of days dispose
Just as He will—and may each friend who weeps
Find praise to give, and, like to David,* rise!

C. P.

* "Then David arose from the earth, . . . and said: . . . Wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

A CHAINED LIBRARY, WIMBORNE MINSTER.

A CHAINED LIBRARY.

THE sleepy little town of Wimborne, in Dorsetshire, is easily accessible from Bournemouth, and is well worth visiting on account of its fine Minster. The building itself first claims one's attention; then there is an astronomical clock, a muniment-room, and last—but not least—a library. This library is perhaps unique, for all the books that it contains are chained to the shelves. It takes us back to a time when books were rare and of great value, and were the embodiment of all the best and worthiest thoughts. What a contrast does the literature of to-day present! Books are now so cheap as to be within the reach of the poorest; "of making many books there is no end;" and, on the whole, their intrinsic worth is far more than when readers betook themselves to the library of Wimborne Minster. But there is a danger of abusing the opportunity thus offered to us. Because books are cheap it does not follow that we should read everything that is published; to do so we should probably waste a great deal of time that might be more profitably employed. Are we careful to select for our reading those books that are worthiest and best?

THE BRIGHT SIDE.

An old lady was in the habit of talking to Douglas Jerrold in a gloomy, depressing manner, presenting to him only the sad side of life. "Why," said Jerrold one day, after a long and sombre interview, "she wouldn't allow there was a bright side to the moon." To another woman of a similar disposition, who said that there was no bright side to her life, a friend replied, "Then polish up the dark side.'"

YOUTHFUL RESIGNATION.

When women are sick, they are generally far more patient than men. They show as much courage in passion or suffering as men do in action. If grown-up men on sick-beds may frequently be described as impatients, rather than patients, we do not expect a great amount of patience in a sick boy. And yet a correspondent tells us that he is now visiting a soldier-boy, a trumpeter belonging to the Royal Artillery, who, afflicted with a most painful disease, from which he must soon die, preaches by his patience and Christian resignation lessons such as many experienced Christians have yet to learn. A few days ago our informant said to "Tommy" (this is a pet name which everyone in the military hospital calls him), "As they are now organising anew the Artillery, I wish that they could organise you into health." He replied, "There is only One who can do that, and even if He never does it I shall always believe that He does His best for me."

SIMPLICITY.

On one occasion Diogenes saw a child drinking out of its hands; so he threw away the cup which belonged to his wallet, saying, "That child has beaten me in simplicity." The more we have of this simplicity, the freer we are and the richer. The really poor man is he who, not content with necessities, hankers after superfluities which are beyond his means.

"AN INTERNAL APPARATUS OF TORTURE."

The examination after death of the body of Robert Hall, the famous preacher, justified his own words, that he "carried about with him an internal apparatus of torture." While he lived, however, his friends did not realise that this was the case, so patiently did he bear his suffering, and so bravely did he try to hide it from them. What enabled him to do this was the internal apparatus of comfort which he had in his soul. He had resigned his will to God's, and the peace and joy that resulted from doing so made him forget the apparatus of torture that was in his body.

THE BEST COSMETICS.

No cosmetics are so capable of preserving beauty as the smile of good temper, and a desire to please. Our faces are formed, or at least changed from time to time, by the lives we live. One man tries humbly to obey the Ten Commandments, and in time the Decalogue seems to be written on his honest face; another leads a hard, sensual, selfish life, and an observer of character when he sees him for the first time will probably say to himself, "If God Almighty writes a legible hand, that man is a villain."

BOOKS FOR PRIZES.

It has long been a subject of debate among Sunday-school officers how far the prizes to be given in the school should be selected according to the present taste of their winners. Probably in most schools a compromise is arrived at; and while some of the books awarded are chosen with a view to their recipient's future, in the junior classes story-books are found more acceptable. Such being the case, our friends will be glad to hear of anything really good in the way of additions to this class of literature; and in mentioning a few such works from among those lately published, we must of course add that the books we describe are equally suitable for prizes or presents. We recommend them to see the volumes published by Messrs. Blackie and Son, who have this season issued three very varied stories by Mr. G. A. Henty, which are sure to be popular with boys, for they are full of life and incident. The first, "Held Fast for England," goes back to the days of the siege of Gibraltar, while the second, "The Dash for Khartoum," is, as its title implies, a tale of the Nile Expedition for the relief of General Gordon; and the third, "Redskin and Cowboy," is a tale of life in the Western States of America. For boys, again, is "The Pilots of Pomona," by Robert Leighton, a story of the Orkney Islands; and a clever historical story of the time of Charles II. is "Silas Verney," by Edgar Pickering, a story which would interest all young people. Then, especially for girls, are two stories by Miss Annie E. Armstrong, entitled, "Three Bright Girls," and "Marian; or, the Abbey Grange." Uniform with the latter is "Gladys Anstruther," by Miss Louisa Thompson; while a less ambitious story, also for girls, is "Bab; or, the Triumph of Unselfishness," from the pen of Miss Ismay Thorn. All these stories of Messrs. Blackie's are handsome volumes, well bound and printed, and admirably illustrated.—A capital story for elder girls is "A Sweet Girl Graduate" (Cassell and Co.), by Miss L. T. Meade, who gives a very lifelike picture in her pages of a girl's college life. Another excellent story for girls, though suitable for somewhat younger readers than Miss Meade's, is "The White House at Inch Gow" (same publishers), by our well-known contributor Mrs. Pitt. The children she describes are so very natural that the tale is bound to appeal to young readers. From the same publishers comes a volume of *Little Folks*, than which it would be hardly possible to imagine a more acceptable prize for a young scholar.—Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton have just published "The Story of the Life of Mackay of Uganda," told for boys, by his sister. Our readers cannot have forgotten Dr. Garden Blaikie's article on Mr. Mackay's work, in our own pages, and the full biography of him for elder readers, to which we referred some months ago, so this present volume needs little in the way of introduction from us. It is admirably in touch with all that is best in the present development of missionary enterprise. An interesting Canadian story from the same publishers is "David Fleming's Forgiveness," by the author of "Christie Redfern's Troubles." There is more than a touch of true pathos in the book.

LINKED IN CHRISTIAN SONG.

There is a true unity amongst believers in Jesus, in spite of every difference. Sometimes the fact is brought home to our hearts with a thrill of happy surprise. We learn unexpectedly that the communion of saints on earth is real and far-reaching. Dr. Pomeroy wandered once into an Armenian church in Constantinople. All was strange to him—language, dress, details of the service, but before he left he had felt the touch of Christian brotherhood as seldom elsewhere. The people sang one hymn with particular earnestness, and with closed eyes, as a sign of reverence. Tears started and trickled down some of the swarthy faces. The visitor was carried away, too, and longed to join in the beautiful song, but his ignorance of the language made his desire futile. At last he found someone who could help

him to an idea of the words; and the hymn which had so moved the little Eastern congregation, here amongst Mohammedans, was none other than Toplady's noblest composition, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." So a hymn goes round the world, and links together in common praise hearts that love the same Lord. Divisions in race, colour, and creed are swallowed up when the soul is flooded by gratitude.

"SLIPPERS! SLIPPERS!"

Such was the order (writes one of our contributors) shouted to the attendant by a friend of mine, an officer in the Ordnance Store Department, when we came to the door of a place in the ordnance yard where shells are filled with powder for the guns of the ships, at one of our largest naval stations. Big slippers were brought, and these we put on over our boots. The slippers are to prevent the nails in one's boots causing a spark. Having put them on, I accompanied my friend into room after room, where pale-faced men were filling with powder huge iron cartridges for the ship-guns. The men wore specially made close-fitting black glazed clothes, with no pockets. Everything to be seen suggested danger and precaution. I asked my friend how much gunpowder was stored in one of the rooms. He made a calculation, and replied, "Five hundred tons."—"If anything were to happen," I remarked, "it would not be a hard death."—"No," was his reply; "we should be blown into pieces so small that they could not hold an inquest on any of them." Yet here we were, as unconcerned as possible. Nor, indeed, was there much to fear, for every precaution is taken against danger; and, if we only knew and realised it, every moment of our lives we might be destroyed by the unseen forces of Nature that are on all sides of us. It seems very terrible to be in a room with five hundred tons of gunpowder and half as many of gun-cotton; but without the preserving power of God, our bodies, not to speak of our souls, are in as much danger always and everywhere.

VERY THANKFUL.

Not long ago we were travelling in a railway-carriage with a cripple, whose cheerfulness we envied. His spine was curved, and he used crutches. A friend of his remarked that he was looking stouter. He replied that it was because, not being able to walk well, he had to wear more clothes to keep him warm. "Still, he continued, "I might certainly be worse off. My legs are far from beautiful or swift, but then I might have neither arms nor legs." "And then," he added playfully, "is it not rather a distinction to be on crutches, and thus separated from the common or garden biped? People, too, are so kind in making way for me when they see that my locomotive powers are below the average. Yes, we cripples have our advantages, and we might all be much worse off than we are. I feel very thankful."

THREE MEMORABLE SAYINGS.

What worker for God can fail to be encouraged as he reads the three memorable sayings of John Wesley, that are carved on the memorial which has been raised to him and his brother in Westminster Abbey? One is, "I look on all the world as my parish"; another is, "God buries His workmen, but continues His work." The third is his ejaculation, "The best of all is, God is with us!" He uttered it on his death-bed, and then, once more raising his arm, and lifting his voice in grateful triumph, he repeated, "*The best of all is, God is with us!*"

ENCOURAGEMENT.

People are often afraid to interest themselves in the religious welfare of others, lest such concern should not be well received. I believe, however, that thoughtful persons seldom resent it as an impertinence when seen to be sincere. Even the termagant Duchess of Marlborough did not turn a deaf ear to Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, when spoken to by that lady about religion. She thus wrote to her: "Your concern for my improvement in religious knowledge is very obliging, and I do hope that I shall be the better for all your excellent advice. God knows we all need mending, and none more than myself! Women of wit, beauty, and quality cannot hear too many humiliating truths—they shock our pride. But we must die; we must converse with earth and worms."

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR MEMENTOES.

The growth of the public appreciation for prettily coloured booklets as seasonable mementoes is clearly shown in the tasteful little works of this class issued for the present season by Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner. Among them are two beautiful sets of views of Venice, by Mr. C. Robertson, R.W.S.—"The City of Gondolas," and "Recollections of Venice," most daintily bound. Then two other sets of views, nearer home, are "Stratford-upon-Avon" and "Bettws-y-Coed." Mr. F. E. Weatherly is the author of a set of poems for children gathered under the title of "Over the Hills Away," and illustrated tastefully by Miss H. M. Bennett; but perhaps the choicest of all Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner's Christmas books is "A Book of Modern Ballads." It is charmingly illustrated by the late Alice Havers and Mr. J. P. Sunter, and is distinctly a book to be treasured. Others, less ambitious, are too numerous to mention, but all alike are of high quality, both in design and execution. The same may be said of this firm's cards, which are often strikingly original in conception, and always exquisite in reproduction. Some of the designs representing kittens, and others showing jewelled mottoes and delicately embossed flowers on quietly tinted grounds, leave nothing to be desired. The difficulty is rather to say which cards one can do without, rather than which one can use.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

The way to prepare to die is to prepare to live. "Turn to God one day before you die," said a Jewish teacher to one of his pupils. "How can I know the day before my death?"—"You cannot; therefore, turn now." If we turn to God in youth, and health, and strength, He will not forsake us at the time of our departure from this world.

"The *Frisky Sally* almost high and dry."

STRANDINGS.

Don't you judge just by appearances, my friend, nor, if you judge at all, without taking in all the surroundings. Many a one settles about things right off, and the settling is often all wrong. If you had seen the *Frisky Sally* almost high and dry, and were merely passing quickly by, and had no time to take in all the surroundings, I daresay you might have said, "Why, she's stranded; there's an end of her now." Well, the *Frisky Sally* was no doubt stranded—though I prefer to use the word "beached," as really more suitable to the circumstances in which she was. And at that particular time the *Frisky Sally* was doing her duty much more by being ashore than afloat; for the folk at Coldharbour had no quay, and they must have been left without coals if the *Frisky Sally* had not discharged her cargo upon the sands. Look at her, and you'll see that she's all taut and trim; this is not the stranding of carelessness, but of design. Ah, my friend! there is many a stranded life, that is so by the design of God. It has its own mission to perform, and a stranded time may be needful for its full accomplishment. The full sail, the ploughing the waters, are, as you say, the functions of the ship. It is so; and yet all may be of no avail, unless the ship be beached. There are times when the ship on the shore is as valuable as the ship upon the sea. How often, if only we look near enough, we can see that with God there is such a thing as stranding by design!

STAR-GAZING.

Thales, the philosopher, on one occasion looked so long upwards to the stars, heedless of the earth on which he walked, that he at last fell into the water. It was afterwards said that had he looked into the water he *might* have seen the stars, but looking to the stars he *could* not see the water. The disciples, when looking after the ascending form of their Master, were asked by two angels, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" They were to do the work on earth Jesus had appointed for them to do, and to find Him in doing it.

"PACK AND FOLLOW."

Writing about her late husband, who was, as is well known, a great traveller, Lady Burton says:

"I went everywhere with him. Often he would receive orders to be off at a moment's notice, and upon my return from a walk or call, I would find a note, 'Ordered off; pay, pack, and follow.' I think that is how I feel now—that he has only gone on before, and as soon as I have packed up and arranged all my little details, I shall follow. It is only a short waiting time, and when my work is done I shall join him." This, after all, is the best way to think of the death of friends. The time is not far off for any of us when we shall be called to join the majority. The little work which God has given us to do will soon be done, and then nothing remains but to pack and follow the near and dear ones who have gone before. Each year then, as friends and kindred depart, we should be more weaned from earth; for where your treasure is, there should your heart be also.

THE EXPLANATION.

To a philosopher who upbraided him for begging instead of working, a man answered, "Ah, sir, you do not know how idle I am." People with money and time at their disposal do undoubtedly work for others now as they never did before; but still there is a large number of them who spend frivolous, idle lives, that do not make others, nor even themselves, happy. Ask them the reason, and if they are honest they will reply, "Ah, you do not know how idle we are."

FOR GENERAL READING.

A few days of convalescence spent by Mr. Spurgeon at Stambourne in the early part of last summer have resulted in a little booklet called "Memories of Stambourne," which is published by Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster, and is jointly written by Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. B. Beddow. It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Spurgeon's chapters are at once quaint and interesting, and at the same time deeply spiritual in tone. We are especially glad to recognise in this book a token of renewed health in the Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.—Professor Drummond's Christmas booklet this year is "The Programme of Christianity" (Hodder and Stoughton). Much as some of the Professor's previous booklets have been canvassed, we cannot, on glancing through this work, see anything in it to which his critics could object; and there is always so much earnestness and fresh thought in his work, that he deserves more merciful treatment than he received at least once before.—Mr. Stalker's "Yale Lectures" on "The Preacher and his Models" are issued by the same publishers in a very attractive volume. Good the lectures undoubtedly are, but we must confess to finding them a little severe for the ordinary reader. Preachers would do well to study them, and to take from them all the fresh inspiration and guidance that they are well calculated to supply.—Curiously enough, one of the subjects which Professor Marcus Dods handles in his new volume, entitled "Erasmus, and other Essays" (same publishers), is "Preaching." Four of the essays, including the one from which the book takes its title, are more or less biographical, and no one can complain that the nine subjects are not sufficiently varied, and all alike are well treated.—Our old and valued contributor Bishop Ashton Oxenden has just issued an autobiography, which he calls "The History of My Life" (Longmans). Much of his work was done in Canada, and it is very interesting to note the changes which have come over the Dominion even in recent years. The Bishop looks back over eighty years, and the story he has to tell is one of almost constant labour and of high endeavour. We are sure that those who remember his writings in THE QUIVER will need no further inducement to turn to this life-story of their author.—Mr. Elliot Stock is reissuing a very useful manual for Sunday-school teachers, called "The Class and the Desk." The first volume, now before us, deals with the books of the Old Testament from Genesis to Ezra, and, issued at a moderate price as it is, and in a very handy form, the work deserves to have a wide circulation.—"The Life and Light of Men," a series of expositions on the first twelve chapters of St. John's Gospel, is the title of the Rev. F. B. Meyer's new book published by Messrs. Morgan and Scott. Thoughtful, suggestive, and helpful, Mr. Meyer's work always is, and this new volume is pre-eminently so. The same publishers send us a copy of the new pocket edition of Mr. Meyer's "Notes and Readings in the Psalms." We heartily wish the work well in this handy form.—Mr. Norman McLeod, of Edinburgh, has just published a revised and enlarged edition of "Lays for Leisure Hours," by Margaret Russell Dow. The volume is a gathering together of poems which have already seen the light in a number of small volumes, and the author's admirers will no doubt be gratified to learn that they may now procure her work in so handy and attractive a form.

CENSORIOUSNESS AND TASTE.

There are people who fancy that censoriousness is a mark of good taste. It is, however, exactly the reverse. He who feels contempt for any living thing hath faculties that he never used. The man of good taste is always the first to discover the soul of goodness that exists in things evil. An individual of rather doubtful character being chosen to the eldership in the Church of Scotland, a friend who knew him well enough to be able to speak candidly, said, "Surely, you won't accept the office?"—"I rather think I will," said the man. "But," observed his friend, "you would not visit nor pray in houses, nor do anything an elder is expected to do."—"That may be," said the man; "but you see in the Session *I could aye object.*" Few of us would describe this sort of person as a man of the best taste. Much better was the taste of Peter the Great. When anyone spoke ill of another in his presence, he would interrupt him, and say, "Well, now, but has he not a bright side? Come, tell me what you have

THE WITNESS OF COMMON LIFE.

noticed excellent in him. It is easy to splash mud, but I would rather help a man to keep his coat clean."

"THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO."

When the cruel nails were driven into our Saviour's hands and feet—into those hands which had been so often raised to bless, into those feet that went about doing good—*then* said Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." What a rebuke to our censoriousness! It is easy to ask that those should be forgiven who have done to us little or no wrong, but not when suffering literally excruciating agonies at their hands. We should censure people less if we reflected that in nine cases out of ten they do not know what they do. Many are incapable of thinking, and do not realise the far-reaching effects of their words and deeds. They may do us great injury and injustice, and yet mean well, and think that they are only doing what is right. When John Huss was burning at the stake, he saw an old woman busy heaping up the wood, and he exclaimed, "Oh, holy simplicity!" We like this entry which Sir Walter Scott made in his Journal: "June 8th [1826]. Bilious and headache this morning. A dog howl'd all night, and left me but little sleep. Poor cur! I dare say he had his distresses, as I have mine." The "poor cur" that wrote that abusive letter to us, or made unkind remarks, had his distresses, and they no doubt were to blame for what he did, rather than he himself. It was a howl of pain, more to be pitied than censured.

THE WITNESS OF COMMON LIFE.

Some people have very transcendental notions of religion; they make it consist entirely, or almost entirely, of emotions and feelings, and, whatever they may feel in themselves, they very often fail to make others feel much about the value of religion. Their lives and their professed feelings are not in harmony. But that religion is little worth which will not give some indication, at any rate, of its existence in outer life. There is such a thing as an about-the-house religion. There is such a thing as the ministry of a broom. The *acts* of common life may be so done as to be the *facts* in the life divine. There was a servant-girl who was asked, during the time of a revival in a certain place, whether she had been converted. Poor girl! she did not know much about the meaning of religious terms, but she did know what had an effect upon her life. She did her humble life-service now as unto God, not with eye-service, as simply a man-pleaser; conscientiousness in the small things of time was the evidence of her true apprehension of the great things of eternity.

BOOKS TO READ.

St. Paul's two Epistles to the Thessalonians and the first to Timothy jointly form the subject of the latest volume of the Rev. J. S. Exell's ably edited "Biblical Illustrator," published by Messrs. J. Nisbet and Co. A very interesting general introduction to the Pastoral Epistles is also prefixed to the latter part of the volume, giving a summary of the arguments adduced for their genuineness. It is a valuable feature of this series that, while the whole set would of course be an acquisition to any library, the volumes dealing with individual books of Scripture may also be used with advantage by teachers and others, for each volume is complete in itself, and forms a handsome commentary on the passages of which it treats.—The Rev. J. Neil, who was formerly resident in Jerusalem, and so speaks with authority of Syrian customs and their significance, has just issued, through Messrs. Nisbet, the substance of two lectures on "The Figurative Language of the Bible," which makes an interesting and useful little handbook. Two excellent volumes have been added to the series which we mentioned last month under the general title of "The Christian Under Review"

(Nisbet and Co.). The first is "The Christian's Pathway of Victory," by Canon R. B. Girdlestone, and the second "The Christian's Inheritance," by the Rev. C. A. Goodhart.—"Gospel Pictures in Bible Stories" (Passmore and Alabaster), by Mr. W. Y. Fullerton, is a series of "Addresses, Spoken and Unspoken," full of earnest purpose, and made bright by abundant anecdote.—The Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D., is the author of a charming series of thoughtful chapters collected into a pretty volume by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton under the title of "Making the Most of Life." Many, if not all, of these chapters would serve admirably for reading aloud to a class or small meeting.—We have also to acknowledge the receipt of "Poems, Chiefly Sacred," by H. G. Tomkins (Parker and Co.); "The New Life," by the Rev. Andrew Murray (J. Nisbet and Co.); "The Indian Female Evangelist, 1891" (Zenana Bible and Medical Mission); "Things to Come" (Elliot Stock); *Home Words*, 1891, and "The Precious Things of Home" (*Home Words* Office); "The Silver Vase" and "Give the Child a Chance" (Morgan and Scott); *The National Temperance Mirror*, 1891 (National Temperance Publication Depôt); and *The Illustrated Temperance Monthly*, 1891 (Church of England Temperance Society): all excellent publications.

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from October 24th, 1891, up to and including November 20th, 1891. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver*" *Waifs Fund:* J. R. T., Spain, 12s. Woodbridge, 1s.; J. J. E., Govan (49th donation), 5s.; A Glasgow Mother (20th donation), 2s.; A Well-wisher, Newmarket, 4s.

For "*The Quiver*" *Free Grants Fund:* M. Moore, Birkdale, 10s.

For *The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children:* A Friend, 5s.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

QUESTIONS.

25. What two great sins are mentioned by Isaiah as bringing down God's judgment on Samaria?

26. What regulation was given by God to the Jewish priests as to the use of wine and strong drinks?

27. By whom was Samaria built?

28. From what great trouble did God relieve Jerusalem in answer to the prayer of Hezekiah?

29. Quote some words from the Psalms in which David speaks of God's readiness to help those who call upon Him.

30. Which of the Apostles speaks of faith as the great defence against assaults of the evil one?

31. In what words does the prophet Isaiah set forth the redemption of the human race?

32. What is said by St. Paul of the great humility of Christ?

33. In what words does the prophet Isaiah show forth the Gospel as the free gift of God to all people?

34. What type have we in the Old Testament of man's deliverance from sin by the death of Christ?

35. What proverb was used by the Jews expressive of the hardness of the Mosaic Law?

36. What promise of the Gospel was given to the Jews of old by the prophet Jeremiah?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 159.

13. He calls it the Sea of Tiberias, after the name of an important town on the west coast. (St. John xxi. 1.)

14. Because Jesus had commanded them to do so. (St. Matt. xxviii. 7, and xxvi. 32; St. John xxi. 1.)

15. At the beginning of His ministry, when He called St. Peter and others to follow Him; and after His resurrection, when He finally commissioned them to feed His sheep. (St. Luke v. 5—11; St. John xxi. 5—11.)

16. The preaching of the Cross. (St. John xii. 32.)

17. In the parable of the vine. (St. John xv. 2.)

18. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept Thy word." (Psalm cxix. 67, 71; Heb. xii. 11.)

19. The prophet Isaiah; for which reason he is often known as the "Evangelist-Prophet." (Isaiah xi. 1—11.)

20. "The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah xi. 2.)

21. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and young lion and fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." (Isaiah xi. 6.)

22. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." (Isaiah xxvi. 3.)

23. They put away idolatry entirely, to which Isaiah refers when he calls them "the righteous nation." (Isaiah xxvi. 2.)

24. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah xi. 9.)

[*Drawn by* MARGARET I. DICKSEE.]

"The child looked up, as fain the gift to see."

"*A FATHER'S LOVE.*"—*See p.* 295.

THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S HANDIWORK

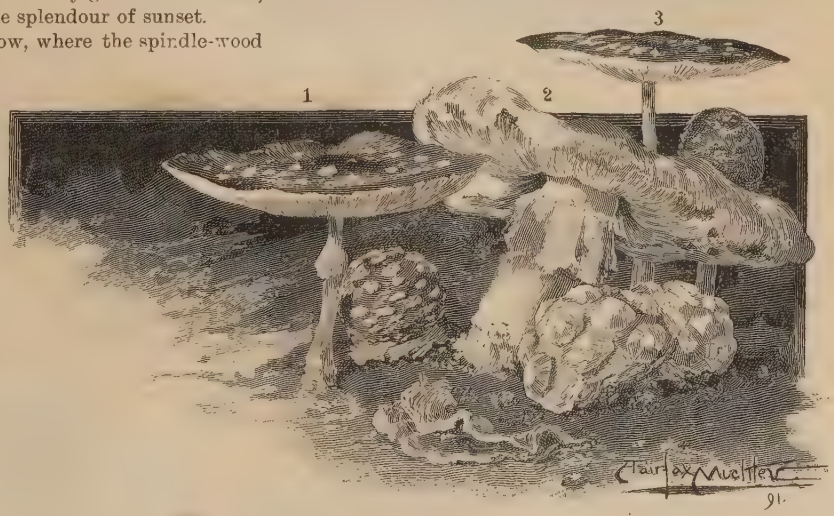
BY THE REV. B. G. JOHNS, M.A., AUTHOR OF "GOD IN THE BOOK OF NATURE," ETC. ETC.

THE LEMON-COLOURED AGARIC.

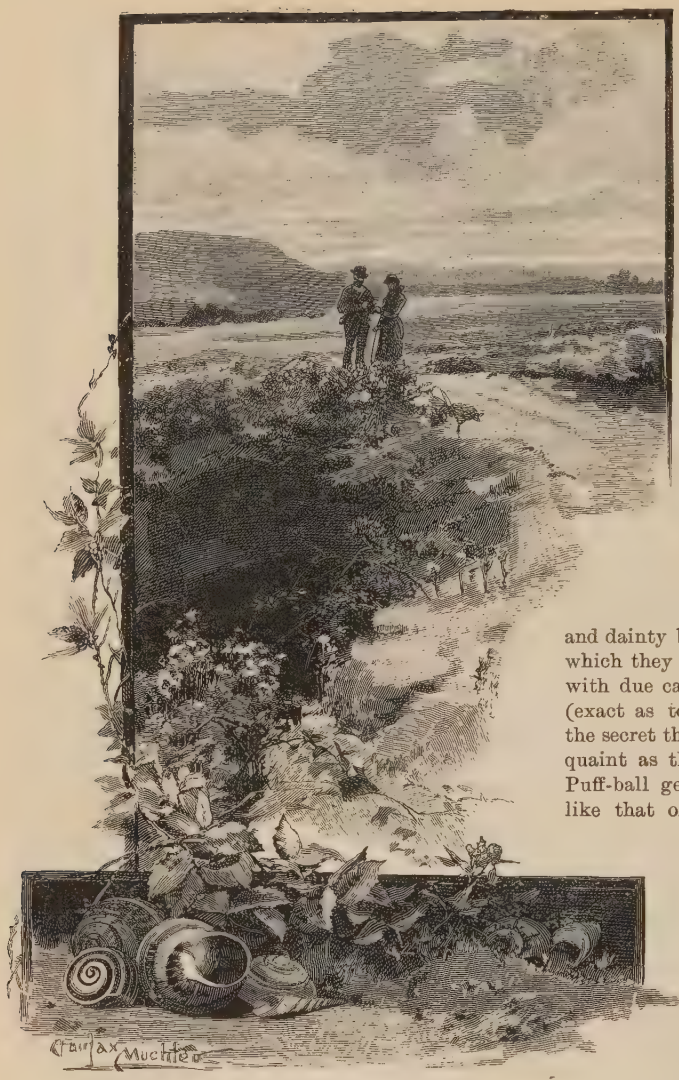
"AND some pages there be in this fair book of Nature," says quaint old Fuller, "that may seem to have to do with the commoner, baser sort of things, and yet shall each have a beauty of its own that to be found needeth only the looking for." I had often been struck with the truth of these words, but never more strongly than the other day, while strolling on by the side of the wood along the winding path to "The Beacons," a lofty mound on our nearest range of hills; where centuries ago was once kindled a bright flame of warning against the Spanish Armada. I stopped at the edge of an old gravel-pit, half-overgrown with ferns and bramble, among which were many patches of crumbling chalk, and on one of these a cluster of empty snail-shells. How or why so many as a dozen of them should come together in one little quiet nook, I know not; but what struck me most was their extreme beauty of shape and colour. No two of them were exactly alike, either as to shape or colour, there being many varieties of volute or twisted shells, one or two like the common *Helix*, and a few of a large spiral shape, such as is often to be noted on a sea-beach; but all tinted with rose-colour, yellow, and grey, of the very daintiest hue. Lying there among the sprays of soft green moss, and crowned with bright sunshine, they looked like stray jewels from fairyland; while here and there, on either side, on the leaves of the bramble, were touches of fiery gold and crimson, radiant as if fresh from the splendour of sunset.

In the very next hedgerow, where the spindle-wood and the wild guelder-rose are in their full glory, among the loose earth at their roots, half-hidden with dead leaves and grass, were touches of crimson colour such as no ruby could surpass. These I soon found to be the glowing little cups of the crimson *Peziza*, a curious lichen that fastens itself on to any broken fragment of dead hazel-wood, and, the seed having been sown (one knows not how) on the inner bark, forces its way through the outer bark to the surface, and there blossoms, as it were, into patches of royal splendour. I found a dozen such pieces of jewelled tracery before my search was over in a single hedgerow; but so hidden were all these gems of beauty, and so slow are people to use their eyes, that not one of our villagers to whom I showed them had ever before seen so common and yet so real a wonder. Some of them had passed the very spot thousands of times; others had worked in the hedgerow and cut down the hazels; but their thoughts were intent on other things, and so the mystery and beauty of God's handiwork had lain hidden away under the dying leaves of autumn, or the clods of wintry snow. "It was the Almighty," says Francis Bacon, "first planted a garden, which is one of the purest of human pleasures, and the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man." "And I do hold it," he says, "there ought to be gardens for all the months of the year, in which severally things of beauty may be then in season."

Had the wise Lord Chancellor looked a little more closely into the hedgerow, woods, and fields, he would have found out how fully and exactly this fair design has been carried out. The natural world, where left untouched as the Creator fashioned it, is still the garden of the Lord, and every season and each month of the waxing or waning year has some secret and special beauty of its own. Of His Divine hand and goodness are traces to be found not only in the wise provision of the ant or the waxen cell of the bee, in the keen unerring instinct of the bird of passage or the wondrous perfection of her nest, but in the exact shape and structure of every woodland leaf, and every blade of grass, every petal of every flower that opens



1.—*AGARICUS MIROCARIUS* (orange scarlet with cream spots). 2.—*A. STROBILIFORMIS* (cream-coloured and pale-sage cream). 3.—*A. PANTHERINUS* (coloured and spotted like a panther).



A CORNER OF THE GRAVEL PIT.

to the morning sun, every weed that is trodden under foot, every winged seed that floats along the passing air.

Leaving the hedgerow and its scarlet jewels among the stumps of hazel, I presently wandered on into the quiet shade of the beech wood, which here covers the whole hillside, and stretches away up to the wild broken waste of "The Beacons." All round me, in the rich earth, rich with the fruit and leaves of a hundred seasons, were scattered clusters of toadstools and fungi, of all shapes, sizes, and colours; some with tall stems and pointed tops of yellow or snowy white; some broad, round, or oval, of delicate rose-colour, pale green, or pearly grey; others of buff, purple, and orange; a few trying hard to look like honest mushrooms, but betraying their true and inferior genus by being slimy to the touch, and of a coarse, rank odour, which no real *Agaricus* ever possesses; but all of them good in their generation, though not to eat, and content with their lowly condition. I had seen such groups hundreds of times before, and was passing on my way homewards, when in a dark nook among some hazels, among tufts of coarse grass, I suddenly came upon a cluster of strange and curious objects such as I had never before seen, and of which I had never heard. They were four in number, and growing within a few inches of each other, but, at the first glance, of so odd an appearance, that I doubted whether I was looking at a few withered hazel-nuts, or some dusky varieties of sea-anemones that had wandered from their ocean home and taken root in the brown woodlands. The fourth of the group, rather apart from the others, was both in size and shape much like an anemone, and the whole quartet were of a delicate and dainty brown hue, like that of the earth out of which they grew. Having carried home my treasures with due care, and made a careful drawing of them (exact as to size and colour), I again pondered on the secret things of beauty in the wood.* For, oddly quaint as they were, these strange varieties of the Puff-ball genus had yet a beauty of their own, unlike that of any other fungus, given to them by Him who has done all things well and made everything good after its kind. They belong, so a learned friend tells me, to the family of *Geaster*, and to a species with the sounding name of *Hygrometricus*.

My walk, however, that day was not to end with the sight of an eccentric puff-ball, but with one of rarer and

* I would here acknowledge the kindness of the Secretary of the Linnæan Society, to whose courtesy I am indebted for the name and classification of these strange fungi.

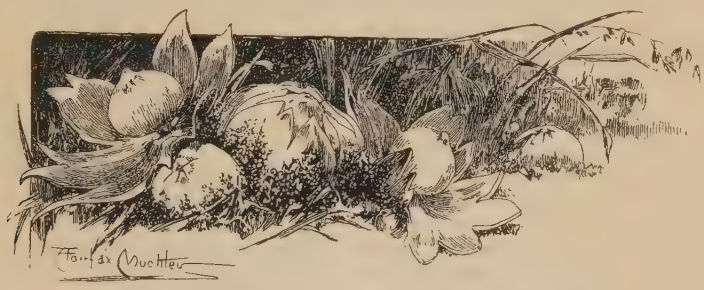
THE HARVEST OF THE WILD BEE.

more singular beauty. In a cottage at Lone Barn I found that the shepherd on his way home had suddenly found in the very heart of a thorn-bush a comb of wild honey, which the bees, for some quaint reason of their own, had fashioned with an amount of skill and beauty beyond praise. A portion of the comb had been broken away in the taking, but one complete section was still hanging up in the shepherd's window, and my readers will, I think, deem it quite worthy of a little sketch. The cells were of pure and dainty wax, ranged horizontally, securely sealed up, and full of fragrant honey. The edges of the comb, also, were most carefully finished, and closely joined, so that none of the sweet juice should escape, and the whole structure was so wisely and aptly fitted into its place, as to be secure against every attack of wind and rain. Once more, I said to myself, skill, beauty, and goodness!

As I looked at it, I thought of a scene in a strange land, far away, thousands of years ago, written for us in a Book where truth, beauty, and wisdom, go hand in hand. "And the people," it said, "went into the wood, and the honey dropped to the ground; and Jonathan put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it into the honeycomb, and did eat."*

And I understood, then, how this strange incident might easily have happened; how the wild bees of Syria might have built their delicate and dainty cells, just after the same curious and natural way as their busy descendants now build on the lonely hillside of a Hampshire wood.

* 1 Sam. xiv. 26, 27.



GEASTER HYGROMETRICUS IN VARIOUS SHAPES OF MATURITY.

THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE.

BY MARY HAMPDEN.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF all the people who were astonished by Hector's departure from Abbeylands, perhaps old Ben Bassett was the least able to form any conclusion as to its reason. True to his first impression, that the Bristols were no better than mere aliens—"them sort o' hangers-on as never does no amount o' good to any family," to use his own words—he had watched with lynx-eyed vigilance the slightest approach of the "Lunnon man" in the direction of Miss Edith. He had, indeed, only overheard the concluding words of Lilian's conversation with her brother; but that conclusion had been more than sufficiently compromising—

"Poor little soul! She has been so caged round that she ought not to be difficult to win. I will begin to make love to her to-morrow; will that be soon enough to please you, my wise counsellor?"

"I do not think you will ever repent your decision, Hector."

Old Ben, from his position among the roses, had heard quite enough to satisfy him that Mr. Bristol was prepared to play a thoroughly dastardly game, and that his sister was "every bit as bad, for a 'ooman is allus twice as ready for a lie as a man 'ud be," he remarked. This being his opinion, he was ready to do or dare any and every ill in the defence of his young mistress; but even his keen scrutiny had failed to detect anything in the conduct of the brother and sister (whom he had regarded jointly as "the inimy") which would justify him in calling Mrs. Weir's attention to the matter, as he would have liked to do. Prejudiced, as most old servants are, in favour of the family to whom he had become devoted by the service of years, he was intolerant of all whom he considered "outsiders," and had a strong opinion respecting town and its gaieties; no man would ever make a good "squire," a prosperous farmer, a successful landowner, to whom the country was a novelty—whose

time had been devoted to other pursuits than breeding cattle and growing crops—whose youth had been spent "in fiddlin' and gamblin'."

However, for a time, as we have said, Ben saw nothing in the conduct of the strange cousins to confirm his suspicions; they and Edith behaved just as a set of young people would have done if thrown exclusively into each other's society; and his exertions on behalf of the Weirs were in a passive or dormant state (so to speak) when they were revived by the scene which he witnessed in the dusk by the library fire: Edith sitting on a stool at Hector's feet, he uttering some treacherously soft words in her ear—words which called smiles to her lips and blushes to her cheek. Old Bassett had watched the pretty picture with jealous disapprobation, standing just inside the door, and carefully holding it behind him, so that the light from the hall might not disturb the pair who were murmuring their secrets in the dark. Surely if Mrs. Weir were told that her nephew had been caught "kissing little missie" she would resent such impertinence, and be grateful to him (Bassett) for his promptitude in unearthing the conspiracy which was to have ensnared her little daughter! The old man's satisfaction was supreme; he felt that he had established a title, which no one in the future would dare dispute, to be the guardian of the family. However, his calculations were upset when he heard next morning that Mr. Bristol was to leave Aberstone by the 10.30 train for town. Puzzled by this unexpected event, and not caring to bring down the family wrath upon the head of an absent culprit, he deferred making his great *coup* until a more exciting stage of affairs. What would be the use of unmasking the treachery of the "Lunnon man" when he was away—enjoying, very likely, all those disreputable pleasures of which Ben had so hazy an idea?

The day succeeding that which had brought Edith Weir the great awakening of her life was a typical winter day; the sky, leaden and sullen, seemed at length to decide upon a course of action, and snowed persistently, with light feathery flakes. Bassett hardly believed that "missie" would venture out; but she, feeling tired by her novel experience of an almost sleepless night, was glad of the fresh cold air, and would have braved a more severe storm for the sake of escaping from Lilian (who always spent her time, in bad weather, sitting by the drawing-room fire), and also for the sake of getting free to think, now despondingly, now hopefully, of Hector's return. The girl was looking pitifully anxious; and old Ben's heart ached for her as he noticed her drooping eyelids and pale cheeks; without knowing exactly what ailed her, he was convinced that "them strangers" were the cause of her trouble, and hated them in consequence.

"Good-mornin', little missie," he called out in his most cheery tone, as soon as she passed within hailing distance. "Bad sort o' day for you to be out a-walkin'; but trot up and down the drive where the snow lies least, and it 'll do you no great harm, I 'm thinkin'. It 's awful wet. I feels it in my bones a'ready; but you, you musn't begin to think o' rheumatiz at your age (may the Lord preserve you from ever a-feelin' of it!), but wait till it comes afore you gives up the blessed air of heaven, and sits a-croonin' by the fire as Lunnoners have to do."

"Good-morning, Bassett. It *is* miserable weather," answered Edith, with a little shiver, as she stopped to speak to the old man. Now that she had escaped the questions and the society of her cousin, she found her own thoughts distressing company, and was glad to exchange a few words with the kind-hearted old gardener. "Miss Bristol does not care for the snow; but she is not going to 'croon' over the fire, as you say, for very long, for she says she has a letter to write in time for the post. We seem to be going to have quite an old-fashioned Christmas, don't we?"

"Old-fashioned? Ay, little missie; an' them things as is old-fashioned is the best, arter all. None o' your innovorations for me! I wish as how this was to be like all the other Christmases have been—just you and the missus a-goin' to church together—the minister a-comin' to dinner—an' you a-playin' and a-singin' to us all in the kitchen as usual. No; no good 'ull come of it, though you be but a little lass, and thinks, as women allus do, as a change must be for the best; but mark my words—you 'll find out some day as how it 's wiser not to believe in strange folks; they turns out bad—leastways, oftener nor not. There, I didn't mean to make you sorrowful-like," he added, as he noticed her downcast face; "p'raps the future 'ull be better nor I think, and maybe we 'll have a merry Christmas in spite o' drawbacks. But don't you stand still in the snow, don't you now, little missie; run along an' get warm, for you 're that pale as makes you look like a statter.—Lor', now! to see how heavy-hearted she 's lookin'," he murmured to himself compassionately, as Edith took his advice and set off on her walk: "an' to think that them as ought to cheer her up is a-settin' by the fire a-shiverin'. No, now; little missie said as how she were a-goin' to write a letter—afore post time—that 's no more nor half a hour. A mighty hurry to be in! She wrote to her brother only t 'other day, so it can't be to *him*, unless something 's happened. I 'd like to see what 's in that letter. If I could get a look at th' outside it 'ud be better nor nothin'. I doubt whether I can do it; but leastways, I 'll have a bit of a try."

Bassett made his way rapidly to the kitchen, hung his dripping overcoat in the passage, and carefully wiping his boots, stepped noiselessly up-stairs. He had snatched from the conservatory some branches of winter cherry and some snowy Christmas roses, to serve as an excuse, if one were needed, for entering the living-rooms; and after listening attentively for several moments, he pushed the door of the drawing-room ajar, and looked in. Seated at the table, with her back turned towards him, Lilian was writing with great care, using a large-sized sheet of paper. Her face was towards the light; and a low screen standing behind her chair seemed to Ben to offer a secure refuge, if he could once reach it unobserved. Treading as lightly as his "rheumatiz" would permit, he made the attempt; but Lilian was too much absorbed in her occupation to notice any slight sound, probably thinking it the work of the wind rather than of an enemy, and owing to her preoccupation he

accomplished his purpose unobserved. Once secure behind the screen, he could watch every word she wrote, easily deciphering the bold handwriting; but for a while he could make no sense out of it. She was directing an envelope—

"*Miss Weir,*
'Abbeylands,'
Aberstone,
Near Marchester."

Why should she take the trouble to address a letter with such manifest care to her cousin, with whom she could speak any hour in the day? More and more surprised as he continued to watch, old Ben saw her making indistinguishable marks upon the envelope with some substance not unlike chalk; finally, taking a stamp from her pocket, she attached it to the envelope, and proceeded to make more unreadable strokes upon its face. At last the truth dawned upon his mind; she was simulating postmarks, with the evident intention of deceiving her cousin into the belief that the letter had come by post. Deception at last! Caught in the very act! Bassett was satisfied.

But he was destined to experience no small amount of alarm for his own safety. Lilian suddenly rose from her chair and walked to a writing-table, which stood in dangerous proximity to the screen behind which he was concealed. It was only after a moment of awful suspense that he was delivered from his fear of discovery. Returning to her seat, and still unconscious of his presence, she drew forth the sheet of paper upon which she had written, and perused the letter, evidently with satisfaction, for she smiled as she refolded it and placed it in the envelope. Ben read it also, peering over the top of the screen, with the spectacles—which were usually devoted to the reading of the Bible—perched upon his nose. It was not an easy task, but as he accomplished it he was so utterly astonished at the audacity which Lilian Bristol was displaying that it needed his utmost efforts of self-command to refrain from uttering his horror aloud.

The letter ran as follows:—

"My Dearest Little Cousin,—In a few days I shall be with you once again. The weeks have been terribly dull to me since I left home and all whom I love; but I went away from Abbeylands because I dared not trust myself to see you day after day. If I had done so I should have told you then, when you had had no opportunity to forget me, what I tell you now—that I love you with all my heart, and can never be happy until you consent to be my wife. The words are written at last, but I must leave them to you to greet as you choose. I have *written* them in order to give you time to reflect over your answer. I will not try to over-persuade you—I a poor man, and you the heiress of Aberstone. But, my darling, time can never change my devotion—I love you with all my heart, for ever and ever!

"If you can return my affection, send me one precious little word, telling me that you are willing to make me the happiest man on earth; but if you cannot answer so, I pray you not to write at all, but to wait until we meet. If you accept me, I will speak to Aunt Mary, and ask her consent when I come. Do not tell her yourself, or I fear she will think me wanting in my duty to her. My darling, how I long to see you!—Ever your devoted

"Hector Bristol."

This was the letter which Lilian had been writing with such care in time for the morning post. Not content with doing her utmost to aid her brother's love affair in every legitimate way, and angered by his determined resistance of her scheme for his welfare, she had taken the matter into her own hands, with the object of settling the question, so that his agreement would be imperative. At the last moment, as she sealed the letter, a feeling of remorse arrested her hand, and she paused to look truth in the face, and to realise, once for all, the danger of the action. She was doing that which, once done, would be irrevocable; her ruse, if it succeeded, would have the result of bringing about Hector's marriage; but how be certain that it would lead to his happiness? Would Edith some day discover the deception of which she had been the victim? Or would the scheme be foiled before it had attained its object?—would she herself be disgraced in the eyes of the brother whom she loved so passionately, and before his relations? A thought of Mr. Ford—of his kindness and good advice—rose up in her mind, and reproached her with her treachery; but then, a remembrance of the early days of her life, of the neglect of the Weirs towards her brother and herself, took its place. After such treatment, why should she pause to weigh the right or wrong of any plan which promised to restore Hector to his rights—to make him master of Abbeylands? The good impulse to destroy the letter before it was too late was but momentary, and was rejected. Lilian finished the seal, closed the blotter, and passed rapidly out of the room, thereby freeing old Bassett from his position of concealment.

The old man's face was expressive of shocked dismay. His first idea was to intercept the postman and take the letters himself, thereby preventing Lilian from carrying out her scheme, for one morning at least; but as he stood considering, he heard the quick steps of Thomas, the footman, passing through the hall with the letter-bag, and in another moment he recognised Miss Bristol's voice—

"Thank you. There is one for Miss Edith, but you need not trouble to take it to her in the garden; I will give it her myself directly she comes in."

"Too late, surely," murmured old Ben. "Was there ever anything the likes o' this! But there 's *me* as have seen the deed, and I 'll swear to 'un in any court o' law, an' afore the Queen herself, God bless her! and short 'ull be the day as the wicked shall triumph. Stay, though; maybe there 's a bit or scrap as 'ull be proof in that there book."

Stepping cautiously to the table, he examined the articles upon it—pens, ink, and paper—as though expecting to find them able to bear witness to the wicked use to which they had been put. At last, thinking his efforts useless, he was about to retire, when a scrap of blotting-paper caught his eye. To secure it was

the work of a moment; and, holding it to the light, the words were clearly legible—

"Ever your devoted

"HECTOR BRISTOL."

"Proof! proof!" cried the old man, forgetting caution in satisfaction. "The Lord has delivered 'em into my hands! 'The wicked prosper for a time,' and aboot the end o' their evil-doin's a judgment falls on 'em and smites 'em to the 'arth! She shall use her power, then, as I cannot go fornent her; but there 'll be a day o' reckoning for her, and for him as is her tool, as sure as my name 's Ben Bassett!"

CHAPTER XIV.

EDITH came in from the garden feeling cheered and invigorated by her walk, and ready to face her large anxiety, as well as the smaller frets and ills of life, with equanimity. The snow and bitter wind had brought a brilliant colour to her cheeks, her eyes had grown bright with the frosty air, and by the time she reached the house she was glowing and hopeful, the pallor and worn look which had so aroused old Ben to compassion having quite disappeared under the tonic power of exercise.

"Lilian!" she called out eagerly, as she caught sight of her cousin bending over the fire, "what a pity you would not come out! It is so much better to move about, this cold weather; and really it is not snowing so very hard. I am sure you would have enjoyed it."

"I don't think our ideas of enjoyment agree, Edith; but I do know that if you stand talking in your wet clothes you will have such a cold that Hector will never forgive me when he comes home. He always seems to consider me capable of keeping you in order, which is far from being the case. Such a feather-brained, innocent, capricious little soul ought to be in charge of someone of experience and courage, not an unfortunate cousin, whose opinions she does not in the least respect. Ah! I have made you laugh: that is some improvement on the lugubrious face you have worn all the morning."

Lilian chattered thus as she followed Edith up-stairs, because she felt unmistakably nervous as to the result of the experiment she was about to try, and found it easier to adopt a bantering tone than to speak seriously at the moment.

"Do I not respect your opinions? I think I do sometimes. I am very sorry that I was so stupid, so miserable, all the morning. I think I was feeling rather tired; but you know I didn't mean to be cross, don't you, dear?"

Accepting her caress graciously, and twining an arm round her cousin's waist, Lilian answered—

"You are never a *very* disagreeable person, little one. And to show how little malice I bear you for your bad temper, I have a present to give you. Are you not very anxious to know what it is?"

"Oh yes! How kind of you, cousin Lilian!"

"My dear, it is very easy to be kind on behalf of someone else. What do you say to a letter?"

"A letter! Oh, Lilian!" Then, blushing at the eager manner with which she had received the news, she added, more soberly, and striving to suppress the glad look which she *felt* suffusing her eyes: "Is there really a letter for me? You are not making fun, are you?"

"No, I am not quite so cruel. Now that you have taken off your wet cloak, come and sit by the fire, and I will give you the letter. I am so anxious to know whether Hector is succeeding in his new appointment; he said nothing about it when he wrote to me."

Edith would have preferred to enjoy her own letter by herself, but she could not refuse her cousin's most natural request. After all, Hector was Lilian's brother, and it was reasonable that she should be anxious as to his success.

Taking a chair by her cousin's side, the young girl began to open the envelope with fingers that trembled not a little with excitement and hope—that very envelope of which Bassett had watched the directing only ten minutes ago. As the paper yielded to her touch, as the letter was slowly drawn from its covering, she felt almost afraid to read the words which it had come to bring her—*his* words, just as they might have been spoken if he had been there beside her. What might they be? What *were* they?

The beginning was just as usual; Hector always began, "My Dear Little Cousin."

"In a few days I shall be with you once again."

Her heart gave a great leap of joy as she realised the truth of that sentence: he was coming to her—coming home!

"The weeks have been terribly dull to me since I left home and all whom I love."

Turning her head, she looked at Lilian through a little mist of tears, and cried—

"He is glad to come home to us! Oh, Lilian! isn't it good of him?" And then she returned to the precious letter—

"But I went away from Abbeylands because I dared not trust myself to see you day after day. I should have told you then, when you had had no opportunity to forget me, what I tell you now—that I love you with all my heart, and can never be happy until you consent to be my wife."

The words swam before her dazed eyes, and with a little cry of joy she sank her face between her hands to hide its happy blushes. Weeks of separation, doubt, anxiety, what did it all matter now, before this fact, this glorious certainty: that he whom she loved had bestowed on her the treasure of his affection? "Only a cousin, who might go away for ever, and marry someone else!" No, there were to be no more sad thoughts such as these; Hector loved her, and her alone. Henceforth he might be to her dearer than a cousin, dearer than a brother, dearer than all the world beside!

Lilian remained silent, with strangely mingled feelings of shame and satisfaction. She had given to her little cousin, so young and trusting, the romance of her life; but she had tricked and deceived her. It was not for Edith's benefit, but for Hector's, that she had been working; it was for the sake of winning for him the wealth of the heiress of Aberstone, not the innocent, fresh love of this simple girl. At last,

"He could watch every word she wrote."—*p.* 247.

receiving no response to her first question, she laid her hand on Edith's arm to attract her attention.

"What is the matter, little one? You are crying. Is he ill?"

"No, no! I have been selfish; I should have told you before. He is well, and he is coming home. I have not read any more, only that—that—oh, Lilian, I am so happy! He loves me—he says he loves me!"

There was silence for a few moments, as Edith, after her burst of confidence, threw herself into her cousin's arms. There had never been in Lilian's heart a feeling of true liking for her little country cousin until that moment when she was called upon to sympathise with her in the great joy of her life. She had more or less despised Edith's simplicity, had regarded her as an enemy—one to be envied, and not loved; but now, with those little hands clinging about her neck, she learned, for the first time, to regret her former suspicions.

"I knew Hector was in love with you before he went away; but he felt that you had never had much opportunity to judge of your own feelings, and so he would not venture to ask you, with your fortune, to marry a poor man. He told me all about it, and that was why we quarrelled, for I thought his scruples ridiculous. As you are rich, you have no occasion to marry for money."

"Did he really speak about it all that time ago? And I was so unhappy, Lilian, wondering if he would ever go away from home altogether. I hope it was not very wrong to be so fond of him before he had asked me to love him, but I couldn't help it, and I feared he would never care for me more than for a sister."

Bending their heads close together, the two girls read the rest of the letter, Edith's fair face radiant with joyous blushes at each word of endearment. It was all for which she had ever hoped, and more—it was reality—so much sweeter than any dream. She had no reason to suspect that it was not the composition of the man whom she loved—Lilian had copied her brother's handwriting so exactly that any possibility

of doubt was precluded, even if Edith had been less easily satisfied. There was only one sentence which the girl did not like—the one in which Hector requested her not to mention the matter to his aunt Mary.

"Oh, Lilian! is it not strange that mamma should not know? I can scarcely feel that all is happy; it is so unusual to have a joy—a great joy—without her sympathy."

"But you must not deprive Hector of the pleasure of telling her himself; besides, you do not understand these things, little one. It is the business of the lover to obtain the consent of the girl's parents. I think your mother would be very properly offended if you were to announce your engagement as settled before he had had time to make his dutiful request to her. Yours are countrified ideas. When Hector comes he will laugh at you."

"It must be right then, if you say so. My dear, dear cousin! Oh, I wish with all my heart that you were as glad as I am now! Did you never love anyone, Lilian? I hope you do not mind my asking."

"I—in love? Oh, no! I am not the sort of girl for that. When I marry, it will be for money or position, not for sentiment. Suppose you make over your other lover to me, now that you no longer want him."

"You only talk like that just to shock me; I *know* you do not really mean it. Lilian," she continued, after a pause, during which her thoughts went back to her cousin Arthur's plans for her, and for the suitor whom he had evidently chosen, "I am so sorry: I would do anything in the world to prevent it, but what *can* I do? It is very dreadful for a girl, is it not?"

"No; very dreadful for the man, that is all, dear. Don't trouble yourself to think about it: *I* should be very glad to act the part of consoler, if Lord Henry were willing."

"Lilian," said Edith presently, "I ought to—to write a letter."

"Yes. Shall I go away?"

"I wish you would tell me what I may say. May I write just from my heart?"

"Of course; and the more shortly the better, for you will see Hector so soon that you need not depend upon writing."

"Then I will tell him that since he has been away I have missed him every day and every hour, that I have never forgotten him in my prayers, and that I have grown to love him with all my heart and soul—my dear, dear Hector!"

CHAPTER XV.

"WELL, I'm glad to see you, sir, that I be. I never was so awful worried as when I heard as how you'd gone away from the Vicarage. You might have stayed right on, and all as knowed you would have bin right-and-away pleased. You're a-comin' for to stay with Mr. Ford, I'm hopin'?"

Ben Bassett had met Lord Henry Wynn coming from the station, and followed by a porter carrying a portmanteau; on beholding him, he had delivered himself of the foregoing welcome.

The young man was not offended, but somewhat amused, at the warmth of the old gardener's greeting

"Yes, I have come on another visit," he answered, with a pleasant smile, walking slowly on, and continuing the conversation. "I was very sorry to go away, only I was wanted in town; but now that I have returned I propose to spend some time in Aberstone. And how have you been getting on? Well, I hope? And the family? I trust that Mrs. Weir and her daughter are in good health?"

"I've bin a-gettin' on ordinary like; leastways, it don't do for to grumble agin natur'; and when a man's grown old he can't expect for to feel nothin', as it were. It ain't my way fur to complain; I'm a'most well, if it wasna for worry. Bless your heart, sir! it takes the life out o' anyone of us to be a-workin' day an' night to prewent the weeds a-comin' up, when other folks goes and does all i' their power to foster 'un."

"Weeds!" said Lord Henry. "Surely even they do not grow this weather?"

"No; the Lord A'mighty sends the blessed snow for to check 'em; but I was speakin' o' the weeds o' wrong-doin', as disfigures the whole earth o' mankind. Work, work, mornin' an' night, it's all I can do to prevent 'em from chokin' out all that's good. But to answer your question:—Missus is rather poorly, and so was little missie too, yest'day mornin'; but arter a while she come round, an' seemed like herself—a-laughin' an' a-singin' like a bit o' a child. But then, the doin's as is goin' on at Abbeylands! There's deception, an' lyin', an' trickin'—ah, well! I'm sayin' more nor I ought; but you, sir, *you're* come just in time for to comfort her."

"To comfort her? Why, what wonders do you expect me to perform, Bassett?"

"Why, sir, at Christmas there'll be a awakenin' as 'ull make her scarce believe her own eyes; an' when she finds as how them in whom she's put her trust is no better nor *roarin' lions*, she'll have need o' some-'un as 'ull say to her, 'Never mind, *I'm* here, and there's naught as 'ull stand agin us.' *You're* the man, sir; an' she'll learn to trust at last to them as 'ull prize her for herself and not for her money. Lord knows I've watchit over her, year arter year, and 'ud give my life—ay, that I would—to save her from hurt or harm; but you'll do it better nor me. God bless you, sir, as 'ull be good to little missie!"

Ben's voice quavered, and tears rolled down his sun-browned cheeks like rain. Wiping them away with his sleeve, he murmured—

"Arskin' your pardon, sir, but I'm that fond o' the family, I can't bear thinkin' o' the trouble as have bin brought upon 'em."

"Why, Bassett," exclaimed Lord Henry, looking anxiously at the old man, "I hope there is nothing wrong about Mr. Bristol?"

"Aboot Mister Bristol! It's him as is trickin' an' lyin'—an' it's his sister more nor him. The time aren't come for to speak out yet, sir; but the day o' reckonin' is at hand, and it 'ull be mighty heavy when it comes."

"It is better that you should keep your secret to yourself, for I am not even a friend of the family—

only a mere stranger; but I am truly sorry to hear that there is a prospect of Miss Edith's being disappointed in her cousin, or brother, or whatever she calls him; but she will get over it in time, you know. You must not worry yourself too much about it, Bassett."

"Ah," groaned the old man, "if he was *only* a brother to her! But you'll do your best for to comfort her in her distress; I looks to you, sir, with all the hope that 's left me."

"Mr. Ford will surely be of more service than I could ever be."

"The minister!" said Ben, contemptuously; adding, with a touch of slyness in his tone, so sure was he of knowing Lord Henry's hopes and plans for the future, "It isna *the Vicar* as 'ull be able to comfort her, nor no one as is in the family. You won't mind *me* a-knowin', sir, for I 'm wishin' you success with every wish o' my heart."

There was no longer any possibility of ignoring his meaning, so Henry answered him plainly—regretting that by so doing he was demolishing Ben's favourite castle in the air.

"You are mistaken; I have no thought of offering myself as a suitor for Miss Weir's hand."

"Heaven above us!" cried the old man. "Then there 's never a side to turn to, an' never a bright spot on the horizon! First, them strangers come, bringin' their wiles and snares; secondly, missus puts her trust in 'em; thirdly, little missie is deceived into a-lovin' of 'em—scamps, traitors, as they be! (There ain't no word o' English as is strong enough to describe 'em!) An' then you, as might a' saved her, falls away in the hour of trouble. Lord a' mercy on us all! what on 'arth 'ull become o' the family?"

* * * * * *

If poor old Bassett had been delighted to welcome Lord Henry Wynn, Mr. Ford was no less pleased at the return of his friend. Perplexed by the events of the past few months, the good Vicar had constantly regretted the absence of the one man to whom he could with perfect confidence have given his cousin in marriage, and he had used his best endeavours to persuade Lord Henry to return earlier to Aberstone; but the latter, though he would have been delighted to accept so kind an invitation, had been unable to leave his brother, Lord Saxby, whose feeble health caused him much anxiety.

Mr. Ford welcomed Lord Henry in his heartiest manner.

"My dear boy, I cannot tell you how delighted I am to see you! We will have the merriest possible Christmas, and you will now be able to see more of my little cousin, in whom you are interested. You are not thinking of leaving us again for a long time, I hope? See how pleased Peggy is to see you back again! I never saw the dog take to anyone else as she does to you."

Henry stooped to caress the spaniel, but did not reply to his friend's question; and the Vicar continued the conversation: so pleased was he to find his lonely home brightened by the presence of a guest, that he was willing to do most of the talking himself, as he dispensed cake and coffee to the traveller.

"You are looking in the best of health. What a thing it is for a man to be young! By-the-by, you did not hear anything of Hector Bristol while you were in town, did you?"

"No; at least, I did not meet him anywhere; but a friend of my brother's—a very prominent man—was speaking highly of his abilities. He has written a magazine article on one of the principal questions of the day, and I hear it is attracting universal attention. He was spoken of to me as a man who was likely to make his mark in the world."

"My dear Henry!" exclaimed the Vicar in astonishment, setting the toast-rack down upon the hob in place of the kettle, so great were his interest and surprise. "Hector Bristol! You are sure there is no mistake?"

"No, none at all. You are not very ready to believe in his success. I always thought him a clever fellow."

"I wish the young man no harm," said Arthur. "I would befriend him to the best of my ability, and will even help to swell the pæan of his praise, if my conscience will allow me; but I do not want him to marry my little cousin."

"But if he turned out clever, and able to win a position for himself, would you still disapprove of the match?"

"Disapprove! You mean that it would be unreasonable. But you forget that Edith has been my charge, my care, ever since she was a child. I should wish to be able to do more than merely 'not *disapprove*' of the man to whom she is to be confided. You, my friend, are as near being worthy of the little girl's frank loving heart as any man could be, I think; you will have won a treasure, dear fellow, but you will have deserved it."

Henry looked embarrassed.

"I see you have changed a great deal since you have been away," went on Mr. Ford, with a sly laugh. "Confess, now, you are beginning to find yourself in love!"

Henry Wynn bent his head gravely as he replied, and an observer would have agreed with the Vicar in thinking him altered. His quiet, thoughtful eyes seemed as though they were looking into the future; they had a far-away habit of losing touch with the events of the moment, and gazing abstractedly into space; even his smile was changed to an expression of wistful doubt, as of one who knew not whether to grieve or to rejoice.

"You are quite right," he said; "I know I have fallen in love, as people say; and not only that, Ford: I have fallen in love almost at first sight. Directly I met her I felt that she was dear to me: that I could prize her regard as far beyond the value of anything on earth. I have met her very seldom: you will be displeased with me, and think that I have disappointed you needlessly: my brother has already expressed his vexation: worst of all, perhaps *she* may never consent to be mine. You see, I do not minimise the difficulties; but be the troubles what they may which my resolve may bring me, she is the only girl I shall ever ask to be my wife!"

"Henry, you bewilder me! Who can the girl be whom you prefer to Edith?"

The young man smiled fondly over the name, as though it sounded to his ear as the sweetest music—

"Kate Burnside."

"You marry the farmer's daughter! A man of your rank, your position! What will be said? The idea is preposterous!"

"I hope not, for I love her; besides, her father is a gentleman, though a very poor one. Arthur, you have always been so good to me—the best friend I ever had—you will wish me success, will you not?"

"'Who can the girl be whom you prefer to Edith?'"—*p.* 251.

"Yes, my dear fellow," answered Arthur Ford despondently, sinking back in his chair. "Yes, I *will* wish you success, if it is necessary for your happiness. But my poor little cousin!—that is the question which troubles me. Her mother on the side of the enemy; Hector coming home triumphant; Lilian plotting for her brother; there seems no hope that she can escape. He will propose to her in the first glory of his newly made reputation; she will accept him; and then, in after-years, we may see Abbeylands in the hands of a spendthrift, and Edith's money—poor little girl!—going to pay his debts. It is terrible!" he added vehemently, almost in the words of old Ben Bassett. "Who knows what may become of the family?"

CHAPTER XVI.

IT wanted two days to the time appointed for Hector Bristol's return, and he was sitting in the lodging in the Strand in which he had established himself on leaving Abbeylands. The change had certainly been abrupt from the cosy warmth and luxury of his aunt's home, and the society of his relations, to the somewhat shabby finery and discomfort of his present abode, and the unaccustomed sensation of loneliness in the midst of teeming life. He had not sought out any of his former friends and associates: young men of fortune, successful authors, actors, spendthrift heirs to large estates, racing men, returned colonists: one and all, they had once tempted him to forget his own position in the vain effort to keep pace with them in theirs, and he had determined never again to be led away from the work-a-day path which must be his in life, either by their invitations or their sarcasm. It was a brave resolution, and it had been bravely kept: already Hector was feeling the improvement

which his better frame of mind had effected. His creditors were satisfied with preliminary instalments of what was owing to them; and having succeeded beyond his hopes in his new appointment, he could look forward to the day when—his difficulties diminished, if not actually overcome—he would be able to make an unreserved statement of his position to his aunt, and ask her consent to his marriage with Edith.

It was a bitter winter evening; and the prospect, looking into the broad street beneath his window, was neither cheering nor invigorating. Snow was falling fast into a sea of mud, through which the never-ceasing traffic rolled persistently; the passers-by were making the best of their surroundings—huddling along, as fast as their feet could carry them, over the slippery ground; save where, here and there, a loiterer stood shivering beneath the gusts of the cruel east wind—some miserable human creature who had no home to seek. Hector looked out compassionately at some such man, who was beating his blue hands against his thinly clad chest in the vain hope of warming them; then, throwing up the window, he tossed him a sixpence, and was about to draw down the blind and retire to the warmth of his fireside, when his eye fell upon the figure of the postman. The sound of a welcome knock at his door confirmed his hopes; letters were pleasant visitors, and he never felt so encouraged, so confident for the future, as when reading his little cousin's gentle words of sympathy. Taking the letter from the servant, he gave a quick glance at the writing. Yes, it was the work of the little hand which he had kissed, the greeting of the girl whom he loved. What had she to say to him, that she had written out of her turn?

Sitting down at the table, he leisurely set himself to the one enjoyment of his day—his sole luxury. But at the first glance he was disappointed; the letter was so short: barely a half-sheet of paper, and written with such care and precision, that it hardly looked like the work of impetuous Edith. Was she angry with him? Had he done anything to offend her? No; the first words gave the lie to this supposition—

"MY DEAR, DEAREST HECTOR,—How can I ever tell you how I have missed you all these long, long weeks? How I have wanted every day and every hour to see your face and hear your voice again! But it will not be for long *now*, will it, my darling?"

"Bless her sweet heart!" murmured the young man, as he pressed the letter to his lips. "In her innocent frankness she tells me, unconsciously, all that I long to hear." Then, after re-reading the words which occasioned him such joy, he travelled on to the rest of Edith's letter.

"I have prayed for you every night that God may help and guard you. Oh, Hector! if it is any comfort to you to know how much I love you—how I have been growing fonder of you day by day—why should I fear to tell it you? It has been my one great dread that you might never come to care for me: that you might go away for ever, and marry someone else.

"Good-bye, my dear, dear Hector. You know that I shall always be,—Your own "EDITH."

The words were written there before him, and yet he hardly dared believe their true significance. What was the strange feeling of regret which mingled in his heart with all the joy prompted by this simple avowal of her love? Was it possible that even in the midst of his gratitude for her generous affection, which had not feared rebuff, which had risen above all conventional ideas of maidenly reserve, he felt dismayed, nay, even grieved, that Edith, his love, should have written thus, unasked? How could it be, he asked himself, that she, his ideal type of girlhood, should have forgotten that timidity which was one of her charms? What motive could have urged her to take such a step unknown to her mother? Could Lilian have prompted her? But, no; he did not believe that the spontaneous impulse which breathed in that letter was the outcome of anyone's counsel; it was pure, simple love for himself which had alone dictated it. Before that answer to his doubt—the only possible answer of which it seemed to admit—all regret died away in his heart, or was crushed down by a sense of the everlasting debt of truth and affection which he owed her—the obligation of proving to her that her vow of love was merely the echo of his own—a vow which had lived in his heart, and would have been uttered weeks before, had he not been a poor man, and she "the heiress of Aberstone."

Turning once again to the letter, he thought long over the words which Edith had penned so joyfully.

Lilian had not laughed at the impetuous love which spoke in every sentence, when this girl, so young to all romance, had asked her, "if it was too bold?" adding: "It is so true! There is no harm *now* in telling him how dear he is to me, is there, Lilian?"

"No, it can do no harm, for you are so dear to him," her cousin had replied, pleased to see that in that letter there was no word to tell Hector that it was merely an answer to the one which he was supposed to have written; in short, no word which could in any way incriminate her. However, as her thoughts led her to remember Arthur Ford, even her anticipations of the success of her plan did not mitigate the pain with which she acknowledged that she had, as it were, put herself outside the pale of his friendship.

With such a sense of deceit lying upon her soul, how could she face this man, whose life was one continual truth? She shrank, with a guilty fear, from meeting the glance of his kind blue eyes; she longed to ask his advice in her troubles, to learn from his lips the lessons by which he ruled and guided his own pure life. But how could she dare attempt a half-confidence, which would be little better than a perpetual lie? There was no help for it, she thought; the loss of his confidence would be the price which she must pay for the sake of seeing Hector "Master of Abbeylands." Of Bassett's opinion she only thought with laughter; but how different would have been her estimate of the power of the old servant's enmity if she had but known all he had witnessed from his place behind the screen, and of the *proof*—the scrap of blotting-paper—which he treasured among his few possessions! But, secure in her ignorance, she continued to lay plans for the furtherance of her one idea.

Edith did not think for a moment that, in consequence of her letter, Hector would try to leave town earlier than he had formerly intended; but Lilian, wishing to be forearmed for the encounter with her brother, which even she expected to be somewhat difficult, was confident that he would get away from London, if possible, in order to answer Edith's love-letter in person. She therefore determined to see him first, before he had an opportunity of speaking to any other member of the family.

Her supposition was correct; for Hector with difficulty succeeded in ante-dating his holiday by a few days.

On arriving at Aberstone he chose to walk home rather than wait while a conveyance was got ready. When he reached Mervyn Hill, the first point from which a view of Abbeylands could be had, he saw his sister Lilian awaiting him in the road below. He laughed to himself as he wondered how she would take the piece of news which he had to tell her, and was surprised to notice that she did not appear astonished to see him there three days earlier than he had promised to come. She did not advance to meet him, but awaited his approach; and she did not even raise her eyes to his face until they stood side by side in the roadway. Then she took his arm and walked on, saying—

"I thought you would come by an early train."

"How is it that you expected me to-day?"

"I did not think you would keep *her* waiting longer than you could help, Hector; but you need not mind sparing me a few moments. *She* does not expect you, and I have a great deal to explain."

"Did you write that letter, or did she? I don't accuse you of forgery; but I mean, were you responsible for it?—did you persuade her against her better judgment?"

"Hector, don't look so angry. I have done no harm. I only helped your wooing forward because you were such a reluctant lover; surely that is not so terrible?"

"Answer me truly: were the words of that letter chosen by Edith herself, or did you make her write as you wished?"

"No, no! The letter was genuine enough—her own composition entirely, without any aid from me—I did not even see it. She told me what she had said to you, and asked me if it was too bold. Of course I reassured her mind upon that point, for I told her what I knew to be true—that you loved her dearly."

"My little girl!" murmured Hector, as a glad light came into his eyes. He was inexpressibly relieved by the explanation. Stopping short, and taking his sister's hands in his own, he kissed her, saying—

"Poor Lily! You have been a naughty, interfering sister, but I owe you too much to be able to scold you. So you made love for me in my absence, and succeeded so well in convincing Edith of my affection that she, of her own accord, wrote me that letter! Well, a little while ago I might have blamed you, but not now. I have succeeded beyond my hopes. My appointment gained, promotion is slow, but sure; my debts are being gradually paid off. I have even made a little stir in the world by my writing. I have great hopes—a probability of future fame—and for the present a secure occupation. Aunt Mary will not be obliged to reject my addresses on account of my idle life, at all events. Poor old girl!" he added kindly, pressing the hand which rested on his arm. "I fear I gave you a bit of a scolding before I went away, and said more than was wise or just; but you know so well what a hasty temper I have. You will forgive me, won't you? Why do you look so grave? Lily, are you really going to be jealous of my wife?"

His sister was walking rapidly beside him; her face was averted, but he could see upon it a pained look, which perplexed him. By this time they had reached the entrance to Abbeylands, and still Lilian, in her new fear of her brother, had not dared to make her explanation. Pausing at the gate, she said entreatingly—

"I have still much to say to you; spare me another moment."

Hector assented, not wishing to seem ungrateful; but as she did not speak, he asked—

"What are you thinking about, Lily? I shall not wait much longer for your secret."

"Hector, I am afraid to tell you."

"Why? What have you been doing? Have you succeeded in securing the attentions of Lord Henry Wynn? Are you going to make a mercenary match because I will not do so? Tell me, dear; I can forgive you a great deal to-day."

"No, it does not concern myself at all; it is to do with you and Edith. I could not bear that you should sacrifice your future for the sake of those who had so wronged you. You had gone: I did not know what to do until the idea came to me that I might win Edith for you, although you were away, so the proposal was made through the post."

"I don't understand. You *wrote* to Edith, telling her I loved her? Yet you could speak to her any day!"

"You *won't* understand!" she cried passionately. "I wrote the letter as though it came from you."

"You wrote as from me! You signed—you forged my name!"

"You should not call it forgery. I knew all you wished to say—I wrote the words which were in your heart. Why blame me? She whom you love is happy, and you will have your rightful position."

Hector maintained his composure by a strong effort of will, but his pale face and knitted brow were silent indications of the passion which was held in check. Turning to his sister sternly and reproachfully, he said—

"If Edith ever learns this, she will think my love the result of pity—that she gave me her heart unasked. Your deception will always be a shadow between me and my wife."

"Hector," sobbed Lilian, "my dear brother, do not look so stern, so cold! Edith will never know. Don't forget that if I have done wrong it was for your sake—for your good. Say you forgive me."

She had seen Hector passionate, and had not feared him: but this anger—too deep for words—this stern self-control, bewildered her.

"Don't be so cruel," she pleaded. "I do not care what becomes of me. I will leave Abbeylands—leave England—if you wish. I can earn my own living. Nothing will matter to me now that you are secure in a home and a position in the world. It was for you that I schemed, not for myself. Have I not always thought first for you?—you, who used to call me 'your little Lily'—who used to love me? Are those days over for ever? Hector! Hector! you must say that you forgive me!"

He raised her hand which grasped his arm, and coldly put her from him. He felt some pity for her. He was not bitter because of the wrong she had done him; but when he thought of his little Edith, deceived by her schemes, forced into an action which, if she should ever learn the truth, would bring a blush to her cheek, and perhaps darken all her life—he could not so far forgive his sister as to take her back at once to her old place in his esteem. Pointing to the gate of the carriage-drive, he said quietly—

"Go! I must have time to think over all you have said. As for forgiveness—may God pardon you as I do!"

(To be continued.)

FOXES AND BULLFINCHES.

BY THE REV. J. R. VERNON, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE," ETC. ETC.

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."—CANTICLES ii. 15.

"WE all have our little faults." How common is this saying, and how carelessly, if not contentedly, said!

It may be rightly, kindly, allowingly said sometimes, and under some circumstances. For instance, if we hear anyone making much of some slight act or negligence, word or silence, of another—of, it may be, a friend—aye, if we find ourselves doing so, it is well to remind or be reminded that the fault was, after all, a little fault, a slip: no such *very* great offence; and, moreover, that *we* ourselves are far from faultless, and need ourselves forbearance from others. "The debt is but a hundred pence; is that a matter for throttling and casting into prison?" And are not we also frail? and do not we also slip sometimes?

In this manner the expression may be kindly and charitably used. But it is not of this way of employing it that I am now intending to speak.

No. We are apt to use this phrase, we often hear it used, in a very dangerous and mischievous way. "We all have our little faults." We may say this unconcernedly, even contentedly, and as those who accept the inevitable, that which cannot be helped; and this to the damage of our eternal character and the peril of our soul. How many a parent has done his child a life-injury by making light of the small beginnings, in that child's disposition, of great sins! How many a one has done, and does, this injury to his own everlasting Self!

Often quoted, but little laid to heart, is the wise man's saying. "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little." And the saying may be illustrated by Solomon's similitude: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines."

"It is not said here, as in that mournful Psalm concerning the vine of God, 'The wild boar of the wood doth root it up, and the wild beasts of the field devour it.' It is not said here, 'Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they that go by pluck off her grapes?' No; it is the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the tender grapes."

Aye, *little* foxes—but they spoil the vines. Little inclinations to sloth, little yieldings to temper, little intemperances, little untruths, little dishonesties, or, to take higher ground, "a little piece of self-indulgence, which seems scarcely to deserve the name of a fault; a little hesitation or difficulty in obeying, which, at first sight, hardly seems a sin of omission; a little carelessness in words, a little coldness in prayer, a little idleness, a little hanging back from the wise man's rule, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' Ah! you must examine these things with the glass, not of the world's estimate, not of man's ideas, but of God's scrutiny, 'before you can see the fault.'"

"And notice," one warns us, "notice that they are not only *little*, but they are *foxes*. They are not only easily overlooked because they are small; but they skulk, . . and keep themselves out of sight because they are crafty."* They need watchfulness, they need prayer, to find them out. They need continual prayer, continual watching, for their extermination. It is a *prayer*, you see, that of the text, "Take us—take *Thou* for us—the little foxes."

Then note, it is the tender grapes which these menace, "those proofs and actions of grace that are not yet strong, still new, and, as it were," yet green.

* J. M. Neale.

We have not in this land vineyards, that are in danger from foxes or jackals. We may, however, from our British experience, illustrate the mischievous tendency of little unregarded faults. At the time of year when the blossom-bud of the fruit-trees is setting, or rather, swelling, you may see, in quite unusual numbers, flitting about the fruit-trees, one of the prettiest of our British birds. It is the bullfinch, called in some parts the bud-bird, thus named for a reason well known to the gardener. At this time of year the bullfinch develops a taste for the blossom-buds of fruit-trees, especially those which are cultivated. The leaf-buds are let alone, the *blossom-buds* are destroyed. And yet it is such a pretty bird that few would care to kill it. However, if the blossom-promise, if the fruit-harvest of the year is to be saved, some precautions at least must be taken against the ravages of these pretty birds.

Even so little faults that spoil the buds must be checked, even if they seem insignificant, or, it may be, pleasant to the eyes. They are, in the young, marring, if not destroying, the blossom-promise of life's Summer, the fruit-harvest of life's Autumn. How often has some unwatched, it may be undetected, fault eaten out the fair promise of a hopeful life! So much blossom-bud, and at the time of blossom such a scanty scattering, at the time of fruit-harvest such a meagre crop. This will often be the explanation of promising, but disappointing, lives. These small unnoticed enemies ate out the blossom-germ.

Is it wise or safe, then, to think lightly of these enemies?—to say airily, in a matter-of-course, contented way, "Oh, I daresay I ought not to do it; but, you know, 'We all have our little faults!'"

Nay, wiser far to turn to the Heavenly Bridegroom, and to entreat, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." Drive away the winged foes that would destroy the germ of blossom, the germ of fruit. Such tender grapes: aspirations and efforts so easily marred! Such frail blossom-buds of better intentions, of heavenward yearnings!

Then the enemies of these, unwatched, unchecked, increase and multiply, and thus the evil grows. Even so with our unwatched, unchecked faults. It seems to me that we might, in imagination, reverse the Parable of the Talents. Let us imagine the devil, of whom our Lord speaks as "the Prince of this World"—let us fancy the devil to be the great man who called his servants, and delivered to each a deposit, bidding him trade with it for him, until, having received the kingdom of Gehenna, he should return to take account with his servants. For he is but Prince of this World, at present going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it. Not until the coming of the King of Light shall Satan enter upon possession of that kingdom of Darkness that we call by the names of the Abyss and Gehenna, the place of the outer darkness, of wailing and gnashing of teeth. Though freed from his bondage by the grace of God, we are not yet so wholly freed but that the devil still has a hold upon us, which he ever strives to improve. We are, though freed from the *guilt* of sin, not yet wholly freed from its *power* over us. "The thing that we would, we do not; and the thing that we would not, even that we do." Some of us strive, in the might of God, against the evil within us; some yield to it easily, and so, by degrees, transfer their plighted service from their Deliverer to the Tyrant. The tendencies in us of evil: these, then, I call the devil's pounds—the devil's talents—our besetting sins, in fact—things of which we often speak at first as *our little faults*. Of these, some have more, some less, but to each and all the Prince of this World gives the charge, "Occupy till I come. Trade with, develop these in my service."

There is not much effort required in this trading. Forethought, anxious care, toil, are absolutely requisite in the trading with His talents for the Lord of Light. Simple neglect, indifference, letting things go, is all that is needful for increasing the devil's deposits. "We all have our little faults." We take this as a matter of course. They do not trouble us; we do not examine ourselves daily in order to discover them; we do not watch and pray against them when we have detected them, or when, by some kindly mentor, they have been pointed out to us. No. And thus the little fault develops into the *habit* of sin. Aye, and the deposit is apt to increase, even to double itself, just by being lightly regarded, by being let alone. Oh! is not the danger terrible? Ought we not to be afraid of the least evil inclination, to think of it as a devil's talent, and to regard, in our young days, at any time of life, "our little faults" as greatly dangerous?

See how the devil's talents may not only themselves increase and develop from little to huge, but may gain beside them other talents more. Thus, unwatched sloth will add to itself selfishness; small indulgences may go on to confirmed intemperance, and this "gain besides" brutality, lust, murder; mere exaggeration may go on to utter untruthfulness of character, and "gain besides" untrustworthiness in act as well as in word; want of method and order may go on to entire unreliability, and, to this, dishonesty, theft, may accrue; incipient love of money may go on to avarice, and this to extortion: aye, once it led to the crime of a Judas. How base, how wicked, a character may become that began with "little faults"! How needful, then, in a world like this, to watch and pray, lest, unwatched, undetected *little faults*, as we deem them, eat the good out of us, develop the evil. See what importance our Lord attaches to little trusts, to little delinquencies. He teaches us, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much."

And we must ever keep in mind that our trial-life here is made up principally of little things—small trusts, little duties, insignificant responsibilities; but that faithfulness in these little things is qualifying us for the great trusts of the world to come. Small temptations, again—little faults, insignificant defaultings. But the careless yielding to these temptations, the unfaithfulness in these slight trusts, is ruining the character, disqualifying for the rewards of God, qualifying for the recompense of Satan.

And, oh! the thought of it! To hear at the last, before Angels and before men, in the keen dreadful silence that follows the averting of the face of the King of Light—to hear in the harsh discords of the King of Darkness the meed declared of the usufruct of the devil's talents: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the despair of thy lord!"

A terrible summons, but one which cannot be averted, if we, by little steps, degenerate from Christ's men into the devil's bond-slaves. Carelessness was gradually making for us the choice which watchfulness should have avoided.

"Aye," declares a good servant of God, to those under his charge, "were I never to speak to you again, I know not that I could leave you with a better voice of warning than this text gives you: To beware of little faults, of things you would hardly call sins." "Take care of the pence," that is, "and the pounds will take care of themselves."

And turn from your detection of these faults, from your dread of them, when this is indeed awakened, to the Beloved and Bridegroom of your soul. Condone the faulty past, O my Lord, the incautious hours! Help in the dangerous present, the dangerous future! Take for us—*we* cannot—the spoilers: even everything which would lessen the heart's entire yield for Thee!

WOLSEY'S PALACE.

BY THE REV. J. TELFORD, B.A., AUTHOR OF "A LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY."

HAMPTON COURT PALACE IN THE TIME OF QUEEN MARY.

CARDINAL WOLSEY'S name and memory are more closely identified with the Thames Valley than with any other part of England. The good town of Ipswich claims him as her greatest son, and lingers regretfully over his scholastic foundation there, which was entirely swept away after his fall. Christ Church, Oxford, still preserves the memory of its munificent and enlightened benefactor; but whatever share other places may have in the great statesman, the banks of the Thames claim the chief place in the story of his life. It was from Richmond Palace that he set out in the autumn of 1508 on that mission to Mechlin which won him his first step on the ladder of promotion. He took boat at the palace stairs at four o'clock in the afternoon, reached Gravesend in three hours, posted on to Dover, and before noon next day was in Calais. He spent twenty-four hours in Mechlin, but got back to Richmond in three days and a few hours after he had left the palace. His amazing celerity earned the special thanks of Henry VII. for what he styled his messenger's "good exploit and happy expedition." Wolsey's royal master died next spring, but he was already Dean of Lincoln and Royal Almoner. The Thames Valley witnessed every subsequent stage in Wolsey's wonderful career. His two palaces at York Place, Whitehall, and Hampton Court were joined by the silent highway, down which floated his magnificent state barge, manned by stout yeomen, and bearing Wolsey and the gentlemen of his household. The Londoners gloated over his disgrace as the fallen Chancellor took boat from the Priory Stairs for Putney on his melancholy way to Esher. A little gleam of sunshine fell on his path when the royal messenger brought him a ring as a mark of Henry's favour; but Wolsey spent a bitter winter in what he calls the "moist and corrupt air of Esher." Happier days dawned when he was allowed to turn towards Richmond. There he spent some peaceful weeks of retirement in what is now the Old Deer Park. Cavendish gives a touching description of the way in which "he would sit in contemplation with one or other of the most ancient fathers of that house in his cell, who among them, by their counsel, persuaded him from the vainglories of

this world, and gave him divers shirts of hair, the which he often wore after, whereof I am certain; and thus he continued for the time of his abode there in godly meditation."

It will be seen from this rapid survey how closely the whole fabric of Wolsey's life is interwoven with the Thames Valley. But one place in this lovely region surpasses all others in its interest for the student of the great Cardinal's history. Hampton Court has been the home of Tudors, Stewarts, and Hanoverian princes, yet none of them have erased its founder's memory. It is still "Wolsey's palace," where his fame lingers, and his almost regal magnificence makes a profound impression on the thoughtful visitor. Wolsey built his palace in the height of his prosperity. The disastrous result of our expedition in Spain in 1512 had irritated Henry VIII. beyond endurance. The raw levies set at defiance all military discipline, and sailed for England despite every effort of the king and his officers. The whole Continent burst into laughter at our expense. Henry determined to wipe out this disgrace without delay. The onus of preparing for the new expedition fell on Wolsey. But if Wolsey was hardworked he was amply rewarded. Terouenne and Tournai fell into the hands of the English. The Battle of Spurs was a triumphant answer to the sneers of the past year. Wolsey was now made Bishop of Tournai. The sees of Lincoln and of York were added on his return to England. Three bishoprics in a year, followed in quick succession by the gift of the Abbey of St. Albans, the bishopric of Durham—afterwards exchanged for that of Winchester—and the farming of the revenues of Bath, Worcester, and Hereford: it is not surprising that the man on whom so many rich sees were conferred should have determined to build a palace worthy of his lordly station and princely resources.

It is said that Wolsey "employed the most eminent physicians in England, and even called in the aid of doctors from Padua, to select the most healthy spot within twenty miles of London." These experts gave their verdict in favour of Hampton Court, on account of its "extraordinary salubrity." Wolsey at once proceeded to secure a lease of the manor from the Knights of the Hospital of St. John, who had held it for more than three hundred years. This was granted him for ninety-nine years, at fifty pounds per annum. A small manor-house, rudely furnished, stood on the site of the present palace, with a little chapel which had only lead or pewter vessels for its altar. Wolsey undertook to leave a thousand couple of conies in the warren on the expiration of the lease, "or else for every couple that shall want" he had to pay fourpence. One wonders how the good knights proposed to count the inhabitants of the warren!

Having secured the lease, Wolsey began to build his palace. Mr. Ernest Law, in his fascinating "History of Hampton Court," gives full details of the progress of the works. Hundreds of artificers were busily engaged. The two thousand acres of pasture-land which surrounded the old manor-house were divided into two parks. Bushey Park lay to the north of the Kingston Road, whilst the House or Home Park surrounded the mansion. Wolsey's cross of black bricks, which stands out well from the deep crimson bricks of the wall, may still be seen in the Kingston Road, near the paddocks. Two other crosses of the same kind are found on one of the turrets in the Clock Court, and on an old tower near the Cardinal's orchard. Who Wolsey's architect was we cannot tell. Perhaps it was a priest called Williams. But there is no doubt that Wolsey was largely his own architect. The west front seems to have been the first part taken in hand. If we could restore the crockets, pinnacles, and gilded vanes, we should understand how picturesque an appearance it presented in Wolsey's day. The delicately moulded chimney shafts, each with its own distinct individuality of style, and the deep crimson of the bricks, give special charm to this façade, with its picturesque turrets and mullioned windows. The ground was carefully drained, and great brick sewers, three feet wide and five feet high, run from it to the Thames. Water was brought in a double set of leaden pipes from the springs at Coombe Hill, three miles away. Every detail of the work was carefully followed by Wolsey himself. The present palace has a thousand rooms, and covers an area of 8 acres. Wolsey's palace was about the same size. His arms are still seen on the inner side of the gateway, under the Clock

THE GREAT GATEWAY IN WOLSEY'S TIME.

Tower, with an archbishop's cross supported by two cherubs, and his cardinal's hat above. The proud motto, "Dominus mihi adjutor," still stands out, though its former wearer has vanished from the scenes of his pomp and state.

Lordly as was the pile, it was its furniture and decorations which threw Richmond Court completely into the shade. Nothing so magnificent had ever been seen out of Rome before this date. Sir Richard Gresham, father of the founder of the Royal Exchange, helped Wolsey to find tapestry for his rooms. Twenty-one complete sets were purchased, containing 132 pieces. The eight rooms which led to Wolsey's audience-chamber were all hung with tapestry which was changed once a week. "The very bedchambers had hangings of wonderful value, and every place did glitter with innumerable vessels of gold and silver. There were two hundred and four-score beds, the furniture to most of them being silk, and all for the entertainment of strangers only." The gold and silver plate was such as few monarchs possessed. The Venetian Ambassador tells us that what he saw in 1527 was worth £150,000, a sum equal to a million and a half to-day. One sideboard held plate worth £25,000; a cupboard in Wolsey's chamber contained vessels worth £30,000. Cavendish makes Wolsey say—

WOLSEY'S OWN APARTMENTS AS THEY NOW ARE.

"Plate of all sorts most curiously wrought,
Of facions new, I past not of the old,
No vesell but sylver before me was brought,
Full of dayntes vyands, the some cannot be told;
I dranke my wynne always in silver and in gold."

Members of the best families in England felt it an honour to serve in Wolsey's household, which numbered not less than five hundred persons. His chief cook wore velvet and satin, with a gold chain about his neck, and sat to give his orders in a little room still to be seen opening out of one of the great kitchens. More than a hundred horses stood in Wolsey's stables, in addition to six that were "to wait on my lord at Hampton Court and other places," and "six grey and white ambling mules" for my lord's own saddle.

When he was at Hampton Court Wolsey greatly enjoyed a ramble in his park or garden; if the weather was unfavourable he had to content himself with pacing the cloisters or galleries. He rose early, said two masses in his private closet, and then came out in his cardinal's robes to give audience to suitors. Towards evening he used to walk in the garden with his chaplain, repeating his evensong. "What business soever he had in the day, he never went to his bed with any part of his Divine Service unsaid, yea, not so much as a single collect." Wolsey took strict measures to preserve his precious leisure from intrusion. One man, who had thus been foiled in his attempt to disturb the Cardinal, said: "I had rather be commanded to Rome than deliver letters to him and wait an answer. . . . When he walks in the park he will suffer no suitor to come nigh unto him, but commands him away as far as a man will shoot an arrow." A sponge saturated with aromatic vinegar was placed inside an orange-skin, and this Wolsey held to his nostrils when he was in a crowd. It was a precaution against the terrible sweating-sickness, which attacked him four times in the course of a few months.

In May, 1516, Wolsey was able to welcome his royal master and mistress to his new palace. Many pleasant entertainments were provided here during his days of favour. Minstrels played during dinner, and gay masquerades or dances followed. Cavendish says that these masques and mummeries were so gorgeous and costly "that it was a heaven to behold." He had seen the king come suddenly with a dozen masquers, dressed as shepherds in fine cloth of gold and fine satin, "with visors of good proportion and physiognomy, their hairs and beards either of fine gold wire or of silver, or else of black silk; having sixteen torchbearers, besides three drums; and other persons attending them, with visors, clothed in satin, all of the same colour." The King and his courtiers often threw off their cares under the Cardinal's roof. The state banquets which he gave filled the Venetian Ambassador with wonder. He says of one function that "the like of it was never given either by Cleopatra or Caligula, the whole banqueting-hall being decorated with huge vases of gold and silver, that I

fancied myself in the tower of Chosroes, where that monarch caused divine honours to be paid to him."

After the Field of the Cloth of Gold, in 1520, Wolsey was more frequently at Hampton Court than had been possible before. Mr. Law says that the palace had now nearly reached the condition in which it was when it passed out of Wolsey's hands. The west front, with the first or Outer Court, are entirely his. When all the cupolas were on the turrets and the green turf covered the area of this court, it must have worn a happy air of peace and prosperity. It measured 167 feet by 142 feet—the largest open space in the palace. The Clock Court formed the principal part of Wolsey's mansion. Here we are in the midst of changes. His hall was pulled down to make way for the erection of the Great Hall of Henry VIII., which fills up the whole of the north side. George II. rebuilt half of the east side, and Sir Christopher Wren erected a colonnade which hides the southern part. Behind this colonnade are Wolsey's own apartments. The gallery in which he used to pace about stood near, but it was probably pulled down by William III. The finest of Wolsey's private rooms has a deep-bayed oriel window looking on to the Clock Court. Its walls were hung with tapestry representing Biblical and mythological subjects, and its windows were filled with coloured glass. The beautiful designs of the ceilings, and the oak panelling of some of the rooms, may still be studied.

In 1525 Wolsey had become unpopular. It devolved on him to raise money for the king's ambitious projects on the Continent, and Englishmen stoutly resisted the heavy levies involved. Wolsey now found it wise to make Henry a present of his great palace. His master asked him why he had built so magnificent a house for himself at Hampton Court. Wolsey replied that he had intended it for the king from the beginning. This ominous incident is said to have taken place in June, 1525, but Wolsey did not altogether give up his use of the palace. His letters are still dated "From my manor of Hampton Court."

Wolsey's fall transferred both his palaces to the king, who went up the river from Greenwich with Anne Boleyn and her mother to see the piles of gold and silver plate, with the stores of silks, velvets, and fine linens, which were awaiting him at Whitehall. He gave orders for many improvements at Hampton Court. New lodgings for the king, a tennis-court and bowling alley, and new kitchens and offices, were provided. Henry was eager to put his own badge on the walls; and large stone tablets with his arms may still be seen in the outer court. The monarch greatly delighted in the chase, and had the parks well stocked with game. Cavendish found him enjoying a game at

CLOCK TOWER, SHOWING TABLET WITH WOLSEY'S ARMS.

archery there when he came to tell Henry of Wolsey's death. Two months before the Cardinal died, the king's workmen were pulling down his hall to make room for the splendid Gothic Hall which is still the chief feature of Hampton Court. It is an imposing building, whether considered from the exterior or the interior. Mr. Law says, "The most gorgeous part of the Great Hall is the elaborate and ornate roof, probably the most splendid example in the Perpendicular style ever erected in England. That of Westminster Hall is, indeed, grander and more imposing; those of Crosby Hall and Eltham Palace purer in taste, but the roof of the great hall of Hampton Court Palace maintains an undisputed pre-eminence for complexity of workmanship and richness of decoration." Anne Boleyn was now enjoying her brief day of power. Her badge—a falcon—is carved on the roof of the hall. In the ceiling of the gateway between the two great courts we find the falcon, together with the initials "A" and "H" entwined in a lovers' knot. The poor queen never occupied the new suite of rooms built for her use. On May 19th, 1536, she was beheaded on Tower Hill, and next day Jane Seymour became queen. There is ample food for moralising at Hampton Court. Its first master, shorn of his honours and estates, dies with the great confession, "If I had served God so diligently as I have done the king, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs." Queen Katharine, who often came here in state, died in solitude at Kimbolton; her rival perished at the block. The workmen, "John and Harry," were forthwith busy painting and altering twenty vanes "from Queen Anne's armes unto Queen Jane's, with theyre badges." The images of St. Anne and St. Thomas were deposed from the "hye alter wyndow of the chappell." The badge and initial remain in the gateway ceiling to remind us of the lady about whom Henry said that she "had the wit of an angel, and was worthy of a crown."

At Hampton Court, to the inexpressible delight of the whole nation, Jane Seymour gave birth to a son, who was baptised in the chapel on October 15th, 1537. On the last day of the month the poor mother lay dead in the same building. Poor Queen Mary spent her honeymoon here with Philip of Spain, and knew many bitter days of disappointment in these walls. Queen Elizabeth delighted in her lovely gardens at Hampton Court, and often spent a few quiet days or weeks in the palace. Of the Stewart and Hanoverian princes who have dwelt here, and of the Lord Protector Cromwell, who knew at Hampton Court much domestic peace as well as bitter sorrow, we may not write. The royal palace has now become one of the chief holiday resorts along the Thames. To see it on a peaceful morning after a walk from Teddington station through the great avenue of chestnut-trees, and, sitting in some quiet corner, to call up around one the princes and courtiers whose portraits still hang in its galleries, is to survey the whole course of English history for well-nigh three centuries. All things change, save God and truth. Happy are they who lay to heart Wolsey's dying confession. It seems still to say, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help." Where can we find material for a more impressive unfolding of those memorable words of St. Paul's?—"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." If the first and greatest master of Hampton Court were able to stand beside us as we survey his palace and think of all his honours, would he not himself sorrowfully endorse the verdict which the Bishop of Peterborough has passed upon his life?—"He had given himself entirely to the material world, and had estranged himself from the spiritual world, which was to him thin and unsubstantial to the last."

SPIRITUAL FAILURES.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

IV.—JUDAS.

IF Solomon made many proverbs by his intellect, Judas made one at least by his character. Whatever is deepest in guilt and bitterest in curse has been thrown back upon him. No man has ever been more pitilessly pursued by the hounds of crime; none has ever more conspicuously failed in the attempt to separate religion from morality.

For, after all has been said about him, we can hardly help calling Judas something of a religious man. If he were living now, he would be found attending services and prayer-meetings; he would be a member of church committees, and treasurer of the provident fund. He would not, indeed, be popular; but he would be considered a good man of business; and if others were carried away by enthusiasm, he would act as the brake of prudence and keep them from going too fast. You could not like him, and many would fear him; but, up to a certain point, he was all right, and it was only the trial of a great crisis which proved too much for him and bore him down.

Can we say, then, that Judas was ever a holy man? It is impossible to say that he was, but it is difficult

to regard him as an enemy all along to Christ, without any pure motives or any desires after better things. He was trusted by his comrades and his Master; he was called to a special work by One Who knew all that is in man. The loathing which has followed him throughout these nineteen centuries makes it very hard to form a judicial opinion of what he was before the last journey to Jerusalem; but if we stopped at the ministry in Galilee, or if he had died there, we should not, at any rate, curse him; and we should perceive that there are many among us with religious aspirations, with characters borne high by popular applause, with hopes of spiritual progress and the crown of eternal life, who can lay no claim half as strong as his was then to discipleship and sainthood. Many of us stand proudly straight, because we have not been sorely tempted. Who can tell whether, if he were put to the terrible test of the past, he would have strength and faith to endure to the end? This is the first practical lesson as we approach the darksome failure of the traitor.

Yet he has not lacked an apologist. Some time ago a theory was conceived in Germany, and was supported in this country by Archbishop Whately and Thomas de Quincey, which makes Judas the bold assertor of Christ's claim to the earthly throne of David. In Galilee an attempt was half-made towards this end (St. John vi. 15), and, if Jesus had only yielded, the populace would have risen in His cause. The ardour of the north was carried to Jerusalem at the last Passover. The crowds from that country who were passing up to the city for the great Feast were filled suddenly with the same inspiration. They proclaimed Him with one voice the Son of David—the King coming in the name of the Lord. They thought that here was the fulfilment of the prophecy that the king they desired should suddenly come to the Temple, and they resolved to give outward expression to their belief. They conducted him to the Temple area; within the colonnades there they beheld Him assume His prerogative as Master and Monarch; but as the night fell all appeared to melt away, and He withdrew to a little village, removed alike from the presence and the sight of men.

Here was disappointment to many who had built their hopes high; to John and James, who asked to be the nearest to Him; and to Judas, who, with an eye to his own advancement, determined that he should not occupy a secondary place. He therefore conceived the subtle plan of forcing Christ's hand, and hastening what he believed to be inevitable. If he placed Him in a trap, if he should bring about a crisis in His career, all the honour of the expected coronation and of the success of the great enterprise would fall upon himself; and it was only when Judas perceived how utterly he had failed, and how, instead of making our Lord a King, he brought Him only to the crown of the thorns and to the throne of the cross, that he gave up hope and rushed upon his own death.

While this explanation does not raise Judas high among the ranks of men, but leaves him a selfish schemer, it overlooks the fact that his fall was not altogether sudden, and that certain marks in his early character prepare us for expecting a great fall and a miserable end.

Many of our Lord's sayings about money and the service of two masters must have gone straight to his conscience. When Jesus said that it was hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Judas was one of those who asked Him, "Who, then, can be saved?" A year before the crucifixion Jesus had pointedly warned him when He said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" In Simon's house, at the banquet, he betrays his avarice under a poorly disguised hypocrisy, and listens without penitence to the solemn rebuke of Jesus, and the doubly solemn forecast of his Lord's death and burial. At the Passover Jesus told the twelve that one of them would betray Him, and that He was to suffer after the Passover; and when the question sprung from every lip, asking who could do so vile a thing, Christ marked distinctly enough the person of Judas. Now, if Judas were too stupid to understand all these utterances, he was too stupid to conceive and work out such a scheme as is suggested; and if he were quick and clever to perceive their meaning and to understand them, he must have been absolutely base and worthless. For all this while he must have been gradually and rapidly slipping away from right and truth, and at last have reached a brink over which he was soon to fall.

For, indeed, the story of Judas is the common story of the growth of passion and the decay of the soul. Ambitions and desires after that which is forbidden seize upon the imagination. The mind is haunted with the picture of the pleasure we should enjoy in their gratification. Again and again in the occupations of the day it rises before us; and in the evening, when the mind and body are wearied, and the purpose and moral strength are weakened, it stands steadily in view. Whatever may minister to its strength we turn to. We feel it is all wrong, and that feeling banishes our sympathy with the pure and good, and keeps us surrounded with an atmosphere of polluted thoughts. By-and-by, what we have gloated over begins to wear the garb of virtue, and we argue ourselves into the conviction that it is right to do what we wish. "He went out; and it was night."

This is the story of many a deed of shame and crime, by which hundreds of men and women are this day the convicts of our prisons who might have been honoured and happy in bright British homes.

It was thus, I think, with Judas. There may have mingled with his earlier designs the hope that the Kingdom of God was coming with outward as well as inward power. He may have been utterly loyal to his Master at the outset, and, amid the swelling of selfish passion, have grimly held on to what, his conscience taught him, was the cause of Heaven.

But we know from several hints in the Gospels—which deal with him in marvellous pity and delicacy—that his temptation was money. And avarice is a devouring passion. We remember well how a great English writer has described an old man who had become the victim of this sin. Every night the passion rose, and every night he stole away to the haunts of his sin. Love could not restrain him; fear of the future had no influence, and God Himself was blotted out, as a thick cloud blots out the stars.

What, then, to Judas was a single peasant's life compared with his own enrichment? That was the question which the crisis suggested; that was the awful form of the final temptation. And it is some such form as this that evil passion and ambition pursued will always take. We are compelled to decide between our own desire and the welfare of others; and if for years we have been carefully cultivating the gratification of ourselves, and carefully despising the gratification of others, we have been doing our best to prepare our own downfall. For fall we shall, unless some Force from on high arrests our progress; and many a saint can tell how often he was tempted to commit great sins, how he balanced the matter seriously for a while in his own mind, and then how the Spirit of the Lord within him rose mightily, sweeping, as a hurricane sweeps the autumn leaves, all the wicked desires from his mind.

The fall of Judas, then, seems to have come from evil, selfish wishes long cherished and steadily pursued, until a terrible temptation mastered him, and he was gone.

The lessons are obvious: 1. We must watch the small beginnings of sin; and we cannot begin too soon. The little boy whose conscience has been trained by his father and mother often finds before he has reached a dozen years that he is not as pure as he was. No boy has passed through school-days without discovering, and discovering to his own sadness, how closely sin besets him. It is then that the struggle is easy and the victory sure, and it is then that the fight must begin.

But in older days—indeed, in every stage of life—new temptations arise, such as we should never suspect. In youth we fancy that, if we can only wrestle with those we so sorrowfully know, all will flee in after-years. The after-years have their own torments; but, if the habit of resistance has been formed and carefully sustained, we shall have less trouble in combating and more joy in overcoming the evil forces of later times.

2. Spiritual opportunities and ordinances must be accompanied by loyalty to the Person of Christ—that is, we dare not be satisfied with means of grace as such, but we must pass beyond them, and through them, to the liege service of the Lord Himself. Now, many poor, weak souls that fancy themselves religious stop far short of this: in some parts of the world a big Bible-class or an adult Sunday-school; in others a prayer-meeting; in others the attendance upon a few services or upon many, makes up all of men's spiritual life. Christ may be found in our words on the Sunday, but never thought of, never worshipped, never bowed to in the activities of life. It is direct and immediate loyalty to the Person of our Saviour that makes us worthy soldiers of the Cross.

3. Grace must build up a *character*. We are not all heart, nor all intellect, nor all body, nor all of this world, nor all of the next. Though we are near to Christ as Judas was, though we listen to Him, and in a measure follow Him, we must become like Him in order to please Him. Christ's test is not feelings, nor wishes, nor intentions, but life and character. The virtue which makes us meet to see the Lord is holiness, and holiness is likeness to Jesus; but it is likeness to Jesus in His whole life. Some will be like Him in His poverty, some in His tenderness and pity, some in His self-denial and suffering; but we must add these all together, and supply likewise the strength of mind in which He resisted and denounced evil of every sort; the force which made Him a power in His time; the judgment which enabled Him to see, not what was agreeable to Himself or to others, but what was eternally true, and strong, and right; the faithfulness to duty which never deserted Him; and the daily existence lived under His Father's eye and seeking the approval of His Father's smile.

Had this been so with Judas, he would have gone to another place than that which is so emphatically called "his own;" for there is a remarkable and impressive fitness in his end to the ambition or the crime which blighted his life. If he were truly the intended champion of Jesus, loyally, honestly anxious to further His interests, then his death, and the manner of it, point out the necessary doom of every reactionist. There was a great idea underlying the promise of a perpetual kingdom for the House of David; it was the idea of growth and progress in all the functions and relations of human life. And when Jesus and His forerunner sprung upon the world the watchword of the Kingdom of God, they stood at the point where a great portion of the old idea died, its crust and clothing crumbling away, and where the new vesture is donned of a Kingdom which is not local or physical, but which, affecting the physical world at every point, is essentially mental and spiritual. The local government of the kingdom was going hand-in-hand with the local power of the Levitical priest. A broader Government, whose power and spirit were to be within men, and not without, asserting themselves by voluntary force alone, was rising, like the southern sun, upon the world. The ideal of the new society was the ideal church, where man should love his neighbour as himself; and to throw back that ideal into the rude casket of a throne upon Mount Sion, to rule that little corner of Judæa, or even to rule the full width and scope of the Land of Promise, would have been the ruin of the noblest cause that ever claimed the heart of man.

Or if, on the other hand, the universal instinct of the Christian Church is right, and Judas was a base traitor to his Master and his Master's cause, that tree on which he hanged himself performed an appropriate and worthy task. The crooked road in morality always leads to disaster. The ablest and cleverest plans will always prove, under such circumstances, nothing less than the headlong fall which marked the last scene. Even the poor slaughtered body refuses to hold together. Jezebel receives a more honourable burial. The very field where he died was tainted and branded with the name of blood.

Here is spiritual failure dragging with it the failure of mind, body, and estate as well. An evil passion nursed is like the cockatrice' den of the prophet. But equally impossible is it to stop the progress of the cause of God. The past can never be undone. To-morrow will be born, not out of last year, but out of to-day.

"THOSE SMITHS!"

"AND who *are* the Smiths, I should like to be told?" said Miss Luttrell, glancing over her gold-rimmed eyeglasses at the company assembled in her small drawing-room.

But no one present felt equal to volunteering the desired information, none of the good ladies having the remotest idea who the Smiths were, any more than their hostess herself had. This being the case, they contented themselves with merely shaking their heads or raising their shoulders in a doubtful shrug, as if to say, "I do not know, and pray do not suppose that *I* care." But though their gestures implied the contrary, they did care, every one of them, very much.

"I consider Mr. le Marchant's letter the height of impertinence," Miss Luttrell remarked, with crushing severity, after a slight pause; "and if he imagines—as I suppose he does, from the mere fact of his having thought it necessary to write at all—that we are all longing to rush over to Rosebank to make the acquaintance of these precious friends of his, he is greatly mistaken, I can assure him—for my own part, at any rate. *Smiths*, indeed!"

There was scorn indescribable in the tone in which she pronounced the plebeian name that so greatly displeased her.

"Perhaps, dear Miss Luttrell, you would not mind reading Mr. le Marchant's letter to us again," said Mrs. Allen in her low soft voice from the sofa, where she sat facing her indignant hostess. "Indeed," she added gently, "I can hardly think he means anything impertinent." Miss Luttrell said nothing—merely pressed her thin lips together. Then she took up and unfolded a small paper that lay on the table beside her arm-chair, adjusted with elaborate care the glasses astride of her lofty nose, and read aloud slowly and distinctly the following:—

"Springfield House, Feb. 14th.

"DEAR MISS LUTTRELL,—As I told you before leaving home, I have lent my house, during my short absence, to my friends Mr. and Mrs. Smith, who will arrive in Slowbridge to-morrow afternoon. It is their express wish to remain quite quietly by themselves for the few weeks they intend occupying Rosebank, and they would prefer not having any visitors at all. I think it only right to tell you this, as you (and others) informed me, before I left, of your very kind intention of calling on them.—Believe me, dear Miss Luttrell, yours sincerely,

"GEORGE LE MARCHANT."

"I don't think it is meant in anything but a friendly spirit," said Mrs. Allen mildly. She was the wife of the doctor—a nervous, gentle-mannered woman, whose white hair and delicate face made her look older than she was.

Her remark was received in disdainful silence by Miss Luttrell.

"So he is at his nephew's house in London," here broke in little Mrs. McAllister, with a sort of respectful awe. Mrs. McAllister was rather looked down on by the select society in Slowbridge, it being generally supposed that the Rector had "married beneath him," as the saying is.

"He went to the wedding, of course. Lord Springfield was married yesterday," said Miss Barton, with the air of one who knew all about it—as, indeed, she did about most people's affairs.

"It is my opinion——" began Miss Luttrell solemnly; but she was interrupted as the door opened, and the neat elderly maidservant appeared with the tea-things.

As soon, however, as each guest was supplied with a steaming fragrant cup and a wafery slice of bread and butter, she returned to the subject uppermost in her mind.

"It is my opinion," she repeated, "that there is something *mysterious* about these Smiths."

"What in the world do you mean?" asked Miss Barton.

"Do people object to meeting and associating with their fellow-creatures unless they have something to conceal?" said Miss Luttrell impressively. "Do they come to an out-of-the-way corner of the world like this for nothing? It is my firm belief that *Smith* is an assumed name, and I should not wonder, indeed," she went on, dropping her voice to a solemn whisper, "if they were hiding from their creditors, or perhaps—who knows?—the police!"

This astonishing announcement fell like a thunder-

bolt among the party. Mrs. Allen lifted her fine eyebrows in speechless amazement; Miss Barton snapped out, "Nonsense!" in her abrupt way; and Mrs. McAllister clasped her little plump hands (all regardless of the bread and butter which dropped, face downwards, on her best silk gown), and fairly gasped with horror as she ejaculated breathlessly—

"Oh, my goodness!—But surely he—Mr. le Marchant I mean, uncle to Lord Springfield—would never allow such people——"

"His being uncle to an earl would not brighten his wits, I suppose," said Miss Luttrell contemptuously, though she was inwardly pleased at the sensation she was causing. "Of course, I do not suppose it is really so bad as that. What I mean is—if these Smiths (and you must allow their behaviour is suspicious) had anything to conceal, any motive for remaining unmolested for a time—we won't say by whom—how simple a matter it would be for clever, designing people to impose on Mr. le Marchant, who is getting old and decidedly—well, *not* sharper; they could easily persuade him into lending his house, where they could remain quietly till the storm blew over. Of course, I am only conjecturing, still I own I have suspicions; but do not imagine that I suppose Mr. le Marchant to be aware of their secret, if they have one: he could be easily duped and taken in with some plausible story. At any rate, you must admit that appearances are against them, and until very lately none of us had ever heard of these Smiths."

"The gate was reached in safety."—*p.* 268.

"That's true enough," assented Miss Barton.

"It is a dreadful idea!" said Mrs. Allen nervously; "but such things *do* happen. I am sure I remember hearing or reading of just such a case. It was a gang of burglars——"

"I never!" cried Mrs. McAllister, flying from her seat in a panic. "Mrs. Allen, *don't!* I shan't sleep a wink to-night. I must go home at once, and tell

Mary to be careful to bar the windows, and to bring all the plate up-stairs at night to our bedroom; and the Rector has not so much as a pistol in the house if anything *did* happen."

Miss Barton burst out laughing at this, but before she could say a word another voice made itself heard—a voice belonging to someone who had been a silent listener to these wild conjectures, but who now came forward from her corner, and confronted the excited community.

"Surely it would be wiser—kinder, at any rate—to reserve our judgment till we see the Smiths. We know absolutely nothing about them, and it is unfair to stab in the dark."

Miss Luttrell glanced sharply at the speaker, and tossed her head, as much as to say, "What next, I wonder?" but Mrs. Allen smiled, and said gently—

"You are right, Barbara. It is most foolish and wrong of us to think such things of utter strangers."

"All the same," said Mrs. McAllister, still fluttered and alarmed, "I shall have the plate brought up-stairs—how glad I am I thought of it!—and I should advise you all to do the same. It is only right to take precautions."

"They are coming!" exclaimed Miss Barton at that moment, hastening to the window. "I see the fly from Dunstone at the bottom of the street, with luggage on top of it."

Slowbridge village boasted but one street, which crawled indolently half-way up a long hill, and then suddenly stopped short, as if it had just discovered that there was really nothing to be gained by going on any further. Miss Luttrell's house was just midway between the post-office at the foot of the hill and the little square-towered church at the other end of the street; therefore, from her drawing-room windows the doings of the entire village could with ease be observed; and anyone going to Rosebank (which lay a quarter of a mile away beyond the church) from Dunstone, the nearest station, must perforce pass before the eyes of all the inhabitants of Slowbridge, who on this occasion were not slow to prove that curiosity is no uncommon possession. At every window were faces, at each door a little group, all equally eager to see whatever was to be seen.

Meanwhile, the fly proceeded leisurely up the hill—a dusty, dingy conveyance, drawn by a dilapidated horse, blind of an eye, and suffering greatly from mental depression; the driver was an ancient individual, who, to judge from his appearance, had been with Noah in his ark, and not quite enjoyed the trip.

"A trunk, a very shabby portmanteau, a bonnet-box, and a Gladstone bag," said Miss Barton, in tones of great interest. "Plenty of room to hide your silver spoons and forks in, Mrs. McAllister."

So absorbed were these good ladies in watching the progress of the fly, that they never noticed a lady and gentleman walking a little way behind it until they were immediately before their eyes.

"Oh!" whispered Mrs. McAllister excitedly; "those *are* the Smiths themselves, no doubt."

And a more harmless-looking, unconcerned young couple could hardly be imagined. A big, broad-shouldered, loose-limbed man, with a good-natured, plain, jolly face, and by his side a little slender woman, whose expressive countenance was just then full of amusement at something her companion had said.

The fly crawled on, the Smiths following, till it reached the turn beyond the church, and passed slowly out of the sight of the watchers.

"If those are burglars, I'm a Dutchman!" said Miss Barton, with emphasis.

"I never mentioned the word 'burglars,'" was Miss Luttrell's remark as she shook hands a little huffily with her departing guests; "but mark my words, those people are here under false pretences, and their name is no more *Smith* than mine is."

No one said anything in contradiction of this, knowing as they did, by long experience, that when Miss Luttrell's narrow mind took firm hold of an idea, all argument and persuasion were powerless to dislodge it.

"She's as obstinate as a pig," said Miss Barton confidentially to Mrs. Allen, as they walked away up the street together. "I'm glad I don't have to live with her, like Barbara does."

"Poor Barbara!" said Mrs. Allen softly.

She was generally thus spoken of in Slowbridge; and though indeed her lot was not an enviable one, still the good people could hardly have told you why they pitied the girl—for girl she still was in years, whatever she might feel after a lifetime of repression.

The people of Slowbridge could give you day and date of when she first had come among them: a tiny year-old baby in the arms of her dark-skinned, queerly dressed ayah; the omnibus from Dunstone had set them down at Miss Luttrell's door one September evening, all unexpected. Oh, the gossiping and talking which ensued! it was a red-letter day in Slowbridge. Then the story crept out—how Miss Luttrell's only sister had married against the wishes of her family, and gone to India with her husband; how he had lately died of fever, and his wife, falling ill of the same fatal sickness, with her last breath commended her baby-daughter to her sister's care. There were many conjectures as to whether that sister would accept the charge thus suddenly thrust upon her, as it were; but before long all doubts were at an end. The ayah was promptly sent back to her native land, and the child was adopted by her aunt, who was, indeed, almost the only relative she possessed in the world. So it had come about that Barbara Lennox had lived all her life of two-and-twenty uneventful years among the people of Slowbridge. They had seen her grow step by step from a pretty, fair-haired baby, into the quiet, reserved woman she now was—had felt a little sorry, no doubt, to see all her youth and gaiety so soon quenched, and pitied her for the dreary life she led with her aunt, whom they knew to be a tyrannical old woman. But though these worthy gossiping ladies vaguely commiserated, and though they were as intimately acquainted as Barbara herself with every little unimportant detail of her daily life, still not one of them had the remotest idea of what lay beneath that still, quiet manner, or could have imagined the depths of a nature so different from

their own. And while they called her "Poor Barbara," and were kind enough to her in their fussy way, they were totally ignorant of the ceaseless, weary longing, the loathing of her bondage, which was held back so strongly from outward observers, but which grew fiercer and more passionate year by year, beneath the enforced restraint she put upon herself. It was like the tide of an encroaching sea, which may be kept at bay for a little, but which in time must bear down the flimsy barriers erected against it, and rush out like a mighty giant, who has burst his bonds at last, and rejoices in his longed-for freedom. But of course, of all this the Slowbridge-ites (especially Miss Luttrell) were utterly unconscious, and at the time when my story opens their minds were too much occupied with another, and, to them, far more interesting matter, to trouble their heads with Barbara Lennox's affairs. For the time being, every other subject was laid upon the shelf, to make room for that all-absorbing topic—the Smiths.

The little commonplace name was in everyone's mouth "from morn till dewy eve." Miss Barton had met them in the post-office, and forthwith hastened to apprise the village of the fact—Mrs. Allen had seen Mr. Smith racing along the road with Mr. le Marchant's big collie, for all the world like a great overgrown school-boy. Mrs. McAllister had learned from the butcher the precise number of pounds of beef and mutton they consumed in the week. Such lasting excitement had not been known in the village since the long-ago days when Mr. le Marchant had bought Rosebank, and settled down there—in spite of all persuasion to the contrary, a bachelor! And then, on the first Sunday after their arrival, the Smiths had walked up the aisle to their pew before the interested eyes of the entire congregation; and it is to be feared that on that occasion the school-children were not the only persons guilty of inattention; but then, how would it have been possible to expect anyone to bestow their entire mind on the service, when by far the greater part of it was centred on that pew below the pulpit, where sat two persons of such vital interest? Then, after service, what a gleeful comparing of notes on the church-steps! Mrs. Allen had noticed how often Mr. Smith had sung out of tune. Miss Barton, from her vantage-point exactly behind, had discovered (with goodness only knows what pertinacious prying!) that Mrs. Smith's Christian name was "Helen." She had read on the fly-leaf of her prayer-book, "Helen: from Mother."

"And a very shabby little book it was, too," she added.

Mrs. McAllister was sorely at a disadvantage, owing to her excluded position behind the harmonium, but even she had brought her little grist to the mill of gossip. She had observed the Smiths whispering together before the offertory, and afterwards a five-pound note had been found in the bag!

"Dear me, how generous!" exclaimed Mrs. Allen; "they must be wealthy people."

"You are sure it is a genuine note?" asked Miss Luttrell disagreeably.

A little blank silence ensued.

"Surely, you don't think——" gasped poor Mrs. McAllister in consternation; but Miss Luttrell interrupted her.

"I would advise the Rector to look at it well," she said, with a faint laugh. "Come, Barbara; it is too cold to stay here in this keen wind."

Away she went, dutifully followed by her niece, having successfully planted her dart, and leaving dismay and anxiety behind her.

For a few days after this there was a lull in the gossip about the Smiths—at least, as regarded Miss Luttrell—for no one cared to contribute their share of petty news in the face of such snubs and hints as she persisted in dealing out whenever the subject was broached. She told her niece that she took no interest whatsoever in the doings of such persons, and begged that she might never hear their name mentioned by Barbara in her presence—as if, indeed, it was the girl's habit to discuss and gossip about their neighbours with her aunt! Indeed, the intercourse between them consisted chiefly in sarcastic, ill-natured criticism on other people's doings on Miss Luttrell's part, and silent (and, if all secrets were known, rebellious) listening on that of her niece.

One day, about three weeks after the arrival of the Smiths in Slowbridge, something occurred which in Barbara Lennox's colourless life partook of the glorifying light of an adventure, and gave her a glimpse into the world outside the narrow groove in which her days were spent.

She had been out for a walk, dawdling aimlessly along the muddy road which ran from the church past Mr. le Marchant's house, to nowhere in particular. It was a windy afternoon, with dull, rain-laden clouds coming rapidly up from the west; and Barbara, who had come out without any protection from the weather in the shape of umbrella or waterproof, turned back after a little, with the intention of hastening homewards to escape a wetting. As she did so, her eye fell on a letter lying on the road close by the footpath, and her quick sight easily deciphered at a glance the address written in a clear hand on the envelope:—

"*Mrs. Smith,*
Rosebank,
Slowbridge."

Barbara stooped to pick it up, and then stood for a moment with it in her hand, considering what to do. The first idea that suggested itself was to take the letter with her and leave it with the sexton, whose house she must pass, asking him to restore it to its owner. She had made a few steps onward with this object in view, when all at once she stopped short, her pulses tingling with a new and daring resolve: she would take Mrs. Smith her letter *herself*.

Rosebank lay but a few hundred yards further along the road; there was not a single creature to see what she did, and in the notion there was a spice of adventure, and doing of something unusual, which proved irresistible; and turning once more, poor Barbara flew up the road towards the gate of Mr. le Marchant's house, her heart beating as it had never done in its dull, sober life before.

The gate was reached in safety, and with a guilty glance round at the empty road, she slackened her

hurried steps to a walk as she turned in at the little laurel-bordered drive. The running and unwonted excitement had brought the colour to her cheeks; her hair was ruffled, too, from its usual precise coils, and she looked what she really was—or would have been under happier circumstances—a more than pretty woman, as she advanced in sight of the house, with feelings strangely mingled of fright and pleasure.

Rosebank was a long one-storeyed house, with a verandah running all along the front, which faced to the west; and in the summer-time over this verandah, and stretching out their fragrant arms to the roof of the house itself, grew the roses from which it took its name. Now, in early March, there was still a long time to wait through chill bleak days before the roses would think of coming, but down by the south wall, which ran at right angles from the house, were sweet purple violets, quantities of them; and standing with a great bunch in her hand, her laughing face bent towards her husband, who was on his knees by the border, was Mrs. Smith herself.

At the sound of Barbara's hesitating footsteps crossing the gravel, they both glanced round in some surprise, and Mr. Smith scrambled to his feet. His wife came forward a step or two, and Barbara held out the letter to her.

"I found this lying in the road just now," she said shyly. "I thought it might be of importance to you, so I came back with it."

"It was very good of you to trouble," said Mrs. Smith, smiling. "I should not have liked to lose it; but I am afraid it brought you out of your way. Thank you very much indeed."

"It was no trouble at all," murmured Barbara, who felt that now her mission was ended she must go, as there was no further excuse for her lingering, however she might wish it. She cast a farewell glance round the little place, and then her eyes fell on the violets in Mrs. Smith's hand.

"Oh!" she exclaimed involuntarily, "how lovely!" The words slipped out unawares, without her intending it. Mrs. Smith raised the bunch, and took a good sniff of its fragrance.

"They *are* lovely!" she said. "I never saw such violets as there are here, or such quantities of them. Would you like some? But no doubt it would be a case of bringing coals to Newcastle."

"Oh, no! indeed it would not," replied Barbara quickly. "There is no garden at all where I live. My aunt does not care the least about flowers."

"But you do, I can see," said Mrs. Smith kindly. "Will you have these, then? and my husband will pick you some more to put with them."

"Oh, don't trouble, please." And Barbara lifted a radiant face from the odorous bouquet which had been transferred from Mrs. Smith's hands to her own.

"Do you know, Helen," said Mr. Smith, laying his hand on his wife's shoulder, "that it is just going to rain in torrents? I can feel drops falling even now."

"So it is;" and Mrs. Smith glanced up at the darkened sky, and then at Barbara, who was turning as if to go. "You will never get home in time, Miss Lennox. Won't you come in, and wait at least till the worst is over?"

"You know my name?" cried Barbara, in surprise, as, nothing loth, she hurried with her hostess up the steps of the verandah.

"Oh yes; we know all about the whole village from Mr. le Marchant—don't we?" said Mrs. Smith, with a mischievous glance over her shoulder at her husband, as they stepped in at the drawing-room window out of the rain, now falling fast and heavily. "You are Miss Lennox, and you live with your aunt, Miss Luttrell. The pretty woman with the white hair is Mrs. Allen, and Miss Barton is the funny-looking old lady who sits just behind us in church."

"I like her," declared Mr. Smith, with a hearty laugh. "She takes such an open, unaffected interest if I sneeze or drop my hymn-book."

How Barbara blessed the weather, as she sat there in Mr. le Marchant's pretty room with the Smiths, and, resolutely putting aside all thought of possible discovery and torment, gave herself up to the pleasure of the moment! She was so happy, so unlike her usual reserved self—it seemed incredible that she could be sitting there so naturally, chatting and laughing with gay unrestraint, such as she had never known in her life before. The kind rain that had done her such a friendly turn still fell outside, and the wind howled, but in here it was so warm and snug. Did ever tea and hot cakes taste as those did which were presently brought in? Did anyone ever speak and smile like pretty Mrs. Smith, or laugh with such genuine light-heartedness as her kind-faced husband? Were ever such pictures and china seen anywhere as in this newly found Paradise?

Poor Barbara! For once she drank her fill of enjoyment, and took in with beauty-loving eyes every detail of it all, to be treasured up in her memory for ever. But even in this damp isle of ours it does not rain always. The heavy clouds drew apart to let through the yellow blinding light of the sun, now inclining to his bed in the west, where a gorgeous couch was prepared for him, all splendid with purple and gold against a background of greenish-blue and grey. Reluctantly Barbara had risen to take leave, and now stood with her new friends at the top of the steps. Mrs. Smith, shading her eyes with her hand, looked out over the garden and few intervening fields towards Slowbridge, lying glorified in the brilliant light.

"What a dear little place it is!" she said. "Do you know, Miss Lennox, we are quite in love with it? It is so peaceful and quiet. I should like to live here always, I think."

"Oh no, you would not," broke in Barbara impetuously. Then, completely carried away by her own vehemence, she went on, speaking swiftly and passionately, her eyes dark with excitement, her hands trembling. "If you had always lived here, you would not say that. If you knew what it was to see the same faces always, hear the same things: if you got up every day to the same life, to eat, and drink, and talk, and go to bed again, knowing that next day it will all have to be gone over again—always the same ground from day to day, from week to week, from one year's end to another: nothing beyond it: no ceasing of the long dull monotony. If you kne-

"His wife still stood looking towards the sunset."

what it was to be shut in, whether you will or no, by those low hills you can see all around, never to see or know anything of what lies beyond, and yet longing to be free, if only for a little time, so as to have something to look back on afterwards—a recollection of something different: new faces, a broader life! *Peaceful* you called it! Oh, you do not know. Surely it is better to enjoy, maybe to suffer, to fight with difficulties, to *live*, rather than merely to exist in such stagnation!"

She stopped at last, her cheeks crimson, her breath coming pantingly, and then suddenly realised what she had done. She had betrayed her secret, so long and jealously guarded, to two mere strangers. Dismayed and confused, she leant against the railing of the verandah in miserable silence for a minute; then she looked up, her eyes brimming over, and all the lovely bright colour gone from her face.

"I must apologise," she said falteringly. "I am afraid I have been talking a great deal of nonsense."

"No, indeed you have not!" cried Mrs. Smith reassuringly; "it was I who did that. Must you go? I hope we shall meet again before long."

And then Barbara hurried away, feeling wretched and ashamed, declining, for more reasons than one, Mr. Smith's offer of walking home with her. He went as far as the gate, however, and saw her hastening down the road; then he came slowly back to where his wife still stood looking towards the sunset. "Poor girl!" he said pityingly.

Mrs. Smith was silent, but when she turned her dark eyes towards him, he saw that they were dim with tender, compassionate tears.

Meanwhile, Barbara made her way home, and escaping with a reproof for being late for tea, and scarcely daring to believe her good luck in not being questioned as to her doings, slipped away to her own little room, and locking the door against possible intruders, drew forth her precious violets, till now carefully concealed beneath a corner of her jacket. It did not take long to put them in water in a hideous green glass vase, with purple roses sprawling over it, which was the only ornament she possessed, and which had been given her on a long-ago birthday by good-natured Mrs. McAllister, who herself regarded it as a miracle of art. With her violets before her on which to feast both eyes and nose at will, Barbara sat down by her work-table in the window, to sew a little and dream a great deal, going over to herself each word that had been spoken, dwelling on each trivial incident. Now and then she would start at some sound in the room below, and send her idle needle through the work again, but it would not be long before her hands dropped on her work once more, and she was back in Paradise—that Paradise of which she had at that moment such real existing proof, in the shape of a

bunch of fragrant dark violets in a green glass vase. There was not a happier girl in Slowbridge that evening than Barbara Lennox, as she laid her head down on her pillow to dream—this time in real earnest—of that eventful afternoon.

In the days that followed, too, the thought of her secret counteracted in the most extraordinary way all the small disagreeables of her daily life: the only shadow on her pleasure was the fact that she had betrayed her real self to the Smiths; but she consoled herself by the reflection that in all probability they would not meet again; they would go away and forget the silly girl who had gushed in such an absurd way about herself. Still, Barbara did not quite reconcile herself to the idea that she would be so soon forgotten, however she might try to persuade herself to the contrary, as she did very often.

A week passed, and she had seen nothing of the Smiths. Not a day went by on which she went out with her aunt without some inward trepidation as to what would happen if they met face to face; her feelings were divided between a longing to set eyes once more, if even in farewell, on the sweet bright-eyed little lady and her husband, and an actual terror of discovery by Miss Luttrell.

One damp March evening, Barbara and her aunt were walking homewards up the street, having been at a tea-party at Miss Barton's, in company with Mrs. Allen and Mrs. McAllister, who followed a little way behind, when all at once Miss Luttrell uttered, in tones of supreme disgust, the words—

"*Those Smiths*, I declare!"

Barbara glanced quickly up, and perceived advancing down the street towards them Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Discovery seemed inevitable, and she set herself boldly to face the worst, when her aunt most unexpectedly came to her relief. Within ten yards of her own door, as she stalked stiffly on, her head held high, and disdain in her glance, suddenly she lost her footing, stumbled, and fell her whole length on the pavement, before her niece could stretch out a hand to support her.

In an instant the Smiths had hurried up, and Barbara bent over her prostrate relative, who lay extended to her whole length, with her high-plumed best bonnet sweeping the dirt of the street.

"She must be badly hurt; run for the doctor," said Mrs. Smith quickly to her husband, as she stooped to assist Barbara in unfastening mantle and bonnet; but Miss Luttrell, dazed as she undoubtedly was by the fall, understood what was passing, and uttered a stern and very decisive—

"*No!*" Then clinging to her niece's arm, she raised herself to a sitting posture, and glared resentfully at the Smiths.

"I am not hurt," she said slowly; "only a little shaken. I must get home—help me, Barbara."

"Allow me," said Mr. Smith; and before a word could be spoken he had raised her from her lowly and undignified position, then, supporting her carefully, led her up the few remaining yards to her own house, and in at the door. Mrs. Allen and Mrs. McAllister hurried after them, and were witnesses to the degrading fact that Miss Luttrell had been obliged to submit to the assistance of the arm of Mr. Smith.

Barbara was hastening after her aunt when Mrs. Smith laid a detaining hand on her arm, saying—

"Please wait one moment. I am so glad to have met you this evening, for we are going away from here to-morrow, and I should have been so sorry to leave without saying good-bye to you."

"Good-bye," said Barbara, a little sadly, as she took the hand held out to her. It seemed as if she were bidding farewell to so much.

"Good-bye, Miss Lennox," said Mrs. Smith, "and may I add, I hope we shall meet again before very long?"

Barbara shook her head, with a sigh.

"I fear it is very unlikely," she said.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Mrs. Smith, with a little gay laugh and a nod of her pretty head. "Stranger things have happened before now. At any rate, we shall see what we shall see."

She laughed again at the half-puzzled, half-wistful face which Barbara turned towards her for a minute, before she ran away into the house, brushing against Mr. Smith in the doorway, as he made his way out, with a twinkle of amusement in his eyes.

"I don't think Miss Luttrell is much hurt," he said. "She is asking for you, though."

"I must go to her. Good-bye; and thank you, Mr. Smith, for your help."

As she assisted her aunt up-stairs to bed, Barbara puzzled in vain over Mrs. Smith's mysterious words. What could she possibly have meant by them? All her pondering and wondering brought her no satisfactory solution of the mystery; but a nameless, undefined feeling came over her—a sort of vague hope, a joyousness which was not to be suppressed even by Miss Luttrell's wrathful mutterings about the "unnecessary officiousness of that Smith man."

For a day or two after this a period of utter stagnation seemed to have set in. There was no longer any interest to be got out of the butcher or the postmistress; there was no chance of running up against the Smiths at any corner; the topic which had lasted so long and yielded such golden fruit seemed exhausted; and Slowbridge felt very dull in consequence. Miss Luttrell's temper had not been improved by her unfortunate shaking, and her niece was gradually sinking back into her old dull depression, from which she had imperceptibly risen for a time.

One day, a little less than a week after the departure of the Smiths, Miss Barton went in the omnibus to Dunstone for a good day's shopping. It was growing late when she returned, but instead of dismounting at her own door at the bottom of the street, she continued her course till she reached Miss Luttrell's house, where she hastily pulled the bell in an evidently excited frame of mind, and was presently ushered into the drawing-room, where the mistress of the house and her niece were quietly sitting.

"What *do* you think?" cried Miss Barton, striking an attitude, and entirely disregarding all customary modes of greeting.

"I have not a notion," replied Miss Luttrell, a little snappishly, annoyed by having her after-dinner doze disturbed.

"Their name was not *Smith* at all," was Miss Barton's surprising announcement.

"I told you so!" Miss Luttrell's high tones reached almost a shout of triumph, but Miss Barton struck in gleefully—

"Ah! but you never knew—never guessed who they really were. Oh, no: not you. They were Lord and Lady Springfield."

"Fiddlesticks!" rejoined Miss Luttrell promptly, while Barbara sprang forward, eager questioning in her eyes.

Miss Barton threw herself down on the sofa, and fanned her heated face with her gloves.

"Oh, my dear!" she said, "you must not suppose I make that statement on my own authority. I came back in the omnibus with M e Marchant himself, and I insisted on his telling me all about them then and there."

"The thing is impossible!" declared Miss Luttrell, in an indescribable tone.

"Not at all; it is easily explained. They wanted a nice quiet place to spend their honeymoon in: and what was simpler than for them to borrow their uncle's house for a few weeks? Then, as to the name, they took that of Smith, which is one of their family names, partly as a joke, and partly to conceal who they really were. And I must confess it is the greatest piece of fun I ever heard of. Mr. le Marchant's nephew and his bride all the time, and there were you calling them *burglars*, and thieves, and swindlers!" Here Miss Barton broke out into uproarious mirth—"Oh, Olivia Luttrell! hiding from their creditors and the police, were they? Lord and Lady Springfield! Oh dear!" She lay back in the sofa-corner, shaking with laughter, mopping her streaming eyes with her ever-useful gloves.

Miss Luttrell rose slowly, and left the room with the small remnant of dignity which remained to her in the face of such open derision.

And never, to her dying day, can she hear the name of *Smith* without a prick of angry shame; though, for all that, she is never tired of saying how much her niece, Barbara Lennox, enjoys her frequent visits to her friends the Springfields. But of course the Slowbridge people can distinctly remember a time when her kindest designation of them was "*Those Smiths!*"

A MODERN ITALIAN REFORMER.

A STREET IN BOLOGNA.

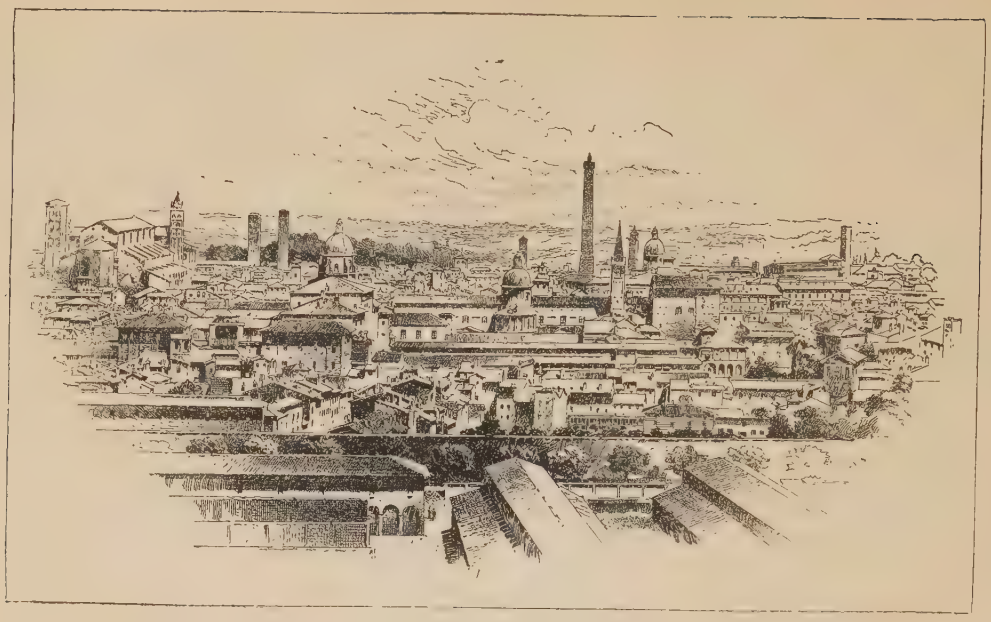
(*From a photograph by Alinari, Florence.*)

BOLOGNA, the home of an ancient and world-renowned university, a famous centre of culture and learning in the Middle Ages, was amongst the foremost of those Italian cities which welcomed the teaching of the Reformers in the sixteenth century. There, however, as elsewhere, the purer faith was stamped out by the bitter persecution which followed the establishment of the Inquisition, and the friar Mollio, who had brought the new doctrines to the Bolognese, suffered martyrdom at Rome. Nearly three centuries later, the city which had been the scene of his labours became the birthplace of another Reformer.

Alessandro Gavazzi, born at Bologna in the year 1809, belonged to a family which had won considerable distinction even beyond the boundaries of his native city. His grandfather on his father's side was Vice-Chancellor of the Portuguese Legations; his grandfather on his mother's side was President of the Court of Appeal, in which office he earned the title of "The Just." His father was Professor of Law in the university, a man of mark in his own profession, who must have possessed a considerable share of the oratorical talent which distinguished his illustrious son. The family was pious as well as learned, and their orthodoxy is quaintly illustrated by Gavazzi's anecdote of his boyish experiences of fasting. Leo XII. had ordered that Lent should be celebrated with "oil diet"—a device to replenish the Papal coffers by the sale of dispensations. The younger members of the family were offered their choice: would they fast according to the new restriction, or by dispensation? With boyish enthusiasm they chose the salt-fish diet, which, Gavazzi relates, but for their mother's anxious care, might have been fatal in its results.

The young Alessandro's piety did not content itself with Lenten observances, and before he had completed his sixteenth year he left his home, "with the most childish delight," to enter a cloister at Naples. In later life he described his journey southwards, and the contrast between the misery and squalor which prevailed throughout the Papal States and the beauty and prosperity of Tuscany; but it is not likely that at this time he traced the degraded condition of the former to its true cause. Certainly, for many years after he was received into the order of the Barnabites, then one of the most educated and liberal of the monastic orders in Italy, he accepted without reservation the whole teaching of the Roman Church.

At Naples his great ability was soon recognised, and he was appointed Professor of Rhetoric in the college when only twenty years old. Not long afterwards



BOLOGNA, THE BIRTHPLACE OF GAVAZZI.

(*From a photograph by Alinari, Florence.*)

he was ordained priest, and sent out as one of those popular preaching friars to whom it has always been the practice of the Roman Church in Italy to entrust the religious instruction of the people during Lent. In this capacity he won fresh distinction. Crowds flocked to listen to his bold appeals for reform in Church and State, and his fame soon excited the jealousy of the powerful order of the Jesuits. It has always been the policy of these men —"the stormy petrels of Christianity," as a modern writer, who has described their baleful influence on learning and education, has styled them—to check freedom of thought and speech even in those whose orthodoxy they cannot question. Gavazzi was removed from Naples, and, after a short time spent at Leghorn as Professor of Belles-Lettres, we find him in Piedmont, where for eight years he preached before the Court and the people in the principal cities. Even there his relentless foes pursued him, and Charles Albert was induced to banish the great preacher just as he had finished a course of Sunday sermons on behalf of a new asylum and schools for infants, and other works of charity.

The years from 1841 to 1844 were passed by Gavazzi at Parma, where he laboured incessantly to improve the condition of his countrymen, often preaching ten times in one day. It was during this period that he was sent to Bologna with instructions to preach on the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception:" but the patriotic monk found a more congenial subject in the fallen condition of his native land, and was in consequence suspended from preaching by the Pope. Not long afterwards he was appointed Chaplain-General to Prisons by the Parmese Government, and his work in the gaols and reformatories thus placed under his care led him to write a pamphlet on the improvement of Italian prisons.

We next find Gavazzi preaching at Perugia, the Papal prohibition having been recalled through the influence of the Barnabite order. Here again, rejecting the abstractions of Romish doctrine, he chose historical subjects for his theme, and denounced, under cover of the past, the crying evils of the present. Again he was silenced, and for eighteen months imprisoned in the convent of San Severino.

The accession of Pio Nono brought release to Gavazzi, and, like many other patriotic Italians, he was led to believe that the amnesty and reforms won from the new Pontiff were the first-fruits of a coming golden reign. The hopes thus raised were doomed to disappointment. Gavazzi's illusions were dispersed in a private interview graciously accorded him by Pio Nono. The Pope received him with great favour, giving him the fisherman's ring to kiss instead of his slipper, but at the same time discountenanced all efforts to rouse the patriotic spirit of the people.

Not many months after, Gavazzi was again suspended from preaching. A thanksgiving service was held on the occasion of the discovery of a plot of some Austrian emissaries, and Gavazzi denounced from the pulpit the infamous pontificate of Gregory XVI. His enforced silence was not of long duration. In January, 1848, the students of Padua rose against their Austrian oppressors, and were massacred in great numbers. Gavazzi was present at the solemn service held in the University Church by the Roman students to pray for the souls of their slaughtered brethren, and at their call ascended the pulpit and addressed them. He was again imprisoned, but the excitement and indignation were so intense that Pio Nono was

obliged to consent to his release. Instead of fulfilling this promise, however, he had Gavazzi removed secretly and at midnight to the convent at Gensano, where, after some days' search, he was found by his friends, set free, and brought back in triumph to Rome.

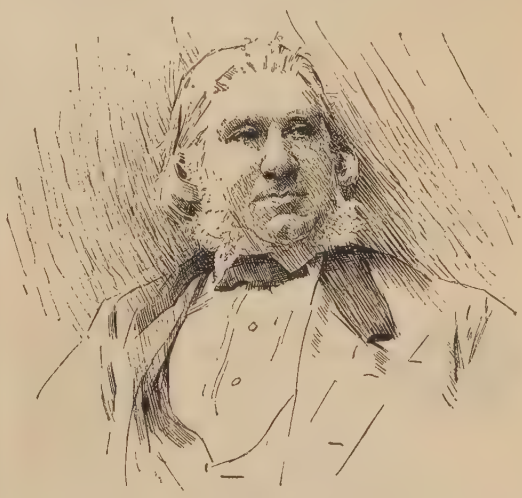
It was a time when the Imperial City needed the presence of all her true-hearted children. The news of the revolutions in Paris, Vienna, and Milan, had spread like wildfire to Rome, and the people flocked in vast crowds to the Piazza del Popolo to listen to the new Peter the Hermit, as, day after day, he preached the crusade in support of the Lombard insurgents against the yoke of Austria. Volunteers were enrolled under his direction; Pio Nono gave his blessing to the army, and appointed Gavazzi its Chaplain-General. In March the Roman legion started, Gavazzi walking on foot alongside of the men and preaching at all the different halting-places, till the numbers of the volunteers rose from four to twenty thousand. At Ancona he met his old friend and fellow-townsman Ugo Bassi, also a monk of the Barnabite order, and appointed him his Under-General Military Chaplain. The story of Bassi's heroic life and tragic death at the hands of the Austrians has been told with much pathos in Mrs. Hamilton King's poem, "The Disciples."

The next few months are crowded with stirring events. We find Gavazzi now on the battle-field of Treviso, bearing away the wounded at imminent risk to his own life; now on a mission to Venice, vainly using all his eloquence to dissuade the Neapolitan contingent from returning home without striking a blow for the liberty of Italy; now at Bologna, denouncing the proclamation of a republic; now marching out from Vicenza with the troops on their capitulation. At Genoa an urgent summons comes to him to hasten to Bologna and restore order amongst the populace, who, having triumphantly expelled the Austrians, were rioting against their fellow-citizens. A single oration from their gifted townsman was enough to bring back the excited Bolognese to their duty. Again Pio Nono commanded the arrest of the heroic monk, this time on the pretext of the welcome he had given to Garibaldi in Bologna; but on his way to the infamous prison of Corneto, Gavazzi was recognised by the citizens of Viterbo and released.

On the proclamation of the Republic of 1849, which followed the flight of Pio Nono, we find Gavazzi in Rome. He never sympathised with the republican views of Mazzini, and seems to have regarded the great teacher of "Young Italy" as an unpractical and somewhat mischievous visionary; but when the Triumvirate began their short-lived reign he proved himself a faithful and obedient subject. When the French laid siege to Rome, Gavazzi and Ugo Bassi devoted themselves to the care of the wounded. Many Roman ladies were enlisted in the good work, and sixteen military hospitals were established in the city. When the end came, and Garibaldi and his devoted band fled before the invaders, Gavazzi stayed on quietly at his work in the hospitals till his life was threatened by the Inquisition. Then at last he yielded to the earnest solicitations of his friends, and obtained from the American Minister a passport, by which he was enabled to escape to Marseilles, and after a few days in Paris made his way to England.

The two years that followed were the darkest in Gavazzi's career. From the stirring scenes of the brief triumph of Italian liberty, in which he had played such a prominent part, he passed to a gloomy and obscure exile in a land where he was unknown, friendless, and poor. For the first time he had to experience want, and that, too, in a foreign country, whose climate must have sorely tried the shivering, hungry exile from the sunny south. He kept himself from actual starvation by giving lessons in Italian, but the scanty remuneration—ten shillings a week—which he earned in this way must have been very insufficient for his needs. Still, he struggled on bravely, though other expenses, and those not personal, came to lessen his slender income. A funeral oration which he preached to the Italians in London in memory of his martyred friend Ugo Bassi was printed at the request of his hearers, but the promised funds were not forthcoming, and Gavazzi had to pay the publisher's bill himself. So, too, with the hire of a chapel near Soho Square for services for Italians. After six months' ministrations Gavazzi was obliged to close the chapel and himself defray the expenses incurred. The Bassi oration, however, led to Gavazzi's acquaintance with Francis Mahony, who made arrangements for a course of Sunday lectures, and afterwards translated them for the press.

It was soon after this that Gavazzi finally renounced Roman Catholicism, and began to deliver a series of orations in the large towns of England and Scotland against the temporal and spiritual oppressors of his unhappy country. At first he spoke in Italian, but soon, not satisfied with addressing large audiences in an unfamiliar language, he determined to master English. This he did most thoroughly, and held great crowds entranced by his wonderful dramatic and oratorical powers. The impression made by his lofty stature and fine physique was deepened by his



SIGNOR GAVAZZI.

(From a photograph by J. Moffat, Edinburgh.)

magnificent voice and expressive gestures, and his impetuous force and unmistakable sincerity gave him a wonderful mastery over human emotions. Still, many of his hearers were not satisfied with the earnest piety of his life and words; and we find him writing to a friend, in answer to numerous inquiries as to which of the Protestant sects he belonged and what his doctrines were, that he is "no Protestant," for his aim is "not to protest against Rome, but to destroy the whole system, root and branch." Indeed, the widespread prejudice against Protestantism, which prevailed even amongst the Waldenses and independent Italian ministers, would have made it difficult even for an Italian to gain a hearing amongst his own countrymen if he came to them as a member of a Protestant community; and later on we find Gavazzi, in answer to a priestly manifesto published against him in Venice, vindicating his claim to a different title. "The Evangelical Christians," he writes, speaking as their leader, "are humble, unpretending believers, who, trusting entirely to the Word and help of God, and strengthened in the name and by the grace of their blessed Lord, the Divine Jesus, seek by preaching and example to bring back Italy to the simplicity and purity of her primitive Christianity, which was the Christianity of the Evangel or Gospel. This is why they call themselves Evangelical or Gospel Christians."

From England Gavazzi went to the United States, and there preached in all the principal cities to large and enthusiastic audiences. In Canada, however, he encountered the bitter hostility of the Irish Roman Catholics, and at a meeting in Quebec a disgraceful riot took place, in which the orator's life was endangered. The rioters besieged him in his pulpit, and he was hurled down fifteen feet. Fortunately he fell on the heads of the mob below, and fought his way out without serious injury.

His exile ended in 1859, when he joined Garibaldi in the Sicilian campaign. He was placed on the great general's staff and appointed "President of the Commission for the Succour of the Wounded." During the next ten years we find him actively engaged in his native land, caring for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the wounded in time of war, preaching and lecturing wherever the Italian Government permitted him when peace was restored. In Venice he carried on his evangelical work in conjunction with the Waldensian pastor Turin, and made many converts. He was attacked again and again by monks and priests, more especially his old enemies the Jesuits; and at one time, indeed, the friendly police authorities begged him to leave the city because of the excitement aroused in his favour by the appointment of twenty-four Lenten preachers to preach against him. It was the dream of his heart to preach the Gospel in Rome, and he hastened to join Garibaldi on his armed march thither in 1867, again devoting himself to the care of the wounded with unfailing zeal, and taking no rest day or night. Even after the failure of the expedition he was still sanguine, and wrote: "I am sure that in one way or another God will grant to the Italians their natural metropolis, and to Christians the downfall of an institution which is mockery to the Gospel and an insult to Christ."

Within three years these hopes were justified, and Gavazzi re-entered the Imperial City. Another fervent wish was realised by the establishment of the Free Italian Church at Milan, and from that time he spent the winter preaching in Rome, and travelled on deputation work abroad during the summer. In this way he carried on his work till he reached the age of eighty, and when death overtook him he was still, as he had wished, in harness. He had suffered for some time from weakness of the chest, but thought so lightly of this ailment that on the day of his death he went to visit the tomb of Victor Emmanuel in the Pantheon. There a severe fit of coughing brought on the rupture of a blood-vessel, and he was carried home dying. By his own desire his body was cremated, and a tombstone placed over his ashes in the Roman Evangelical Cemetery with the simple inscription—a brief but not unworthy epitome of his heroic career—

"A CHRISTIAN PATRIOT."

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

FEBRUARY 21ST. JEHOIAKIM'S WICKEDNESS.

To read—Jer. xxxvi. 19—31. *Golden Text—Heb. iii.* 15.

INTRODUCTION. Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, the good king, was now king over Judah. Began to reign at twenty-five, when character formed for good or evil—in his case for evil. Took no warning from fate of his brother Jehoahaz, sent into exile by Pharaoh, king of Egypt (2 Kings xxiii. 33), but did great evil. Then came invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who conquered Pharaoh, and placed Jehoiakim under tribute for three years till he rebelled (2 Kings xxiv. 1). To-day's lesson tells of his wickedness and Jeremiah's warning.

I. THE ROLL READ (19—21). Jerusalem in very sad state. Invasion from king of Egypt on south, king of Babylon on north. The king, wicked and cruel, filled the city with innocent blood (2 Kings xxiv. 1). Only one faithful prophet — Jeremiah. He sometimes in great danger—imprisoned, put in stocks, obliged to hide. How did he warn the people?

By words—foretelling coming punishment (xxv. 3).

By signs—*e.g.*, breaking the earthen vessel (xix. 1—11).

By writings—as in this roll.

Notice about this writing—

It was dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch.

It contained a summary of God's warnings.

It was written in columns on parchment.

It was rolled up into a "book."

It was carefully put away in safety.

It was subsequently read to the king and princes.

II. THE ROLL BURNT (22—26). Describe the scene.

The king and princes in the audience chamber.

A bright wood fire burning on the hearth.

The roll read amid intense silence.

No fear or grief at hearing the solemn words.

Three or four columns heard without remark.

The king snatches up the scribe's penknife, makes cuts down the parchment in anger; seizes the roll, throws it on the fire; some of the princes remonstrate in vain (ver. 25).

Orders given to seize Baruch and Jeremiah.

But they were kept in safety by God's hand.

III. GOD'S MESSAGE (27—31). Another roll to be written.

What did the burning of the roll show?

The king's *defiance* of God's message.

His *folly* in thinking to stop his fate.

His *impiety* in imprisoning God's servants.

What further judgments were to follow?

The king's family should become extinct.

His dead body should be insulted.

The nation's punishment will soon come.

IV. LESSONS. 1. The Word of the Lord endureth for ever.

2. He that despiseth me shall be lightly esteemed.

FEBRUARY 28TH. JEREMIAH PERSECUTED.

To read—Jer. xxxvii. 11—21. *Golden Text—Jer. i.* 19.

INTRODUCTION. Sixteen years passed since the burning of the roll in last lesson. King Jehoiakim dead; his son Jehoiachin (or Coniah) taken as a prisoner to Babylon, and his eyes put out; succeeded by his uncle, Zedekiah (2 Kings xxiv. 17): the last king that ever reigned at Jerusalem, a very weak king; seems to have begun his reign fairly well; made a covenant with the people to set free the slaves (xxxiv. 15) in accordance with God's law. Also in time of trouble sent to ask Jeremiah to pray for him and the people (verse 3). But mostly "did evil in the sight of the Lord, as Jehoiakim had done" (2 Kings xxiv. 19). Jeremiah for a short time is at liberty.

I. JEREMIAH IMPRISONED (11—15). Is getting an old man. For many years been prophesying in Jerusalem, the only witness for God. Sometimes the king for him, sometimes against him. Sometimes even the priests turned against him (xxvi. 11), desiring his death. Now a slight respite.

The Chaldeans have withdrawn for a time.

Jeremiah determines to visit his own home.

He sets out for Anathoth, in Benjamin.

Is taken prisoner in the gate of the city.

Accused of going over to the enemy.

Is taken to the princes to be examined.

Is disbelieved—beaten—imprisoned.

II. JEREMIAH INTERVIEWED (16—21). Poor prisoner. Secretly interviewed by the king.

Dungeons and cabins (cells) show the kind of place the prison was.

Not much better than cesspool (xxxviii. 6).

Kept there "many days": *i.e.*, a long time.

But has done his duty bravely and nobly.

Therefore, though persecuted, may rejoice, like Paul and Silas in the stocks at Philippi (Acts xvi. 25).

Now the king sends for him to his palace.

Holds a secret interview with him.

The king is in trouble—enemies are near.

Has the prophet any word from God for him?

Only the same message as before.

God's word must come to pass.

He shall be delivered to the king of Babylon.

Then Jeremiah pleads for himself—

What is his crime that he should be imprisoned?

Other prophets have prophesied falsely.

His prophecies have all come true.

He will die unless released from the dungeon.

The king repents, removes him to his own palace, protects him and feeds him during the siege.

III. LESSONS. 1. They that will live godly must suffer persecution.

2. Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not in despair.

3. If God be for us, who can be against us?

4. When a man's ways please the Lord He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

MARCH 6TH. THE DOWNFALL OF JUDAH.

To read—Jer. xxxix. 1—10. *Golden Text—St. Matt. xxiii.* 28.

INTRODUCTION. The end of the kingdom of Judah now come. God had borne long with the people—had sent repeated messages to them, "rising up early and sending them," but they would not hearken. Almost all their kings did evil, and the people followed the kings. Now comes the punishment long threatened—long delayed. The beautiful city of Jerusalem is destroyed by fire, and the people are taken as slaves to Babylon for seventy years. And the agent in carrying out God's designs is a heathen king.

I. FATE OF THE CITY (1—4). Read also 2 Kings xxv. 1—12.

All the horrors of a long siege.

Vast Assyrian army round Jerusalem.

Forts for shooting arrows on hills around.

Towers with battering-rams assail it.

At last awful famine within the city.

Siege lasts eighteen months (2 Kings xxv. 1, 2).

Jeremiah describes horrors in Lamentations.

Noblewomen searching for offal (Lam. iv. 5).

Children devoured by their parents (iv. 3, 4, 10).

Two-thirds of people died by famine or sword (Ezek. v. 12).

At last breach made by the battering-ram.

Walls entered, city taken, king and guards fled.

Whole city burned with fire (verse 8).

II. FATE OF THE KING (5—7). His flight by night discovered.

Is pursued, overtaken by the enemy.

Taken as prisoner to the king of Hamath.

Judgment given against him.

What had been his offence?

Had broken his oath of subjection to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chron. xxxvi. 13).

So he is terribly punished as follows—

His sons slain before his eyes.

His nobles also put to death.

Then his own eyes are put out.

He is bound with chains, and taken as prisoner of war to Babylon.

III. FATE OF THE PEOPLE (8—10). Officers and all that remained in Jerusalem taken to Babylon, except a few poor left to till the land.

Thus for the time ended the great Jewish nation.

See how complete the destruction.

The great kingdom come to an end.

The beautiful city in ruins.

Solomon's temple burnt with fire.

Its treasures taken to a heathen land.

The people dead or taken captives.

Was ever destruction so complete?

IV. LESSONS. 1. *God's word standeth sure.*

Jeremiah prophesied that the king should see the king of Babylon (xxxiv. 3); Ezekiel, that he should not see the land (xii. 13). Both prophecies literally fulfilled, for his eyes were at once put out.

2. *God's hatred of sin.* Zedekiah's defection from Nebuchadnezzar nothing compared with his defection from God. His sin found him out, and was punished by judgment. So shall it be always. Every one must give account of himself to God.

MARCH 13TH. PROMISE OF A NEW HEART.

To read—Ezek. xxxvi. 24—38. *Golden Text—verse* 26.

INTRODUCTION. Ezekiel was, like Jeremiah, both a priest and prophet. Was carried away to Babylon at twenty-five. There he delivered his prophecies against his own nation. Their ruin, because of sin, seemed complete. But God has a purpose of mercy towards them. His old covenant with them stands firm. His glory shall revisit the earth. His Spirit shall "breathe on the slain, and they shall stand up a great multitude" (chap. xxxvii.).

To-day's lesson tells how "a new heart and a new spirit" shall be given them.

I. SPIRITUAL MERCIES (24—32). 1. *Restoration.*

What was the effect of their being taken captive?

God's House of Israel was profaned among the heathen (20—23).

They had watched this chosen people.

Seen them kept under God's eye in the promised nine hundred years.

Then another shameful exodus *out of His land.*

Therefore God's work and titles seemed failures.

Now His power and love vindicated by their return to their own land.

2. *Change.* They shall be cleansed from sin.

The stony heart on which His love made no impress changed to a soft heart, on which God's Spirit should write His law (2 Cor. iii. 3).

3. *Fatherhood.* The old covenant restored.

They shall dwell in their Father's land.

They shall be the true children of God.

4. *Repentance* (31). Hatred of sin the first step.

Putting away sin the next step.

Forgiveness and mercy follow.

EXAMPLES. Publicans, etc., at Jordan (St. Luke iii. 8).

The multitude at Pentecost (Acts ii. 38).

II. TEMPORAL MERCIES (33—38). 1. *Return.*

The exiles to return after seventy years.

The ruined cities should be rebuilt.

The desolate land tilled once more.

Cultivation and fertility fill the land.

2. *Increase.* The old promise restored (Gen. xviii. 18).

The nation shall again be great and prosperous.

Flocks of men, like the Passover lambs.

The heathen will recognise God's power.

III. LESSONS. 1. *God's infinite mercy.* His compassions fail not.

2. *The God of nature the same as the God of grace.* The same God who forgives sins gives daily bread.

3. There remaineth a rest for the people of God.

Father of Mercies, Bow Thine Ear.

Words by B. Beddome, 1787.

Music by J. Varley Roberts, Mus.D.
(*Organist of Magdalen College, Oxford.*)

1. Fa - ther of mer - cies, bow Thine ear, At - ten - tive

to our earn - est prayer; We plead for those who

plead for Thee— Suc - cess - ful plead - ers may they be.

2.

How great their work, how vast their charge!
Do Thou their anxious souls enlarge;
Their best acquirements are our gain,
We share the blessings they obtain.

3.

Clothe, then, with energy divine
Their words, and let those words be Thine;
To them Thy sacred truth reveal,
Suppress their fear, inflame their zeal.

4.

Teach them to sow the precious seed;
Teach them Thy chosen flock to feed;
Teach them immortal souls to gain,
Nor let them labour, Lord, in vain.

5.

Let thronging multitudes around
Hear from their lips the joyful sound;
In humble strains Thy grace adore,
And feel Thy new-creating power.

"THIS LOOKING-GLASS FOR LADIES."

BY THE REV. MICHAEL EASTWOOD.

(PROVERBS xxxi. 10—31.)

A CRITIC once said to a Rabbi, "Your God is a thief; as it is written, 'And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs.'" Whether the Rabbi was nonplussed or not, we are told that his daughter was eager to reply, saying, "Let me answer the aspersion. Last night robbers broke into my room and stole therefrom a silver vase, but left a golden one in its place!"—"Ah!" replied the critic, "I wish such thieves would visit me every night!"

Thus if God takes the silver, He leaves the gold; if He has taken the superfluous rib, He has left a royal woman in its place.

It is a royal woman you are to see in the "looking-glass" held before you on the present occasion. And, if you do not see yourself, be not discouraged, my sister. The picture was never meant to tantalise. He who inspired its delineation did so for your encouragement—to show you, not perhaps what you are, but what you may be.

Nor do you forget that the picture placed before you is drawn by a woman—a wife and mother, who, perhaps, laid it on her son's table, with many a tender prayer for the happiness of that son and his bride.

And it is not a little remarkable that every contribution to Holy Scripture from the pen or tongue of a woman is a poem in form and thought. The well-known thirty-first chapter of Proverbs, which constitutes our study, forms no exception.

With one other preliminary word I wish also to remind you that the designation given to our study is from the pen of Matthew Henry. It sounds quite modern, and as if invented by a writer of to-day to bespeak attention to the subject in hand. It is, however, from dear old Matthew Henry, "suitable to everybody, instructive to all; . . . and as for thoughts, they will swarm around you like twittering swallows around an old gable towards the close of autumn" (C. H. Spurgeon).

The first point to be noticed is that this is "a virtuous woman." A stable foundation of character—a strong fundamental note—a guiding, dominant principle: and it is virtue. And even the student always feels some surprise when he remembers that the word means *manliness* (*vir*, a man).

But this does not mean what we commonly understand by "a strong-minded female." It implies no gentlemanly behaviour. It indicates nothing loud, over-pronounced or harsh; not the false ring that bespeaks a counterfeit man rather than a true woman. Such a one, the assertive or the dashing woman of the Jezebel type, is not considered strong when viewed from a Scriptural standpoint: "How weak is thine heart" (Ezek. xvi. 30).

On the contrary, we know that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is, in the sight of God, of great price. But I think that the woman here pictured has a pleasant dash of the masculine about her intelligence and heart; meek and gentle, but a woman of spirit; imperial, but not imperious.

So the royal lady brought before us is characterised by a masculine power of *thought*, while pursuing her way with womanly grace, intuitiveness, and tact.

And once more we venture to pause and say, Be not discouraged if the picture is one of perfection; for doubtless this is an ideal picture suggested by life. Perhaps King Lemuel's mother, as she fain would have seen herself, now pictures the wife she would have for her son. The standard, then, is perfection. The Divine standard always is; so that we may ever have room for growth and improvement. And I am sure you would not reduce the standard if you could.

The picture, moreover, is repeated (practically) in 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, 1 Pet. iii. 1–6; it is therefore surely worth the attention of every woman who would grow in grace.

In that monosyllable "grow" is the true secret of continued attractiveness on the part of either sex for the other. Yes, if few men possess such a wife as is here portrayed, yet let her but resolve to grow, and the heart of her husband will safely trust in her; he will consider her price above rubies, imperfect though she be; for it doth not yet appear what she shall be.

This woman was scarce at the time under notice; for our poem opens with a question: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." Such a one is not only eminently desirable, but how she is missed when absent—more than lost jewels! She is a treasure; so that we are not surprised at the further comment, "Her husband shall have no need of spoil."

Of this interesting lady we find it clearly implied that *she makes it her business to please her husband.* It is really the woman of spirit and intelligence who does this, and who is truly most submissive. She likes her husband to be ruler; realising the old Scriptural doctrine that woman was made for the man, and not man for the woman, she seeks to fulfil that Divine mission; if she rules, it is by obedience: like Sarah obeying her husband, calling him lord, and evermore commended. Yes, it is the imperial woman who does this: Sarah, the *princess;* and she is the last to urge the elimination of the obedience clause from our venerable marriage service.

Her carriage is such that her husband trusts her.

Does she go forth?—he trusts her; does she stay at home?—he trusts her; does he go forth at duty's call?—he trusts her; has he a secret?—his heart doth safely trust in her; has he plans?—his heart doth safely trust in her; for it is his own: these two are one, and have no separate interest. And one glance of her eye gives him a greater sense of companionship and support than all the chatter of the world.

Therefore he has no need of spoil. Even in those ruder days he had no need to build his house on the foundation of human bodies. Nor does such a one envy or covet the finest house he sees. The image of his royal wife rises before him, and he scorns the thought.

Of this good woman we are told that she is not weary of well-doing; in other words, "she will do her husband good, and not evil, all the days of her life." Very comprehensive words are these, revealing a sublime patience and a touching constancy. For it is not merely remarked that she is good to her husband during *his* life, but, with a touch of exquisite poetry, we are informed that she will do him good all the days of *her* life: faithful unto death, whether it be her lot to depart first or to remain after the husband is called away. Even then she has a high office to fulfil in behalf of his name and memory.

Pathetic and beautiful, then, is the picture of the faithful wife in the study, in the office, in the room of the departed; arranging his papers with loving, reverent hand; assorting his well-loved books; settling his affairs; embalming his memory so that it "smells sweet in death and blossoms in the dust"; beautifying all these engagements and magnifying all these offices as she looks at them through the tears that fill her eyes: doing all this, not for a brief passing hour, but "all the days of her life."

But in other ways she is a wife—a weaver; and, in one sense, a spinster still. Girls did the spinning, I suppose, and were called spinsters; married women the weaving, and therefore called wives. And a true wife weaves more than cotton or wool. She shapes character, she weaves destiny.

This good woman was not ashamed to work with her hands. Hence we are told, "she eateth not the bread of idleness," even though she need not work for a living. Thus, "she seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." Her lamp burns—"goeth not out by night." And as she bends over the little frocks that will get frayed, the little socks that will get perforated, and the little jackets that will share the scrapes of hearty boys, it might be pathetically and playfully remarked of her work—"It is never too late to *mend*." As with the student, her work sometimes smells of the midnight oil.

For all that, she rises early, "while it is yet night," to give her servants and children breakfast, to send all cheerfully about their work. Next to family worship, a sweet, simple, appetising breakfast is a means of grace for the day. Beginnings are important. "Those that have a family to take care of should not love their bed too well in a morning," remarks Matthew Henry. And we should sometimes find it a profitable study to observe the early risers of the Bible—from Abraham to Joshua, from Joshua to Jesus—and the work they did. "They that seek me early shall find me." "He who would thrive must rise at five." This good lady, then, is an early riser. She gets a good start, and pursues her way calmly and tranquilly, like the sun, who always rises betimes. Then, breakfast over, she seeks her wool and flax, and "putteth forth her hands"—her ornaments, "the spindle and the distaff." Thus she is a keeper at home.

And now with regard to food.

Care, system, and pleasant variety characterise this department in her hands. "She bringeth her food from afar; she is like the merchants' ships." She does not restrict herself to the supply immediately at hand. What she can there procure is agreeably supplemented. Pleasing variety, splendid simplicity, a good homely article pleasantly and skilfully prepared: such is her aim.

This is an important subject.

For, *we are what we eat*. It is, therefore, the object of this lady to blend the solid and the aërial in the food department: such as will give plodding staying power on the one hand (for the prosier struggles of life), and wing power on the other (for the flights of the mind). This, therefore, is more than a matter of animal gratification. Hence we have so much in the Bible about eating and drinking; and our blessed Lord Himself began (and ended) His mission at table. And this lady takes eager interest in the subject, not only procuring good things, but dispensing them to her maids, so that there shall be neither stint, provoking to rebellion, nor excess, tempting to waste and extravagance.

And at the same time she allots the work as well as the food—visions of refreshment relieving the duller programme of labour. System such as this costs some pains and trouble, but ever brings joy in its train, and saves greater pains and trouble.

Personally, this lady is strong—a sound mind in a sound body; and she takes some pains either to retain or to increase her strength. "She strengtheneth her arms." This would indicate, I think, that she takes exercise. Now, without entering upon the subject of gymnastics, we may fittingly urge the benefits of a daily walk. Quickening the circulation, expanding the lungs, oxygenating the blood, dispelling gloomy melancholy humours, blowing away the cobwebs of the mind, giving food for thought, promoting cheerfulness, often bringing the matron home happy and hungry as a school-girl: it proves a gospel indeed to herself and the dear ones around her. But, alas! how truly do many of the sisters of this lady plead that they have no time. Perhaps, however, they would find that the hour seemingly sacrificed would be compensated by additional power for the daily routine, their work being done with increased facility, and daily proving less of a "drag." (This lady, by the way, can walk, I know, because her foot is not trammelled in an angular boot, marring her peace of mind, and aggravating, if not inducing, neuralgia.)

Her agreeableness is further increased by the beauty of her garments—"silk and purple." How "nice"! But, rich and good (rather than gay) as her clothing is, she herself transfigures her clothing. At the same time, clothing always reacts upon the mind and

person, and if good and comfortable, makes an agreeable person still more attractive and at ease.

We are, therefore, pleased to find from this inspired picture that the model woman is well dressed. Nor is the pleasant doctrine in any wise contradicted in two well-known passages of Scripture. The first of these is 1 Peter iii. 3, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel." This does not preclude the use of the things mentioned. But it urges that woman should not *depend* on these for ornament—the true ornamentation coming from within, from the heart and mind, and not from without. The other passage is in Isaiah iii., and enumerates a list of ornaments at such length as quite surprises one, coming from a masculine pen. But we are glad to learn from reliable commentators that the words are directed against the priestesses of Astarte, and not the well-dressed Jewish ladies.

Her surroundings are like herself, and summed up in the one word "tapestry": a general term, to indicate that her home is subdued, but beautiful and inviting in its aspect. Her bed-rooms make you restful and sleepy; her dining-room makes you hungry—but thankful; her drawing-room makes you wide awake, tasteful, and cheerful; her (husband's) study makes you thoughtful; while her *boudoir*, if you are permitted to enter, you find to be no *pouting*-chamber, as the word means, but a sanctum, sweet with thought and prayer, a holy retreat, where she communes with God, and devises loving schemes for the good of husband and children, and also for the world, as far as she can reach it.

And in the olden time she used to make her husband look well—as indeed she does yet—as, with garments made by her tender skilful fingers, he felt all day long as if the mantle of her love was upon him, while all eyes were fixed upon the beauty of his robe.

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom"; what she says is thoughtful and suggestive, and sets you thinking too, as she stirs the pulses of your mind to pleasant activity. "The law of kindness is on her lips." It is a law to herself; she makes it a law for others; in her presence you cannot say the mean and spiteful word, though she does not in words forbid you.

And when her husband comes home cross, she—what? Well, there was once a woman who had a very cross husband, and she went to seek the advice of her minister, who said, "Always greet him with a smile." In a month's time she brought that minister a couple of fine fowls, as an imperfect expression of her gratitude for a changed husband.

How thoughtful and considerate is this lady! "She looketh well to the ways of her household." She knows how things are going, how they are likely to go. She studies character, and not only her own, but that of her husband, her children, her servants; not as a cold critic, but in the endeavour to correct all their faults.

She studies their comfort. "All her household is clothed in scarlet." So "she is not afraid of the snow." Don't her children make a bonny picture in their warm scarlet against the white background of snow? This sagacious lady discovered long ago what the wise tell us to-day, that in winter we should be brilliantly clad. ("Double garments," the expositors read: quite so, but they may have been scarlet, for all that.)

Again and again throughout the chapter we are reminded of her shrewdness, industry, and sagacity. "She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She eateth not the bread of idleness. She perceiveth (*can see*) that her merchandise is good. Her candle goeth not out. Her hands hold the distaff. She delivereth girdles to the merchants." Alike with her exports and imports, she enriches the household. Well may she "rejoice in time to come." And her example is a reminder to every housewife that sickness or disaster may lay the husband aside; and the example puts the pertinent questions—Can *you* develop the resources of home? and what is *your field?*

Yet she is equally benevolent and beneficent. She gets—but *gives;* and so heartily, for "she stretcheth out her hand to the poor" with such a pleasant little thrust when they come to her; and when they do not come to her, she goes to them, "reaching forth her hands to the needy" (in the distance), seeking out the broken-down who are bleeding in secret. Away she goes to them upon the least hint. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." Yes, she is a *lady*—a *loaf-giver;* and she makes her husband a *lord*—a *loaf-getter*, whoever he is.

Last, but not least, she is devout. "She feareth the Lord." Like Mary, she sits at her Master's feet, and, possessed of the one thing needful, she can go through work and trouble with serenity of mind. Like Luther, the more work she has to do the more time she gives to prayer.

Nor are we left to imagine the joy and blessing that fall to her lot. A delightfully feminine touch is given (verse 25) to describe her innate satisfaction:—

"Strength and honour are *her clothing*"; which is another way of remarking that she has a joy even greater than that afforded by her silk and purple.

Better still, "her children arise, and call her blessed."

And better still, "her husband praiseth her." That is her great joy. And he is recognised "in the gate, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." And her works praise her and speak for her, even when she is called hence, like Dorcas.

Enough then, when all is over and her toils are ended, when the hand of death is chilling her busy fingers, stilling her noble heart, and filming over her eyes with the night-dew, when husband and children gather round her bed, too sorrowful to speak; enough if she sees her true self mirrored in their eyes, and if their silence tells her more eloquently than words: "*Many have done well, but thou excellest them all*"; enough if her children's children will feel the touch of her vanished hand; enough, as she passes away to fall at the feet of Him who will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant;" enough, as she walks with Him, evermore to see that her work lives on, and, like pebble dropped in lake, moves in ever-widening circles, on, on, *ad infinitum*.

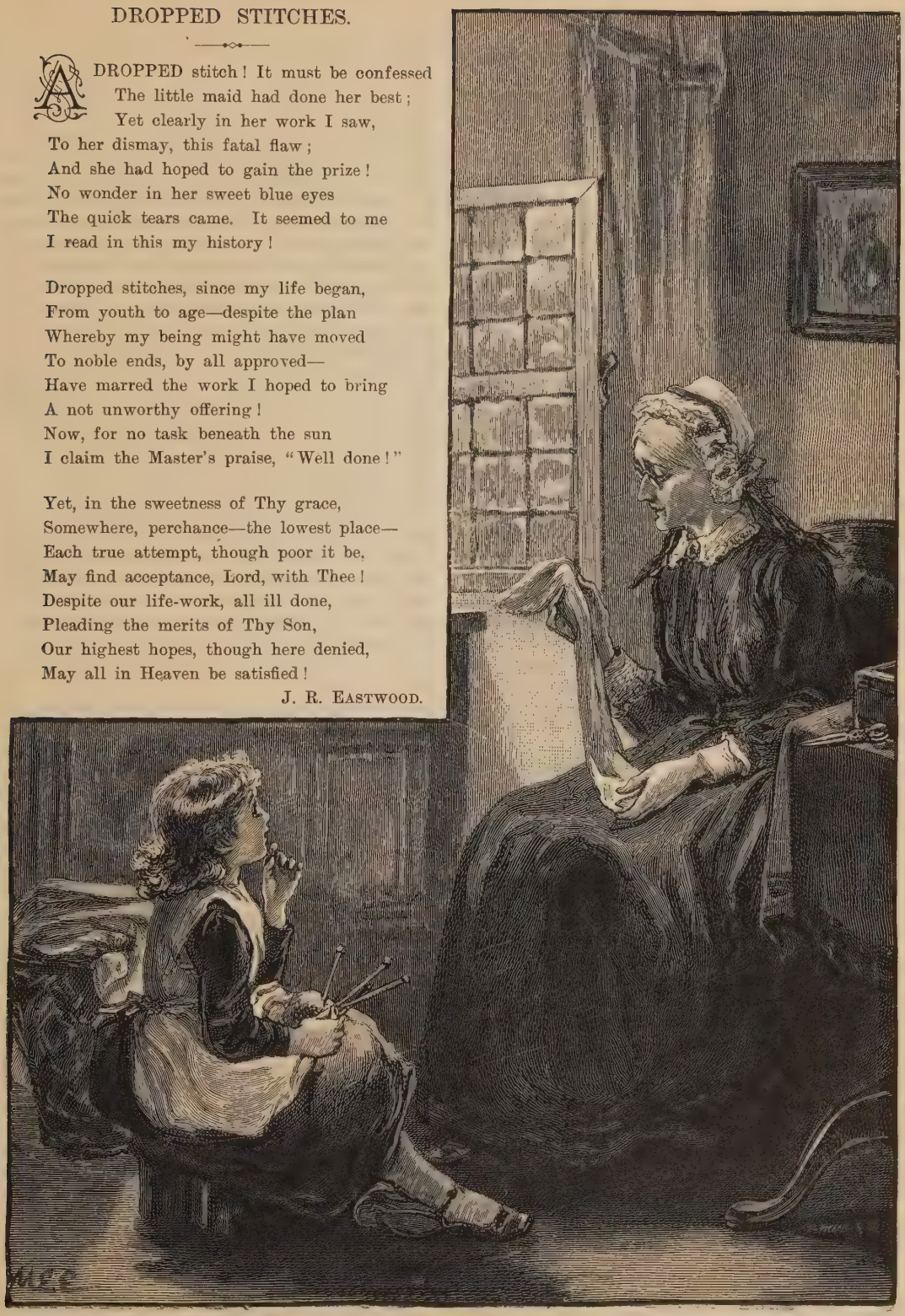
DROPPED STITCHES.

A DROPPED stitch! It must be confessed
The little maid had done her best;
Yet clearly in her work I saw,
To her dismay, this fatal flaw;
And she had hoped to gain the prize!
No wonder in her sweet blue eyes
The quick tears came. It seemed to me
I read in this my history!

Dropped stitches, since my life began,
From youth to age—despite the plan
Whereby my being might have moved
To noble ends, by all approved—
Have marred the work I hoped to bring
A not unworthy offering!
Now, for no task beneath the sun
I claim the Master's praise, "Well done!"

Yet, in the sweetness of Thy grace,
Somewhere, perchance—the lowest place—
Each true attempt, though poor it be,
May find acceptance, Lord, with Thee!
Despite our life-work, all ill done,
Pleading the merits of Thy Son,
Our highest hopes, though here denied,
May all in Heaven be satisfied!

J. R. EASTWOOD.



THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS.

BY FAY AXTENS.

CHAPTER XIII.

RETURN of Richard Hardy to Carsthorpe was looked upon by one person in anything but a favourable light; that person was Will Lawley. It was not that he objected to the black sheep being received back again into the fold, or that he had altogether lost his affection for his old friend and playmate; but he considered that he had chosen a very inopportune time for putting in an appearance. Until Richard came, Will's summer-day life had seemed to glide on in complacent serenity; the cares and anxieties that harassed and perplexed the minds of others passed him by unharmed. He had no thought or desire beyond the pleasure of the moment, no troubles that a little diplomatic contrivance could not successfully dispel. He looked on things outwardly through the rose-coloured spectacles of a sanguine disposition: as to inward vision, he had not made the cultivation of it a habit, and the faculty had become almost dormant from disuse.

The arrival of Rosamond Wylde had made life at Lawley Manor not simply endurable, but extremely pleasurable. She had a lover, it was true, but not by any means an exacting one, and consequently Will was able to enjoy almost as much of her society as he chose to claim. It had not taken him long to discover that Rosamond, besides being a very beautiful girl, was a lively and agreeable companion. At first he had no intention of allowing himself to be captivated by her charms, yet insensibly his feelings were becoming compromised more and more deeply. It needed but the presence of a rival in Miss Wylde's favour to show him that he had been indulging himself in a fool's paradise, and building castles of happiness on a foundation utterly insecure. Sir John had spoken truly enough when he said that Will was too honourable to attempt to engage Miss Wylde's affection; but he had reckoned without his host in affirming that his son would therefore be proof against that young lady's fascinations. So long as there had been no one to dispute Will's precedence, all had gone well; but when there came another to share the privilege of Rosamond's society—one, too, whose claim of prior acquaintance would not be gainsaid, and who must also be treated with the courtesy of a guest—matters began to assume a different aspect. It is never a pleasant experience to find oneself set aside, and Will was not slow to perceive that his old friend was gradually but surely taking that place in Rosamond's favour which formerly it had been *his* especial privilege to enjoy. The fact that Rosamond allowed it did not make him feel any the more kindly towards Dick, though he was far too proud to show openly that he resented it. The petulant frown which opposition always provoked was, however, a sufficient indication that Will felt himself aggrieved; and though he would scarcely have cared to own it to himself, his gay, sunny temper seemed at times to be in danger of undergoing a serious change. Rosamond, however, heedless and fickle in her friendships as she undoubtedly was, never liked entirely to alienate her admirers, and she therefore took pains to conciliate Will whenever he seemed inclined to hold aloof, making up for little acts of neglect by conferring on him some special mark of favour. From the very first Will had warmly championed Rosamond's "cause," for which reason he considered he had a particular right to her friendship. She had confided to him in the early days of their acquaintance all the story of her wrongs, and, though Will's sense of justice enabled him fully to appreciate Lestrange's action in the matter of the will, yet he agreed with Rosamond in thinking that her lover might have shown more sympathy with her, and rather less anxiety to displace her from that position which she felt ought to have been hers by right. Rosamond's representations of her sufferings on the occasion of her father's second marriage had won for her his fullest sympathy, and he felt at times indignant with Anthony for what he considered his heartless disregard of Rosamond's feelings.

Anthony and Will had never been on very intimate terms, for Will's gay, buoyant, butterfly nature seemed absolutely incapable of understanding the intrinsic worth of Lestrange's graver and more solid disposition. They were complete opposites in nearly every respect—a circumstance which, instead of attracting them to each other, as is sometimes the case, repelled any attempt prompted by courtesy or kind feeling to closer mind-contact. Young Lawley regarded Anthony's anxieties with but scant interest, and though he was in reality in possession of a piece of information that would have been extremely valuable, he had given so little thought to the matter, that he was scarcely aware of the fact. He did, it is true, confront Richard with the statement that he had himself seen him at Greychester; but Dick, who was not easily to be thrown off his guard, received the statement with so much show of scornful surprise that Will was driven to doubt his own conviction.

"Well, my dear fellow, if you've any doubts on the subject," said Dick, "I can positively prove to you that on the day in question I was at a public dinner in New York. I keep a little diary, you know, and jot things down now and then just to keep count of the days. They have such a rum way of going when a

fellow's always on the trot. Here's the entry; you can look at it, if you like."

"Oh no, thank you. I don't wish to doubt your word. But I never saw a more striking likeness, that's all."

"I should think you had a rather bad opportunity of judging," remarked Dick, with a casual laugh, "considering you have never seen me with a beard, and don't know what I should look like. You say that fellow had a beard?"

"Yes," admitted Will. "Of course, I may have been mistaken."

"I wish you had given him a slap on the back," observed Dick. "It would have saved you a lot of uneasiness, though it might not have been pleasant for you at the time. However, I have done my best to set your mind at rest, and that is all I can do."

"Oh! it's all right," said Will. "Of course, it makes no difference either way. In fact, I had scarcely given it a thought, but your turning up so soon after brought it back to my mind."

Will was not quite satisfied with Dick's explanation, but did not think it a matter worth further consideration. The circumstance of his having ultimately arrived upon the scene *in propriâ personâ* troubled him a good deal more, especially as it obliged him to face the very unpleasant fact that he had fallen deeply in love with a girl whose affections he was bound in honour not to try to win.

He was sitting in the verandah one very hot afternoon, moodily musing over these things, when Rosamond, looking like a vision of loveliness in her cool white gown, came through the open French window, and advanced smilingly towards him. A bunch of crimson roses nestled amongst the soft folds of lace, and she carried a large fan of peacock feathers.

"All alone, Mr. Lawley?" said she, in her most persuasive tones. "I hope I didn't disturb you. You look as gloomy as Hamlet interviewing his father's ghost."

Will raised himself from his lounging attitude, and placed the cushions for her on a chair beside him.

"I hope you are come to enliven my gloominess, Miss Rosamond," he said.

"You must tell me the cause of it, then," she replied, "or I can't promise a cure."

"I am afraid," returned Will, with a meaning glance, "a complete cure would require more than your inclination would extend to, even were it in your power; but your presence is sufficient to effect a temporary one."

"That sounds very pretty, Mr. Lawley. You have evidently mastered the art of complimenting."

"I never compliment *you*, Miss Rosamond."

Rosamond waved her fan and shook her head with a deprecatory smile.

"I say, Miss Rosamond," said Will, after a pause, "how long have you known Dick Hardy?"

"How long have I known him?" repeated Rosamond, turning away her head to hide the startled colour that always deepened in her cheeks at the sudden mention of Richard's name. "Really, I hardly know. I don't count time by days and weeks, as most people do, and I don't quite know how to reckon back. Are you very anxious for the exact date?"

"Oh no," said Will, laughing. "I need not trouble you so far; but I will own to being a little curious on the subject. I wondered whether the acquaintance dated back one year or two, or an indefinite number."

"Oh, well, if you will allow so large a margin, perhaps I might fix it some time between one and two years."

"You met him first in Rome?"

"Yes," replied Rosamond hesitatingly, "I think so."

"Before your father's death?"

"Oh yes, a long time."

"And after that you saw nothing more of him till you met him here?"

"I may have seen him since. People are always knocking up against each other when they are travelling about, are they not? My recollections are not very distinct. I don't think Felicia much like her brother, do you?" she continued, anxious to give the conversation a different turn. "What a very nice-looking girl she is! I mean to get her to visit me in town some day, and introduce her into society. She would make quite a sensation, I am sure. She has such a stately air, and seems altogether so different from other girls one meets. It is a great shame she should waste her sweetness on this desert air. She is not half appreciated here, is she?"

"No, not in one way," said Will, colouring slightly at this warm eulogy on Felicia; for he had not forgotten that two months before he had thought her the loveliest and most lovable girl in the world, and he felt a little ashamed of his changed feelings with regard to her. It was an episode in his life he scarcely cared just now to look back upon, and Rosamond, who guessed pretty shrewdly the state of affairs, was quick enough to see that she had successfully turned the tables on him.

"Not in any way, I think, Mr. Lawley," she returned, with an arch glance. "I sometimes think Anthony is the only person who really appreciates Felicia enough; he is always talking about her sweetness and unselfishness, and generally singing her praises. Why do you lift your eyebrows? I assure you I am not joking. He admires her very much. Ah! here he comes. I will ask him if it is not quite true."

"What is that, dear?" asked Anthony, who at this moment made his appearance on the verandah with a book in his hand.

"I was just telling Mr. Lawley how much you admire Felicia, and he appears incredulous, so I appeal to you to confirm the statement," said Rosamond, with a saucy look up at him.

"Why incredulous?" asked Anthony, with a smile which showed plainly that the point of Rosamond's remark had passed him unharmed.

"You misunderstood me, Miss Rosamond," retorted Will, who wished Anthony further, and felt ruffled in consequence. "I think it extremely likely."

"Yes, of course," said Anthony blandly. "I think we are all agreed in admiring Miss Hardy—are we not? I am glad to find Bert is very happy, and is behaving himself beautifully. Mr. Hardy says it is quite a pleasure to have him."

"Have you been to the Rectory to-day?"

"No; I met Mr. Hardy this morning, and we had a long talk. I think the arrangement will prove satisfactory on all hands. Would you like to come and play tennis, Rosamond? It is much cooler now, and we shall have plenty of time for a game before dinner."

Rosamond agreed, and they went away together, leaving Will, who had languidly declined the invitation to accompany them, a prey to morbid and melancholy reflections.

CHAPTER XIV.

As the weeks went by it became more and more evident that Anthony's difficulty with regard to Bertram had been successfully solved. He was therefore now at liberty to turn his undivided attention to the more serious question of the missing will.

It was already nearly twelve months since the death of Colonel Wylde, and, though Mr. Lestrange had, by his own personal efforts and also through his solicitors, been using every endeavour to discover by what means the will had been abstracted, he had not been able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. His task was all the more difficult because, at the time of the Colonel's illness, he was himself confined to his room with a malady of a somewhat serious nature, and thus was obliged to take on the evidence of others the events that had transpired during that period. The facts he elicited were these:—When it became evident to the physicians that the Colonel's disorder was likely to assume a dangerous character, his daughter, who was spending the winter in London, was at once communicated with. She came to Wyldeholme, and during her stay there, was visited by relatives and friends, some of whom were well known, whilst others were strangers. There were, however, neither relatives nor guests staying in the house during the whole period, and none but Miss Wylde, the doctors, the nurse, and the Colonel's valet Claydon, were admitted to his room, his condition being considered too critical to allow any excitement. Two days before Colonel Wylde's death, Mr. Lestrange, whose anxiety was evidently retarding his progress towards convalescence, received from his medical adviser a reluctant permission to travel, and he at once went to Wyldeholme, where he found his *fiancée* in a state of unusual agitation. When questioned as to the cause of her concern, she complained that she had been much distressed by having to receive so many visitors, but as they sometimes came from a long distance, she felt she could not always refuse to see them. The housekeeper, an elderly woman, who had been many years in the Colonel's service, afterwards informed Mr. Lestrange that a gentleman whose name was unknown to her had called that day and detained Miss Wylde all the afternoon in conversation in the library. She thought it extremely inconsiderate under the circumstances, as he was evidently only a casual acquaintance of Miss Wylde's, and could not possibly have any interest in Colonel Wylde's illness.

Anthony felt vexed at the occurrence for Rosamond's sake, as it seemed to have excited her at a time when she needed a little respite from social duties, and he advised Rosamond to give orders that none but relatives should be admitted.

Colonel Wylde's condition seemed decidedly improved on the night of Anthony's arrival. He was quite conscious, and able to converse with his future son-in-law, whom he had been anxiously awaiting, as he was fully aware that his illness would ultimately prove fatal. He told Anthony that his affairs were in perfect order with the exception of the somewhat singular fact that two wills were in existence, one of which, the former, was in the hands of his solicitors; the other, a later one in favour of Bertram, of which Anthony was executor, he had retained in his own possession, and it might be found in a safe in the library. Being desirous of effecting some slight alterations in the matter of smaller bequests, he wished for an interview with his solicitors, and requested Mr. Lestrange to communicate with them to that effect, and at the same time inform them of the existence of this later will, and instruct them to destroy the one in their possession.

During this interview, the nurse being absent, Anthony fancied he heard a slight noise in the anteroom, which was separated from the sick-room only by a curtain, and, as the conversation was of so private a character, he thought proper to investigate the cause. He drew back the curtain just in time to see the figure of Claydon the valet disappearing through the opposite door. Finding, however, that he had been observed, the man turned and apologised obsequiously for his intrusion, saying that his master's medicine had just arrived, and he thought it would be needed at once. Mr. Lestrange did not feel quite comfortable about this incident, though the valet's manner was apparently open and honest.

Other events, however, put it for a time out of his mind. That night it became evident to all that the improvement in Colonel Wylde's condition was only fictitious: he grew rapidly worse, and died at an early hour on the following morning. Anthony now had his hands full. All the arrangements for the funeral devolved on him, taxing to the uttermost the little strength that remained after his own severe illness. Besides this he had the painful task of endeavouring to console Rosamond, whose agitation appeared to be uncontrollable. Anthony's experience through a somewhat lengthened courtship led him to the conclusion that Rosamond, though impulsive and affectionate, was not a girl of very strong emotions, and he was consequently rather surprised at the amount of feeling she exhibited. She looked white and worn, and in her heavy black draperies made a most pathetic figure. All the love and tenderness in Anthony's nature was stirred to its depth, and his thoughtful anxiety for her in her trouble so occupied his mind that he quite overlooked the curious fact that the summons despatched to the family solicitors on the night before Colonel Wylde's death brought no immediate reply. A later communication, informing them of his demise, was the only one that received attention.

When, however, a member of the firm arrived upon the scene, Anthony learnt to his surprise that this letter, sent by him in accordance with Colonel Wylde's instructions, had never been received, and that they

were still in ignorance of the existence of any other will than the one held by them, which had now been brought to be read in due course. Although somewhat staggered at this information, Anthony did not attach a great deal of importance to it, till the lawyer, following his instructions, proceeded to unlock the iron safe in which the will had been deposited, and, after a careful and thorough examination, made the startling announcement that the document was nowhere to be found.

Then it was that this circumstance, together with others seemingly unimportant, came back with vivid significance to Anthony's mind. He remembered the unusual hesitancy, the strange reticence which he had observed (however casually) in the valet's manner ever since that night when he caught him, as he fancied, eavesdropping, and heartily he reproached himself for the thoughtless negligence through which he had allowed this man to escape; for, as it happened, two days previously Claydon had come to him in great distress, saying that his father was dangerously ill, and requesting permission to leave. Being of the kindest disposition, Anthony had entirely forgotten his suspicions, and having made the same settlement with regard to wages as he intended doing with those servants who remained, he had allowed him to depart

"'I hope I didn't disturb you.'"—*p.* 283.

without further questions than such as kind feelings prompted.

Vague as were his suspicions, Anthony could not help feeling in this unexpected crisis that the only person who could have thrown light on the subject had taken himself off. In the meantime the utmost consternation prevailed; everybody asked questions which nobody could answer, and it would have been difficult to say who, of all the persons assembled on the occasion, was most bewildered and perplexed.

As to Rosamond, she seemed scarcely able to comprehend the full meaning of this unlooked-for circumstance, and it was not until Anthony explained the whole matter to her that she could grasp the situation sufficiently to enable her to understand and answer the pointed questions the lawyer felt bound to put to her. Of course, it was patent to all that the will had been abstracted with design, but the motive for the act remained in the deepest obscurity.

It was natural that suspicion should rest both upon Rosamond and Anthony, as being the only persons who could have any real interest in the disposal of the property, and also as being the only persons admitted to the Colonel's confidence during the last days of his life. When the first shock of surprise was over, Lestrange realised with a feeling akin to dismay the position in which he was placed, but his chief anxiety was for Rosamond, lest any rumours should reach her ears of an aspect of affairs unlikely to suggest itself to her innocent girlish mind. He used every effort to shield her from closer examination than was absolutely necessary, out of tender regard for her feelings; and, indeed, Rosamond's repeated asseverations that she knew nothing at all about the matter, and her extreme distress and concern, induced the legal gentlemen to spare her as far as was possible. Search having been made without result for the missing will, there was nothing to be done but to prove the former one, under which Miss Wylde became heiress to all her father's property, pending the discovery of the rightful document.

As soon, however, as Mr. Lestrange had sufficiently recovered his health to be able to attend to business matters, he resolved to take definite steps towards endeavouring to clear both Rosamond and himself from false and dishonouring imputations. He therefore took the earliest opportunity of laying before his solicitors, Messrs. Russell and Grimsby, his suspicions against Claydon, and a strict search was instituted for the valet, but no trace of him could be found. His movements after leaving Wyldeholme could not be discovered. He had not been seen in his native place, and it was conjectured that he had left the country; which fact, of course, tended to increase suspicion.

In the meanwhile the establishment at Wyldeholme was broken up and the house closed, while Miss Wylde, under the escort of friends, went abroad for change of scene and air. Anthony, who felt unable under existing circumstances to leave England, took the poor little boy who was the indirect cause of all this trouble into his bachelor home in London.

To a certain extent matters seemed for the present to be settled, the possibility of recovering the will in favour of Colonel Wylde's young son being extremely vague. Anthony, however, was fully determined not to let the matter rest, but his health for some time prevented him from taking any active interest in the inquiries which were being carried on.

Months went by without any trace or clue being discovered, until Mr. Lestrange made the visit long talked of to Lawley Manor. When walking one day with Will down one of the principal streets of Greychester, it happened that he came almost face to face with the very person for whom search had been so long fruitlessly made. He followed him apparently unnoticed, and found that his business in Greychester, if any, had been transacted, that he was bound for the railway station, and that his destination was London. He at once telegraphed the information, and from that time the movements of Mr. Claydon were under the cognisance of a private detective.

But the difficulties of the case were not yet overcome, for the evidence against Claydon being based on a mere suspicion, and there being no real ground to work upon, the solicitors hesitated about taking any definite steps. It was probable that before long the evidence would develop itself, and would afford more reasonable scope for action.

For the present Anthony remained at Lawley Manor, but was in constant communication with the solicitors, making occasional visits to London as circumstances required.

One morning, soon after Bertram had been settled at Carsthorpe Rectory, Mr. Lestrange sat in the inner office of Messrs. Russell and Grimsby in confidential conversation with the senior partner.

He had been telling him of the arrangement he had made, and discussing with him the question of the child's future prospects.

"I am afraid, Mr. Lestrange," said Mr. Russell, "our difficulties are not in the way of being cleared up. Claydon seems to lead a very retired life; his habits are quiet and exemplary, and it appears hard to fix upon anything tangible."

"If one could but discover whether the man had any motive for committing such a crime, it seems to me it would simplify matters," said Anthony.

"His motive, whatever it was, has apparently brought gain to him in an indirect manner," observed Mr. Russell. "It could not possibly have affected him personally whether Colonel Wylde's property went to his son or his daughter."

"That is the curious part of it. It is scarcely reasonable to suppose anyone would venture on so daring an act out of pure mischief or to gratify petty malice."

"You never heard Colonel Wylde speak against Claydon's character?"

"Never. I always considered him a valued and trusted servant."

"Exactly. There is scarcely a particle of evidence against him. Had he remained at Wyldeholme until after the funeral it would hardly have occurred to you to suspect him, would it?"

"No, not without further cause; but, as you are aware, he left on false pretences."

"That is true, and has not been heard of since. I think we shall not be able to do anything until we

can satisfactorily account for the period which has elapsed between that time and this."

"I don't see how that is possible."

"It may take time, Mr. Lestrange," said the lawyer blandly; "but it is worth while to wait. I do not believe in hurrying matters. I wish you had taken note of the person or persons with whom he was talking the day you saw him in Greychester. It might have helped matters considerably."

"I wish I had, but my recollections of the circumstance are very indistinct. Indeed, I scarcely saw the persons: they had already turned away, and were entering the hotel. I believe it was a gentleman and a lady, but I only caught a glimpse of the lady, and the man I should not have recognised had I met him ten minutes after."

"It is unfortunate. You may, perhaps, have had personal intercourse with that very individual since."

Anthony looked surprised.

"It is possible, but I do not think it likely."

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders, and pursed up his lips.

"One never knows. In matters like these one needs to keep one's eyes open."

"Is there any other person you suspect?"

"Well, yes," said Mr. Russell, with a short laugh. "Some person at present unknown. I think you mentioned, Mr. Lestrange, that this circumstance happened the day before Miss Wylde went to Lawley Manor?"

Anthony considered a moment before replying. The two incidents had evidently no connection in his mind.

"Yes, it was so," he said at last. "Miss Wylde came down from London rather unexpectedly the day following."

"She came from London?"

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"I wonder whether Miss Wylde has ever happened to come across Claydon in her travels?" the lawyer remarked casually.

"Oh no, I think not. Had she done so I feel sure she would have mentioned it to me, as she knows I have some ground for suspecting him. But I will ask her."

"Yes, you might do that. We must seek information from every possible source. A casual meeting might be of the greatest possible assistance. It would give some definite point to work from."

Anthony wondered in himself that he had never thought of this before. He promised Mr. Russell that he would put the question to Rosamond immediately on his return to Lawley Manor, and report to him the result. At first he had thought it almost useless to inquire, feeling sure that Rosamond would herself volunteer the information; but, in thinking the matter over, an uneasy feeling came over him that perhaps she would think herself justified in keeping silence on the subject, as he knew she was not anxious to bring about a different state of things. He tried hard to get rid of a feeling which he knew to be detrimental to the honour of the girl he loved; but the recollection of her words and conduct whenever he had been able to speak to her on the subject reminded him only too forcibly that her sense of justice and of duty was not of the very highest order. Painful as the discovery had been, he felt obliged, in this instance, to look the fact plainly in the face.

CHAPTER XV.

ONE morning during Anthony's absence, Rosamond found, amongst the letters her maid brought her, one bearing the Carsthorpe postmark.

The sight of it caused her to change colour slightly. She put it on one side till she had dismissed the maid, when she at once tore it open, and read as follows:—

"DEAR ROSAMOND,—I want you to come down to the wood, park end, through the new plantation, at three o'clock sharp to-morrow—Tuesday. I suppose your folks will be indulging in a siesta about that time, and won't miss your charming society. Send Master Will on an errand—you know how to arrange that sort of thing. It's very important to keep it quiet. An awkward question might put us in a hole. I needn't explain further.

"Now, don't have a fit of hysterics, but take it easy. If you can't manage it, send me word, but never mind otherwise.—Your devoted, as usual,

"DICK."

Rosamond sat staring at the letter with a perturbed expression of countenance.

When Richard adopted this tone, she always felt instinctively that he had the upper hand, and, whatever turn matters took, meant to retain it. It was not pleasant to know that she was entirely in this man's power; nor did the fact of always being accustomed herself to have the upper hand make it any the more agreeable to contemplate. But it was evident that Dick had some important news to communicate, and she therefore, in spite of a strong disinclination to meet him in this mood, determined to arrange as he wished.

So she made an imaginary indisposition an excuse for sending Will to Greychester alone, on a certain little shopping expedition which they had arranged together on the previous day; and, as soon as lunch was over, and her host and hostess had retired, after their usual custom, the one to her boudoir the other to the library, Rosamond put on her garden-hat, took a book and her parasol, and went away down the terrace steps and across the lawn. She reached the park by a circuitous route, where she took the path that led down to a stile bordering on the woods where Will and Felicia had spent that happy afternoon.

As she came in sight of the stile, she observed the figure of a man leaning against it in a negligent attitude, and knew that she was being waited for. Richard had his back towards her, and did not turn till she came quite close; then he jumped over the stile and came forward to meet her.

"Well, Dick, I have managed to come, you see," said she, with a slight blush.

"Yes, I knew you would," he replied carelessly. "I wonder whether you would be very angry if I told you my note was a hoax, and that I asked you to

come because I want to have you all to myself for a little while?"

An expression of relief came over her face.

"If it was only a hoax, it was very unkind of you. Your note quite frightened me. I thought you must have some dreadful news to tell me."

"Ah, well! wait awhile. Did you bring your smelling-salts?"

"No, Dick. What *do* you mean? How strange you are to-day. Is it a joke or not? If you don't tell me, I will go back again."

"Oh no, my dear!—you would not be so unkind. Let me lift you over. No? Well, if you will be so independent, you must please yourself. After all, you do everything so gracefully, it is quite a pleasure to look at you."

They crossed the stile and went down the path into the wood, through the new plantation, which belonged to the Lawley estate, till they came to the more densely grown and luxuriant part, where a broad pathway opened out before them a fair vista of exuberant foliage and tall stems, through which a glimpse of blue might here and there be seen. It was a very hot afternoon, not blazing with golden light, but overhung with a heavy blue haze. There was not a breath of air stirring. Every leaf hung motionless in the still, soft atmosphere, undisturbed even by the birds, who seemed to have caught the infection, and sat in clusters on the branches, only giving vent to their feelings by an occasional "chirp, chirp."

Dick and Rosamond pursued their way through the lonely woodland avenue, both too much absorbed in their own reflections to notice the manifold beauties that assailed the eye on every side. Dick had placed her hand on his arm, and, as he walked beside her, he looked down on her lovely face, flushed and agitated with conflicting emotions, with a gaze of ardent and unrestrained admiration. She seemed scarcely to notice the intentness of his regard, though it was scarcely possible for her not to be aware of it.

"How quiet you are to-day, Rosamond!" he observed at length. "Are you contemplating a convent and the black veil?"

"Do not be so foolish, Dick! If you were only hoaxing me, you may just as well say so. After all, I should not blame you very much, for I certainly should not have come out such an afternoon as this merely for the pleasure of walking here with you."

Richard gave a loud, amused laugh. "Really, my Lady Rosamond, you are more candid than kind. Take care lest I ask you to retract your words. When does Anthony come back?"

"I don't know. He has gone up to town again about the will."

"Yes," said Richard; "so I suppose. Does he intend to bring it back with him?"

"I don't know what you mean, Dick. I wish you would explain yourself. You can't care very much for me when you are so regardless of my feelings."

"No! So that's what you think, is it? After all I've done and risked to get you what you want, you coolly inform me I don't care for you. It seemed to me hardly necessary to tell you I cared for you more than for any other creature in the world. But that's just the way with you women; you never credit a fellow with having any sentiment in his nature. As to being regardless of your feelings, you had better reserve that stone to shy at Anthony. A pretty lover he is! I wonder how he can have the impudence to pretend he's fond of you!"

"How dare you speak so!" cried Rosamond, flashing an indignant glance at him. In spite of everything, she was still loyal enough to Anthony not to like hearing him spoken ill of. "I think you forget we are engaged."

"Oh dear no—I don't!" said Dick, with a defiant laugh. "I remember it only too well. It makes me just wild, I can tell you, Rosamond, to think that that fellow, who loves you so little, has the right to kiss you as often as he likes, and yet I, who care so much for you, am not allowed to kiss even your hand. But I will some day, never fear. Oh, you needn't look so frightened; I am not going to take a mean advantage unless you positively provoke me to it by those bewitching blushes. But Master Anthony Smoothface will have to make way for me one day—eh, Rosamond?"

Rosamond turned her head aside with a pretty pretence of scorn.

She was far too much of a coquette not to feel gratified by this bold declaration, and, being accustomed to a good deal of extravagant flattery, tried to persuade herself that Richard's words meant no more than many another idle vaunt. She accepted his homage as the natural course of things; but, being a proud girl, liked to think that it was quite in her power to check it when she would.

"Do not talk nonsense, Dick," she said. "You know I don't like it."

"Oh, don't you? Well, forgive me this once. I didn't mean to offend you. By the way, there are one or two things I want to talk to you about. Where's Will this afternoon?"

"At Greychester."

"Oh! Well, I suppose you know they have hunted down Claydon?"

"No! Who told you that?"

"A friend of mine. Better not ask too many questions; it is not always wise. Anthony does not confide in you much, then?"

"He doesn't tell me anything," said she, beginning to feel sorry now that she had so effectually repulsed her lover's confidence. "He thinks I don't want to be troubled with it; and it is not a pleasant subject. What do you mean by 'hunting him down'?"

"Of course, you always knew that Lestrange had his suspicions. Claydon behaved very indiscreetly, no doubt; and those old wiseheads very naturally came to the conclusion that he had good reason for taking himself off last year. It was rather unwise of him, to say the least of it, to walk into the lion's den; but I daresay he thought personal attention to business would be more satisfactory. I could tell you another secret, Rosamond, but you haven't got your smelling-salts, and I don't understand the treatment for hysterics."

"You need not be alarmed; I never have hysterics. Pray tell me," said Rosamond, in an anxious voice.

Dick gave a sidelong look at her, and drew her hand further on his arm, holding it tightly.

"You remember I told you someone spotted me that day in Greychester?"

"Yes."

"It turns out that it was then Claydon got spotted, though not by the same person. He has been kept in quarantine ever since."

"What do you mean?" she asked breathlessly.

"Just this, my dear: that his kind friends are taking such a close interest in his affairs as to make it rather unpleasant for him. As long as he keeps quiet and contents himself with innocent amusements on his native soil, all's well and good; but if he were to consult his own taste, and book his passage to America or elsewhere, they'd pop down on him like shots. In other words, James Claydon would be 'wanted.'"

"I suppose you mean he would be taken up?"

"Exactly. A very clever guess. Just think what a lamentable condition to be in!"

"Oh, Dick, it's dreadful! What is to be done?"

"So far as that goes, he'll have to shift for himself. It has nothing to do with either you or me."

"No, of course not," said Rosamond, evidently much relieved. "I don't think you need have frightened me so, as it makes no real difference to me—or you."

Dick took a letter out of his pocket, and put it into her hand.

"This came to me yesterday," he observed casually. "You had better read it, and tell me what you think."

Rosamond's face grew white as she read.

"Oh, Dick!" she gasped.

"My dear child," said he, soothingly, putting his arm round her unreproved, "don't alarm yourself. There, you see, I told you you would want your salts. How white you look! Let us sit down on these logs till you are better. It was stupid of me to give you that letter. The insolent idiot! I've half a mind to give him a good thrashing!"

"What good would that do?" she cried, turning on him with an angry glance in her eyes. "It is all your fault, Dick—you ought to have managed better. You promised me there should be no further trouble about it, and this is the result of all your fine promises!"

"Oh, of course it's *my* fault!" he retorted, biting his lip hard. "That's just what I expected. As to making promises, I didn't reckon on your dutiful lover taking it into his head to turn up every stone in this way. However, that's neither here nor there. What's done can't be undone. The question now is, how is this fellow going to get out of this scrape?"

"He seems to have a very clear idea on the subject."

"Exactly. But it doesn't fit in with our ideas, does it? Now, look here, Rosamond; it's no use being angry, and putting the blame on everyone in turn. I'm your friend through thick and thin—I needn't tell you that—and if you'll trust to me I'll set it all right—you see—that is, supposing you undertake to do what I tell you. Just sit down for a minute, and I'll give you my suggestions."

They sat down together on some fallen tree-trunks by the side of the path.

Rosamond, who seemed for the time to have forgotten all her usual arch coquetry, clasping her hands nervously together, fixed on her companion a gaze in which fear, indignation, and anxiety seemed struggling for the mastery.

The rest of their conversation was carried on in whispers; but, as Rosamond listened, the clouds gradually cleared off her face, the colour returned to her cheeks, and presently even the dimples came back in a momentary smile.

"You see, after all, my dear," Richard observed presently, still in an undertone, "there is no real reason for alarm. I wouldn't, for the world, have bothered you with this, but I can do nothing without you. However, having got your consent, if it comes to the worst, I'll soon settle it up, and I've no doubt we shall pull through. I think, on the whole, we had better be more careful about keeping our little escapades quiet, don't you? I hope we shan't be caught this afternoon. What's the time? Four-thirty, I declare. We must be going on. I say, how dark it's got!"

While they had been thus absorbed in conversation, a kind of heavy grey gloom had been settling down; a faint breeze had arisen and set all the leaves stirring; the birds left off chirping, and huddled themselves together on the branches; a sighing sound as of murmuring trees, the sure presage of a coming storm, went all through the woodlands. The air seemed yet denser and heavier, and the heat was almost stifling. Dick, observing these signs, started up in a hurry.

"Good gracious, Rosamond! there's a storm coming on. You'll get a drenching, I'm afraid."

Almost as he spoke, a few heavy drops fell upon Rosamond's soft muslin dress, and a moment later a low rumble warned them not to linger. Rosamond, who had the greatest horror of a thunderstorm, sprang to her feet in terror, and, clinging to Richard's arm, followed him as fast as she was able down the path by which they had come.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE storm came on apace; through the quivering lattice-work of green above their heads the great drops fell heavily, and the darkness became almost as dense as if it were night. Dick hurried on as fast as possible, dragging the frightened girl after him, for the thunder-clouds were travelling rapidly in their direction, and he feared lest the storm should break violently before they could reach the open country. He knew that their position was one of peril, and, though danger of any sort on his own account had a kind of fascination for him, he did not like the idea of Rosamond being exposed to it. His main object, therefore, was to get clear of the wood, of which, fortunately, he knew every inch

well, or it would have been difficult in the dim light to discover the intricate path which they were obliged to take. Rosamond followed, without hesitation, the footsteps of her companion along narrow footpaths where the overgrown brushwood scarcely left room to pass, up steep ascents amid fern and bracken and gorse, across the streamlet's course, where the well-worn stones rocked with the flow of the swollen waters, till at last a glimpse of light told them that they had reached the outskirts of the wood.

"Where are we, Dick?" asked Rosamond, looking round with frightened eyes. "I have never been here before. Oh, how I wish we were safe at home!"

As she spoke, a vivid flash of lightning lit up all the landscape around. It appeared to dance amongst the branches of the trees, and then slide downwards in wreaths of light. It was followed immediately by a tremendous peal of thunder, that seemed to shake the ground on which they stood, the sound of which was echoed from end to end of the wood. Rosamond started and hid her eyes.

"Come, Rosamond dear, don't let 's have a scene! There 's no need to be frightened. Why, that 's nothing. It 's only play!"

"Only play!" repeated Rosamond, trying to repress her tears. "Do let us make haste away from these trees. I wish it would go and play elsewhere. I am sure we shall be killed."

"Oh, dear no, we shan't," said Dick coolly, "at least, *I* shan't. No such luck for my family, poor things; and if you stick close to me you'll probably share my good-fortune."

"We are going back by the road? I dare not go across the park."

"No, my dear Rosamond, we are on the Carsthorpe side of the wood. I guess I shall have to take you home to my folks. I didn't want them to know; Floy is so sharp; but it can't be helped. Of course we met 'promiscuous like.' I'll manage that, and make excuses for you at the Manor too."

Rosamond made no demur. She trusted implicitly in Richard's management; and though she knew Felicia entertained the opinion that her intercourse with Dick was more than either would admit, she felt that, in her present condition of mind and body, any refuge was better than none. Perhaps, as she was wearing her thin shoes and her garden hat, Felicia would the more readily believe that their meeting had been a chance one. At any rate, if Dick was willing to risk it, she was not inclined to offer any objection.

They hurried on again through the blinding rain and hail. The lightning in occasional flashes lit up the gloominess of the way, but caused poor Rosamond much uneasiness. Dick pretended to laugh at her fears, but he himself felt some anxiety on her account. She seemed so exhausted, so overwrought and unnerved, that he began to be afraid the result would be serious.

It was quite a new thing for him to think for, or trouble about, anyone but himself, and the unusualness of it tended perhaps to make his anxiety all the stronger.

Rosamond looked a pitiable figure when she presented herself to Felicia's astonished gaze at the Rectory hall door. Her pretty light gown, that had looked so faultlessly fresh and dainty when she started forth, now hung round her like a limp, torn rag. Her hat was soaked through, and her golden hair tossed and dishevelled by the twigs and brambles through which they had to push their way. She was, besides, flushed and breathless, and apparently on the verge of tears. Felicia scarcely stopped to hear Dick's explanation of the state of affairs, but at once took Rosamond away to her own room that she might recover herself and change her dripping clothes.

"Did you ever see such a sight in your life, Floy?" cried Rosamond in agonised tones, as she took a survey of herself in the glass. "What a mercy we did not meet anyone on the Carsthorpe road! I am sure they would hardly have recognised me, would they? Oh dear! I feel faint with fright. You don't know how thankful I was to see your brother: I know I should never have found my way out of that horrible wood alone."

"No, very likely not," said Felicia. "I know what it is to be there in a storm. It is easy to miss one's way. I am rather surprised at your venturing to go there alone, Rosamond. I thought you told me once that you were too nervous to go out by yourself."

"So I am, but I was left all alone to-day, for Will Lawley is gone to Greychester, and Anthony is away, you know."

"He has returned this afternoon," observed Felicia quietly. "I suppose you did not know he was coming. My father met him on his way up from the station."

"Oh, dear!" said Rosamond, her colour rising, and a look of annoyance overspreading her countenance.

There was a moment's pause. Felicia, observing these unlooked-for signs of vexation, maintained a contemptuous silence, and Rosamond was too much absorbed in reflection to speak. At last she broke out in angry, petulant tones, as she generally did when anything went contrary to her wishes. "How tiresome it is of Anthony that he will always do things without letting me know! I suppose he came home to-day to surprise me, just as if I were a child. I hate surprises! He ought to know that by this time."

"Don't blame him rashly on that account, Rosamond," said Felicia, with a slightly ironical smile; "he may perhaps have only consulted his own convenience. But it will be very disappointing for him not to find you at home. I must send a messenger at once, for I suppose Lady Lawley will not know where you are?"

"No," said Rosamond, reddening under the steady gaze of the stately girl who stood beside her assisting her in her toilet. There was always such a calm air of self-possession about Felicia, and in her own home she seemed so completely mistress, that Rosamond, in spite of the fixed idea of her own superior attractions and importance—an idea which, having been early indulged and fostered, had grown into her nature and become inseparable from it—often felt a sense of insignificance in Miss Hardy's presence. On this particular occasion, conscious of having something to conceal, she felt it even more than usual, and though there was really nothing at all extraordinary

in her having gone out without informing Lady Lawley, she yet felt extremely uncomfortable under the ordinary, matter-of-fact questions her hostess put to her.

"I suppose she would never suspect you had gone out of the grounds, then, and would probably send the servants out to look for you? I can imagine she would be in a great fright when the storm came on; and when Mr. Lestrange arrived, of course there would be inquiries made for you."

"Yes, of course," said Rosamond; "it is such a dreadful storm, too: I don't think I ever saw such a violent one; and Anthony knows I am afraid of thunder and lightning. Why are not you afraid, Floy? You look as quiet and unconcerned as if nothing had happened."

Felicia's chin went up a little higher, and an amused smile trembled on the corners of her mouth.

"It never occurred to me to be anything else. A thunderstorm is not a very unusual phenomenon. I only hope the farmers will not suffer any loss," she added.

"You always think first of the farmers, it seems to me," said Rosamond, pouting. "You don't trouble at all about my being drenched through, and half-killed with fright."

"Oh, yes, dear, I assure you I am very sorry indeed!" returned Felicia, moved by the pathetic appeal to a voluntary caress. "There now, I think your toilet is completed, and tea will be quite ready by this time, I expect. Come and have some—you will feel better afterwards; and I will send up at once to the Manor."

They went down-stairs to the dining-room, where a fire had been lighted, which blazed cheerfully in the grate, and the bright copper tea-kettle was singing indefatigably. Bertram was lying on the hearth-rug, amusing himself with a book of rhymes, and entertaining Mr. Hardy, who sat in the large arm-chair by the fireside, with his prattling account of the gaily coloured illustrations; Dick was leaning with his back against the mantelpiece in his usual careless attitude, looking on and listening.

Rosamond came into the room arrayed in one of Felicia's gowns, looking slightly embarrassed and uncomfortable.

Mr. Hardy's kind solicitude for her comfort soon, however, restored her equanimity. The colour came back again into her cheeks, she regained her good spirits, and before long was making her misadventure the subject of playful raillery. It was very seldom that she failed to shine in the company of others; she had an almost irresistible way of attracting all the attention to herself without in the least seeming to do so, and if the circumstances under which she had arrived at the Rectory that afternoon had appeared somewhat strange at first, her gay and artless manner of relating what had befallen her made one forget the inconsistencies which occasionally arose in the narrative.

As they sat laughing and chatting over the tea-table, making up by the brightness indoors for the general air of depression outside, a loud peal of the bell announced a visitor, and a moment later a well-known voice was heard in the hall inquiring first for Miss Wylde and then for Miss Hardy. Rosamond and Dick exchanged glances. Felicia sprang up and moved hastily to the door.

"Mr. Lestrange," she exclaimed: "oh, pray come in. Yes, Rosamond is here, and quite well. Why, how wet you are; have you walked?"

A look of intense relief came over Anthony's countenance as he took the hand she offered him. He forgot to answer her inquiry in his anxiety to assure himself of Rosamond's well-being, but followed her into the dining-room without further delay.

"My dear Rosamond, I have been looking for you everywhere," he exclaimed, rather reproachfully, as he greeted her.

"I am so sorry, Anthony, to have alarmed you all, but I really could not help it. You must not blame me; you must blame the storm," said Rosamond, trying hard to hide the confusion his sudden entrance had occasioned.

"You have not received my message, I am afraid, Mr. Lestrange," said Felicia; "I hoped it would have been in time to save you any anxiety."

"Your message! Have you sent to the Manor, Miss Hardy? That was very kind and thoughtful of you; but I have been out more than an hour, so I probably missed the messenger."

"Have you been looking for me, Anthony?" asked Rosamond.

"Yes, dear. I saw there was a storm rolling up, and one of the gardeners told me he saw you go across the park towards the wood, so I went to find you. I did not know you were coming on to Carsthorpe."

Although he spoke with his usual calm gentleness, Rosamond saw that he was vexed. His manner was strange and altered; altogether he seemed unlike himself. It was such an unusual thing for Anthony to show signs of displeasure or annoyance that the circumstance cast quite a cloud over them all.

"Well, as your search has proved successful, sit down and make yourself comfortable," said the Rector. "Let me take your coat. It seems pretty well soaked through."

Anthony acceded to Mr. Hardy's request, and having, with Dick's assistance, divested himself of his coat and rendered himself generally respectable, he came back to the dining-room and took the seat Felicia offered him at the table beside her. But his equanimity was by no means restored, though Rosamond tried all her arts to bring back the usual serene expression. He received her laughing protestations and excuses in stony silence, as if he desired to put a check on them—neither asking questions nor answering them with his customary directness. Rosamond, noticing this, allowed the conversation to drift on to general topics, and before long, under the influence of Mr. Hardy's genial good-humour and Felicia's kind but quiet hospitality, Anthony's manner gradually thawed. Again he became sensible of that feeling of restfulness and contentment, so subtle and so difficult of explanation, which the presence of this girl exercised over him. Once, looking suddenly at her, he found her clear, grave eyes fixed on him with an expression of sorrowful concern. Her gaze held

"They hurried on again through the blinding rain."—*p.* 290.

him for the moment spellbound: a strange thrill of sympathy seemed to vibrate through his whole being, as if in that gaze his soul had come in contact with hers. The stormy look in his eyes melted away as by magic, and his voice took a softer modulation as he replied to the simple question she had put to him. It was an experience each felt too consciously to venture to repeat, yet both were quite unconscious of its inward depth and meaning. Anthony was content to allow the gentle influences of the Rector's home to soothe and calm his ruffled spirits without inquiring too closely into their origin, while Felicia let her inward feeling rush out in dumb, silent pity for the man who seemed to have proved his capacity both for receiving and giving sympathy, and who was yet apparently doomed to live a life of heart-loneliness.

The carriage came down from Lawley Manor in the evening to fetch Rosamond and Anthony. They had a very silent drive home, for Rosamond was tired and did not invite conversation. She, however, took advantage of her lover's restored composure to rally him on his ill-humour that afternoon. He made no direct reply at the time, but, as he wished her "Good-night," he said that on the following day, when she had recovered from her fatigue, he should be glad of an opportunity of speaking to her in private, as there was something he wished particularly to say to her.

(To be continued.)

LIFE—CHRIST.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR ROBERTS, D.D., ST. ANDREWS.

"For to me to live is Christ."—PHILIP. i. 21.

THERE are some quarters of the heavens in which the stars lie so close together that nothing can be perceived by the eye but an undefined expanse of radiance. The very richness of such spots prevents us from fully analysing them. In other parts of the sky we can distinctly perceive, and accurately number, the various stars which stand out from the dark blue by which they are surrounded; but in such a region, for instance, as the Milky Way, the infinite number of orbs crowded together permits us only to mark and admire the cloudy brilliance which is thus presented to our observation.

Now, there are also such regions to be met with in the firmament of Scripture. Not a few passages must at once be felt by every reader to be most beautiful and suggestive, while, at the same time, it is difficult or impossible to attach to them any very definite signification. Like those brilliant portions of the heavens which irresistibly draw the eye to themselves, but which refuse to be resolved into separate stars, so the parts of Scripture now referred to, although surrounded, so to speak, with more than ordinary splendour, will scarcely submit to our endeavours to fix their exact and exclusive significance. Of such passages, that now before us seems to furnish an eminent example. No one can fail to be struck with its beauty and sublimity; but its very richness is a hindrance to its precise interpretation. When the Apostle exclaims, "To me to live is Christ," he condenses into a few words such a wealth of meaning, that we can scarcely hope to lay hold of the leading idea which may have been present to his mind. There is, as it were, a whole galaxy of Gospel truth set before our view in this passage; but while we are at once impressed by its surpassing grandeur, it will not yield to our efforts to resolve it into the separate stars of which it consists. And hence we find that there are many different opinions as to the exact meaning to be attached to the Apostle's words. They may be regarded as implying either that Christ was the Author of his spiritual life, or that Christ's grace was the support of that life, or that Christ's glory was the great object to which the life of the Apostle was devoted.

Now, it appears to be highly probable that all these thoughts, and perhaps more, were present to the mind of St. Paul when he expressed himself in the striking words under consideration. We need not be anxious, as so many have been, to fix upon any one idea as that which alone is to be regarded as implied in the passage. It seems very unlikely that, if no more than a single thought had now engaged the mind of the Apostle, he would have expressed it in the remarkable language which here lies before us. We are rather to look upon the words, "To me to live is Christ"—words so few, yet so exhaustless—as the result of an intensely earnest effort on the part of the writer to embody in one brief utterance several glowing conceptions, which all arose together in his mind in connection with the Saviour. To Christ he looked as the source and the support of his life; to Him also he looked as the glorious pattern to be imitated in his life; while to Him, too, were the whole energies of that life devoted which the Apostle was then spending upon earth; and all these thoughts together may properly be regarded as embedded in the striking statement contained in the first part of this wonderful verse. According to such a view of the passage, it is, of course, in vain to attempt its exhaustive treatment. All that we can do is to select one or two of the truths which seem clearly to be contained in it, and to illustrate the importance which belongs to these in the case of all professing Christians.

First, then, the words before us imply that *Christ is the Author and the Preserver of the believer's life.*

In one sense, our blessed Lord may be said to be both the source and the support of *all* life; for, says the Apostle in another place, "All things were created by Him, and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." We might, then, properly conceive of the words which here flow from the pen of the Apostle as forming the declaration of everything that lives. "Christ is my life" may, indeed, be regarded as the utterance of all that exists. It is His glory that shines upon us in the mid-day splendour of the sun, His skill that we perceive in the delicately blended tints of the flower, His providence that we see directing all the processes of nature, His infinite wisdom that operates in the various instincts with which the inferior animals have been endowed, and in the mental faculties with which the members of our race are severally gifted, His divine and unwearying power that supports all being, whether inanimate, corporeal, intellectual, or spiritual; so that on everything that lives, from the insect which creeps upon the ground to the eagle that sports in the heavens: from the butterfly that basks in the sun to the angel that worships before the throne, the eye of a believer may see, as it were, inscribed—"Christ is my life."

But it is to spiritual life that we must here specially refer; and there is a very emphatic sense in which this is to be traced to Christ as its Author, and must ever depend on Him as its Preserver. By no one of

the sacred writers is this more fully or emphatically stated than by the Apostle Paul. In regard to the origin of that life which existed in his soul, we hear him declaring that when "dead in sins" he was "quickened together with Christ;" and, in reference to the way in which the life thus begun was preserved, we find him saying, "Christ liveth in me." Thus, then, we reach these two momentous conclusions: that by Christ only can spiritual life be conveyed to our souls, and that through Him alone can that life be preserved and nourished. Before any of us can adopt the language of the Apostle, and say, "To me to live is Christ," we must be savingly united to Him by faith, and have life bestowed upon us by His quickening Spirit. Stand by a tree which, in the very height of summer, remains leafless and bare, as in the depths of winter: observe the sure tokens of death which are presented in the brittle branches and the decaying bark; see how painfully distinct the little bird appears which has for a moment perched upon one of its naked arms, instead of being hidden, as it would have been on a living tree, among luxuriant foliage; and as you look upon the spectacle, consider that it shadows forth the condition of your own soul by nature. So far as human art or effort can go, the state of that tree is hopeless. It might, indeed, be laden with ornaments, it might even be covered with artificial leaves, but nothing except the Creator could arrest its progress in decay, or clothe it anew in the beauty and freshness of vitality. And thus is it naturally with the human soul. Its condition, too, is hopeless for anything man left to himself can accomplish. He may contrive to cover up for a time the evidences of death which it presents, and he may adorn it with many of the natural virtues which are often so attractive, but he cannot restore it to spiritual life, or array it in the beauties of a true holiness. These things, if they are ever effected, must be so by the agency of God Himself; and the means which He has appointed for accomplishing them is a vital union to the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul of the sinner must, through faith, be connected with the Saviour, and in this way become a recipient of that Divine life which flows from Him to all His people when He says to them still, as to His disciples of old, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." And then, just as the tree, in order to live and flourish, must continue in connection with the soil, so must the soul, in order to preserve and develop its life, remain in communion with Christ; for, says He, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me."

Another thought suggested by these words, "To me to live is Christ," is that *the believer lives for Christ:* in other words, that *to Christ's service and glory is the earthly life of the believer willingly devoted.*

This seems, as far as we can judge, to have been the great idea now uppermost in the mind of the Apostle. At the time when this Epistle was written, he was a prisoner at Rome. Within one of the imperial dungeons, and in doubt whether or not he should ever leave it except to die as a martyr, he penned this memorial of his deep interest in the Christians of Philippi, and his heartfelt desire for their spiritual welfare. His days of active usefulness were, perhaps, nearly ended. But, come what might, he had this noble resolution in his breast, that he would both live and die for Christ. If he were spared and released, then what remained of his life should still be spent in the service of the Lord: and if he were soon to die, it should not be without an effort to advance the glory of the Saviour; for, says he in the preceding verse, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

The same words should describe the desire and endeavour of every believer still. There was much, no doubt, that was peculiar in the outward life of St. Paul—in the work which he had to do and the sufferings he was called to endure—but there was nothing peculiar in the principle which animated his conduct and sustained him under all his labours. It is far from necessary that our life should externally resemble his in order that, like him, we may spend it in the service of Christ. There is need for many sorts of employments in the world; and the Apostle's own exhortation to his fellow-believers was—"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." It mattered not, in his estimation, whether a man was bond or free, whether he was a master or a servant, whether he was a preacher of the Gospel, like himself, or a private member of the Church, like his friends Philemon and Onesiphorus; it was equally possible in all cases that life might be dedicated to the service of Christ. And so is it still. There is no special class to which alone belongs the honour of living for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not those of great talents, or those of eminent station, or those directly engaged in preaching the Gospel, who alone may secure the blessedness of advancing by their lives the cause of the Redeemer. There is no need for any one of us to seek a change in the position which we occupy in order that, like the Apostle, we may say, "To me to live is Christ." All that is required is that our hearts be sincerely given Him. The mere outward mould in which our lives may, in Providence, be cast, is of comparatively little importance. One believer may have a place among princes, another may dwell among the poor and lowly. To one may be given great talents which render him widely and strikingly useful; to another there may be allotted only a small and scarcely perceptible power of doing good. One may be fitted for the duties and requirements of a public life; another may find his only congenial position in privacy and retirement. Still, it may be justly said of every true believer that his life is Christ's. The philosopher who teaches the world, and the mother who instructs her children, the soldier who fights for his country, and the servant who fulfils her duties in the household, the author who guides and improves mankind by the results of his studies, and the physician who spends his days in seeking to heal

their diseases, the nobleman who gives his thousands to Christian and benevolent undertakings, and the poor widow who delights to cast her two mites into the treasury of God, the preacher whose office it is to expound and apply Divine truth, and the lawyer whose duty it is to plead the cause of righteousness—may each one say, if only at heart the Lord's, "To me to live is Christ." Greatly is it to be desired that this truth were more felt than it has ever yet been. What an elevation and sanctity would belong to human life if in all the purposes which it fulfils there were a conviction that it was spent for Christ! On the other hand, let this be left altogether out of view, and how paltry appears the honour which has gathered round any human life! Trivial indeed seem all the plaudits which the world may bestow upon its favourites, compared with one word of commendation from the throne of the Eternal. Bring the hero home who has fallen in the midst of victory, and lay him among the illustrious dead with all martial glory; or bear the monarch to his grave amid regal splendour, and with the most imposing demonstrations of woe; or deck the tomb of some world-famed patriot with all the honours which a grateful and admiring country can confer—but what a crowning tribute to his worth it would in every such case be, and how completely would it cast all his other glories into the shade, if one could truthfully whisper by his last resting-place on earth, "To him to live was CHRIST!"

Let us, then, learn the secret of a truly successful life. Whatever the sphere we occupy, let a desire to honour Christ prevail in our bosoms; let us look at all our earthly duties, as assigned us by Him, that through the way in which we fulfil them we may "adorn the doctrine" of our God and Saviour. And then, whether in the busy haunts of commerce or the quiet retreats of study, whether on the public battle-field of life or in the private retirement of the family, whether as masters or as servants, as parents or as children—for us "to live will be Christ," and for us also (in words which we have yet to consider), "to die will be gain."

A FATHER'S LOVE.

A MOTHER drew her darling to her breast,
And of her father in a far-off land
She strove to make the child-heart understand,
While, with a kiss of twofold love expressed,
Intent to make his fondness manifest,
She said, "Thy father sends his love to thee."
The child looked up, as fain the gift to see,
And, from rose-lips, "Where is it?" came the quest.

"*Where is it?*" Foolish child, to question thus,
When all around, and in her mother's eyes,
It shone, and in its fulness she could bask.
Love needs no token. But are we more wise?
Our Heavenly Father sends His love to us:
"Where is it?" in our ignorance we ask.

P. W. ROOSE.

NURSERY TALES IN EAST-END DRESS.

MY friend was painting from a little professional model, a girl of five years, shy, gentle, with a sensitive, refined face. The child was encouraged to talk, as it kept her from feeling weary. She told the following stories; and I was so much struck with the contrast between her appearance and the Grimm-ness of her tales—there was also something so comic in the monotonous way in which she chanted them—that I asked my friend to persuade her to tell them again, in order that I might take them down as they were told. The child began—

"There was an ole woman, an' she saw a little girl with a white hat an' a white pinafore an' a red frock. She sez to the little girl—

"'Will you come an' mind my Polly Parrot, 'cos I'm frightened to leave 'im?' An' she sez, 'Yus.'

"An' when the ole woman was gone she went to the cupboard an' begun eatin' the sugar. So the Polly Parrot sez, 'I'll jes tell the missus! I'll jes tell the missus!'" (This was chanted in a high key.)

"An' she sez, 'If I give yer a bit of sugar yer won't tell, will yer?' 'No!' So she give 'im a bit o' sugar. Then she wanted another bit, an' the Polly Parrot sez, 'I'll jes tell the missus! I'll jes tell the missus!' An' she sez, 'If I give yer two bits, yer won't tell, will yer?' 'No!' So she give 'im two bits. An' when she 'ad some more, he sez, 'I'll jes tell the missus! I'll jes tell the missus!' An' she sez, 'If I give yer three bits, yer won't tell, will yer?' 'No!' So she gives him three bits; then he sez, 'I'll jes tell the missus! I'll jes tell the missus!' So she run away.

"An' when she come to a apple-tree, she sez, 'Apple-tree, apple-tree, will yer 'ide me, 'cos the missus she 'll see me?' An' she sez—

"'Break my bones,
Cover me over with marble stones.'

The apple-tree sez 'No!'"

he sez, 'She 's eaten your sugar, an' I told her not to touch nothink, an' she 's run away.'

"An' the ole woman sez, 'You stay 'ere till I come back, 'an' yer won't touch anythink, will yer?' Then she come to the apple-tree, an' sez—

"'Apple-tree, apple-tree, 'ave yer saw a little girl in

"The child was encouraged to talk."—*p.* 295.

The little girl in the story goes in turn to a pear-tree, an orange-tree, a butcher, and a "tater" man, the conversation being the same in each case. At last she finds a friendly baker, whom she asks in the same words to kill her and erect an expensive monument; and he answers, "Yus, go up-stairs and get in the oven, for the fire 's out."

"Then the ole woman she come 'ome, an' she sez to the Polly Parrot, 'Where 's the little girl gone?' An'

a white 'at an' a white pinafore an' a red frock?' An' the apple-tree sez 'No!'"

The same question is asked by the old woman of all the other characters, and the same answer given, until she comes to the baker, who says—

"'Yus, she 's up-stairs in the oven.' Then the old woman went up-stairs, an' there was some grease on the stairs, an' she tumbled down and broke 'er 'ead."

This was the end of the first story. There was

a pause of a few minutes, then the child repeated with unction, "There was some grease on the stairs, an' she tumbled down an' broke 'er 'ead."

"Did she?" said the artist abstractedly. "Turn your head a little more that way—that's right. Do you know any more stories?"

"Oh yes; I know 'Blue cat, blue cat, 'ave yer seen my gloves?"

"Very well: tell us that." So the child began—

"There was a little girl an' her mother, an' the little girl she say, 'Mother, I would like yer ter 'ave a pair o' blue gloves;' so she say, ''Ere 's the money,' the mother sez; so she bought the gloves, an' she put 'em on over 'er 'ands, an' they was too big for 'er. An' the mother sez, 'Don't yer lose 'em, or I 'll kill yer;' an' she lost 'em, so she sez, 'Blue cat, blue cat, 'ave yer seen my blue gloves?' 'No!' So she sez, 'Red cat, red cat, 'ave yer seen my blue gloves?' 'No!' So she sez, 'Green cat, green cat, 'ave yer seen my blue gloves?' 'No!'

"Then the lady what lived in that 'ouse she come home, an' she 'd got the dinner from the bake'us, an' she sez, 'Mary, Mary, open the door, 'cos I've got something nice for dinner.' So she sez—

"'Mary, I'm on *one* stair;
Mary, I'm on *two* stairs;
Mary, I'm on *three* stairs.'"

(And so on up to ten—the voice rising two tones for each numeral.)

"And when my auntie," said the child, "came to *ten stairs*, she said it so loud that she made me jump."

This was the end of the cat story. What became of the gloves, or the little girl, or the three cats—what awful catastrophe happened on the tenth stair—whether they were all made into a pie for dinner, or whether the cats consumed the blue gloves, and Mary, and the lady, no amount of questioning on my part could elicit.

The next story for bloodthirstiness is quite mediæval; but the child told it in the same sing-song way, holding the studio doll tenderly in her arms meanwhile.

"The lady sez to the little boy, she sez, 'You go and git me some pepper;' an' he thought she was larkin', an' so he went an' bought some swee's.

"So she sez to the little girl, 'You go an' git me some salt;' an' the little girl thought she was larkin', an' she bought some cakes. An' when they come 'ome she cut the little girl's 'ead off for the father's dinner. An' when he saw it he sez, 'I never sor a rabbit's 'ead with a ear like that.'

"An' the little girl was up the chimley, an' she calls out—

"'Father, father, you're eatin' *my* 'ead!
Father, father, you're eatin' *my* 'ead!'

"So he sez, 'Who 's that callin' out?' So she calls out agin—

"'Father, father, look up the chimley!
Father, father, look up the chimley!'

An' he went an' looked up, an' down come a bag of sovereigns.

"Then the little girl calls out—

"'Brother, brother, look up the chimley!
Brother, brother, look up the chimley!'

"An' he went an' looked up, an' down come a 'orse an' cart.

"Then she calls out—

"'Mother, mother, look up the chimley!
Mother, mother, look up the chimley!'

An' she run to the chimley an' looked up, an' down come a bag o' stones an' killed her."

This ghastly story (which is familiar in a slightly different form to children who possess a certain book of fairy tales, prefaced by Professor Ruskin) was as much enjoyed by the child as were the others; and I could not help wondering whether these brutal nursery tales may not have something to do with the habits of mind formed in these children. The neighbourhood in which the child lives is notorious for horseplay, which not unfrequently ends in manslaughter, and for mobs of young ruffians who are almost too much for the police. Children of a tender age in other ranks of life are apt to shrink from tales with "naughty people" for heroes or heroines, and if they heard such stories as the above, would say, "Wasn't she wicked?" etc. But this small model took it as a matter of course, making no remark on the motives or character of the *dramatis personæ*. Possibly neither her imagination, her sympathies, nor any other part of her little mind, is affected by it—that is a question to which I cannot find an answer—yet it seems to me impossible that the stories should have no influence, or that this should be for good.

The last tale she told, after having exhausted all the savage ones (including a funny version of "Bluebeard"), was of quite a different type, and was chanted in a different voice, being evidently considered a kind of Sunday-school story, and was called "Peter and the Poker."

"One day the mother went out, an' she say to Peter, 'Peter, don't touch the fire or do nothink, will yer?' an' Peter sez, 'No!' An' when she was gone he put the poker in the fire, an' he burnt 'isself in 'is fingers, an' he 'ad to go to bed, an' he laid in bed, an' he couldn't lay this way an' he couldn't lay that way, an' he couldn't lay any way, nor nothink! An' the next mornin' 'is mother she say, 'Shall I fetch the doctor?' an' he sez, 'Yus!' An' when the doctor come he say, 'Why, 'owever did he do it?' An' his mother she say, 'I 'm sorry to tell ye that he did it 'isself; he would touch the poker.' An' the doctor he say, 'If yer do it agin I won't let yer 'ave nothink ter make yer well;' and his mother she say, 'Yer 'll give 'im somethink this time, won't yer?' An' he sez, 'Yus, I will this oncet.'"

This was the only story with a moral to it, and after it came from our gentle-mannered girl the refrain—

"An' there was some grease on the stairs, an' the ole woman she tumbled down an' broke 'er 'ead!"

Florence Reason.

THE SNOW TWINS.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," ETC. ETC.

PART II.

TO come back, however, to what Lavinia Apogee, the 'strologer, had to do with John Umph, the cobbler. As ill-luck would have it, she came at the very precise time that the cobbler had left the house, having in her hand a shoe, which she had as an excuse for her visit. The truth was that she came after John Umph himself. The planets had not as yet provided Lavinia Apogee with a husband, so she made up her mind to let them alone, and that she would shift for herself. When a thought of a possibly malign influence of Saturn crossed her mind, she told that planet in very decided, though unladylike language, to "mind his own business." She even went so far as to tell him that "she would have no humbug. However much it might do for other people, it wouldn't do for her." She was getting on; she was now—ah! well, we won't say what—and she wanted to get off. "Getting on" and "getting off" sometimes come astonishingly close together in the mind. No doubt this was an association of ideas; but what can be more wonderful than this same process of the mind?

But, somehow or other, men did not take to Lavinia. They were afraid of her. They looked upon her as uncanny. Not all the planets put together, along with the twelve signs of the Zodiac to boot, ever gave her a helping hand in the matrimonial line. Saturn, or someone else, must have been dead against her; for up to the present the heavenly bodies had not done anything for her.

Under these circumstances Lavinia thought that the best thing to be done was to take the matter in hand, and do something for herself. Now, when women take this view of matrimony they are capable of making very extraordinary efforts, and accomplishing, or at any rate attempting, very extraordinary feats. As a prudent man, I would not take it upon myself to say what they would or what they would not do. My mind was, I find, suggesting piracy upon the "high seas of life"; and seeing its tendency, and not knowing how far it might carry me in this direction, I shall not pursue the subject farther. I shall leave the matter to the imagination of my readers.

Well, Lavinia fixed her fateful eye upon John Umph; and, at the time of which we write, had had plain intimation from him that, for the present at any rate, he had no thoughts of supplying the late Mrs. Umph's place. "She's not gone," said John Umph. "She's with us still, morning, noon, and night." Moreover, he had proceeded yet further, and given Lavinia to understand that if even he did think of another Mrs. Umph, she was out of it altogether; and on the present occasion, when the 'strologer entered with the shoe, she had really come to give the cobbler a bit of her mind—a final one, and therefore, like the final chord of some tremendous piece, a very startling, thumping, and effective one.

But as things turned out, the cobbler's not being at home suited her purpose much better. Had she seen him, and poured upon him the vials of her wrath and that of all the heavenly bodies—Saturn and the Milky Way included—there would have been an end of it; she could have done the cobbler no harm. But now she got the chance of doing him a permanent injury, and that chance you may be sure she did not let slip.

"Pshaw! what's that?" exclaimed the 'strologer, as she caught sight of the mourning emblem burnt into poor Umph's apron. The 'strologer had, of course, an eye for all cabalistic and curious signs, figures, and shapes; and here was one such as she had never seen before. Miss Apogee took up the apron, and examined it well. She saw in a moment that there was something at any rate that wasn't much in her line. There were the figure at the bottom, and the two guardian angels; but her attention was chiefly fixed on the central emblem. It did not require much power in unravelling mysteries to decipher the poor cobbler's simple monogram; there were the two letters plain enough, one of them a K and the other a U, and what could they mean but the deceased Kitty Umph? "This is what's keeping him from me," said the 'strologer. "This is the charm; 't is with this he's beat the stars. As long as he keeps the old one before his eyes, he won't think of me. You must clear out of this," said the 'strologer; and taking up the cobbler's sharp knife, she ran it round the offending circle, and in as short a time as would take to write it, cut out the whole thing, and took herself off, carefully closing the door behind her. The knife she had also taken the precaution of putting back exactly where she found it.

Great was the amazement of the poor cobbler when he came home and put on the apron. He never thought of his not having closed the door—or rather, of his not having locked it. Nothing about the place had been disturbed; the idea never seemed to enter into his head of anyone's having come in. But there was the hole, and how it had come there who could tell?

That mystery the cobbler was never destined to have solved. It formed an element in his death. And at the period of which I am now writing, that death was drawing near.

I may as well tell you the present state of things

at once. Though it takes but a short time to tell, it took several weeks in coming about.

With the departure of poor John Umph's emblem, there departed much of his peace of mind, and the happiness which he had in his contemplations on the memory of his lost wife. These happy thoughts gave place to brooding and miserable ones. He felt himself in that miserable condition in which a man is when he feels he does not know what will happen next. His children would be spirited away, his lasts, his lapstone, his awl, his wax—anything, everything that he had, such as it was, would vanish before his very eyes. His dear wife's name began to be associated in his mind with some undefinable but very real dread, and he began to waste away. Moreover, there came across his disordered mind a thought worse than all these. Had he in any way offended his own dear wife? Had he done or been anything that she in her now purer state could be displeased with? The thought was dreadful: it was intolerable; and the cobbler became a sad and gloomy man.

But he had something else to make him melancholy also. His business mysteriously fell off. He had lived chiefly on the work of his neighbours, and that now gradually dropped, and finally departed altogether. This was a very serious matter, for their custom was his bread, and without that there was no money for rent or food, and times became hard indeed.

Nor was this all. "Troubles," as the saying is, "never come alone," and there was yet another which came upon poor John Umph. His neighbours began to fight shy of him; they dropped off one after another from having anything to do with him; they looked askance at him. And the burden of the whole thing was its mystery. What was it all about? Even the children in the court used to run away now from his children, instead of playing with them, and they used to point at them.

John Umph had no belief in the 'strology woman, and her charms, and powers, and confidential relations with the heavenly bodies; if he had, it would have troubled him that she had told him that "it would be the worse for him if he did not marry her: that she was the only one who could protect him from misfortune; and not only this, but that she was one who could bring misfortune on him." Well, if it came to this—sign against sign, any day—he would back the emblem of the good dead wife against all her signs of the Zodiac or anything else; but now the emblem was gone, and the 'strology woman was gone too. She went off from time to time on certain circuits, fortune-telling, and she was on circuit now; so there was nothing for it but to brood over his misery and pine away yet more, and die at last. It is true Toby and Kitty did all that children could do to brighten up their poor father. Alas! they only increased his distress; indeed, they formed no small element in it. For what was to become of them when he died? as die he felt sure he should. John Umph knew that he lived at the bottom of the gulf, and that at the bottom of the gulf the roaring lion was going about always, seeking what little children he could devour.

Had the 'strology woman been in the neighbourhood, John Umph would have thrown himself so far on her mercy as to ask her if she could give him any light on all this; but no one knew where she was, nor did they know how long she would be away. And so, the poor man just sank lower and lower, until now, at last, as Christmas drew near, he felt himself to be a dying man; and the thought had firmly fixed itself in his mind that he and his had been bewitched by the 'strology woman. This depression finished up poor John Umph, and Christmas Eve found the poor fellow a dying man.

Christmas—like many other times and things—was very different at the bottom of the gulf from what it was at the top. No doubt there are at the bottom of the gulf some bright specks here and there, but we cannot say very much for it in a general way. Anyhow, we cannot so far as the Umph family are concerned; and, as it is with them only that I am immediately concerned, beyond them I do not now mean to go. Preparations for Christmas there doubtless often are at the bottom of the gulf, as in the case of the "Hunted Hare," where the flaming gaslights are festooned with holly, so as to make men believe that there was Christmas-keeping there, even though there should be none at home; and where an old Father Christmas, with red cheeks and a redder nose, stood in the window, as much as to say, "Walk in, for this is the place to keep Christmas—all is comfortable inside;" and as in the case of honest Tom Spriggs, who, giving the "Hunted Hare," and the degraded Father Christmas there, a wide berth, had put by what with many went in there (and never came out again: into their pockets at least), and was lord and master of a roast goose and a real plum pudding that day; and as in the case, too, of the widow Malone, who for weeks had made preparations for a tea-party with herself and her old cat—aspiring to nothing short of cream, and giving two teaspoonfuls to the poor creature that couldn't know anything about Christmas, but that might enjoy it, nevertheless. "An' shure," said Mrs. Malone, "av the poor crature had only sinse, maybe 't would be keeping Christmas more like a Christian than many a one is doing; and didn't Father Ryan say, when I wint and paid him his dues, 'Mrs. Malone, and how is your cat? If that cat was a Christian instead of being a poor beast, he 'd be with you to-day, and be bringing meself a mouse.' Ah, Father Ryan has a power of larnin'; perhaps some day he 'll be the Pope." And there was an apple on Mrs. Malone's mantel-piece—a red rosy apple, and a sprig of holly, about an inch and a half long, stuck in it: it was the choicest one from Mrs. Malone's stall, and she had addressed it gratefully before she put it there—gratefully and appreciatively—and thus

she kept a Christmas better than that of many a so-called Christian who, having been provided all the year long with meat and drink, is so far from acknowledging his mercies, that he does not seem even to be aware of them at all. "'T is on these apples I live most of the year," thought Mrs. Malone; "they 're workin' for me, they 're out wid me in heat and cold, and why shouldn't they keep Christmas wid me now? 'T is honour and rispict I have for what gives me the bit I eat and pays the rint; 't is mistletoe I' d be puttin' in ye too, av there was inny one to kiss—sure and I wouldn't mind kissin' you, me hinny (honey)," said Mrs. Malone, addressing the cat; "but, ye see, ye aren't a Tom, and 't would be no good for two poor faymales to be kissin' under the mistletoe at all, at all;" and with the feelings embodied in that apple and that cat, there was more real religion in Mrs. Malone's Christmas-keeping than in that of many who ate plum pudding and roast beef, and were heedless whence the good things came.

But poor Umph—ah, poor Umph! my business just now, so far as the bottom of the gulf is concerned, is with you.

Things had come to such a bad pass with poor John Umph that, broken down in mind and body, he had fallen into consumption, and now he was very far gone—so far as to be drawing near his end.

John Umph knew that it was Christmas-time; and he knew that people ate roast beef and plum pudding; and he knew also that there was none for him. But he did not seem very much to mind. He was almost always more or less under the influence of the sleeping-draught which was supplied to him from the neighbouring hospital to kill the pain.

But his two little ones—Toby and Kitty—they had all their wits about them; and at the present moment these wits were being exercised about keeping Christmas, and especially with reference to their father.

After much consultation, they determined that they would go out on Christmas Eve, and try whether they could get a few pence by singing carols near some of the great houses—even a few pence would get something for poor father; of themselves they did not think. A couple of pennyworth of lollipops did cross their minds, but in such a fleeting way that it was not worthy of being chronicled as actual history.

But what carols should they sing? The thought must have come to an untimely end, had it not been that they had one friend outside the court who had happily escaped the influence of the 'strologer. For it was the 'strologer who had poisoned the minds of the credulous neighbours, and made them believe that John Umph had dealings with someone with whom he ought not. She knew it, she said, from the stars. She had seen with her own eyes the dreadful means by which he carried on his evil dealings. *She* had only to do with the stars, and they all knew the stars; but *he*—well, let them wait awhile and see. Reader, if you want to be terrible, always be vague. Dread lives in the undefined. You should never prophesy accurately unless you know, but you may prophesy vaguely without knowing anything; and as long as you keep to "something," and don't say what that "something" is, you are, in your prophetic capacity, all right.

Mrs. Elps was a widow—living with her sick son on a small allowance from a master she had served for many years. Tom Elps never could be better: he knew it, he accepted it—the life he could lead he did lead, and that was a quiet one with God. He did what little good he could; and amongst his small good deeds were little kindnesses to the children Umph. Now, Tom Elps' great solace in life was poetry—or ryhmes, if you are not appreciative, if you are critical, if you don't go in for finding pleasure in small things. He read poetry, and he made—well, whatever you choose to call it.

Just now, to be in season, Tom Elps had been carol-making—so the twins Umph were just in the very nick of time to get their wants supplied.

Tom quite approved of the twins Umph going to sing the carols, provided they did not go too far from home and get lost, and he read them out several of his latest compositions from which to choose. The choice finally rested between two—

"One day the angels went a-singing:
Said they, 'Good news to-day we're bringing,
Set all the church bells ding, dong, ringing:
Jesus Christ is born to-day,
He 's come awhile on earth to stay;
So all you bells your loudest play;
Ding, dong, ringing.'"

The other, which was chosen, was shorter, and easier to sing, and ran thus—

"Jesus Christ is very good;
He came on Christmas Day;
And Jesus said He never would
Drive anyone away.
Up and down,
Through the town,
Let every bell
The story tell,
That Jesus said He never would
Drive anyone away."

There was a stroke and fire of poetic genius in making the "would" come in as a rhyme from the middle of a sentence, which made the carol worthy of being chosen on its literary merits; and one is always glad when merit meets with its reward.

The Umph twins were quick enough at learning such things as they had the chance of, and they were soon fitted with both words and tune. And out of that carol they fondly hoped that there would be a good Christmas dinner for their father; and, though they would not allow the idea, still that deceiver and flatterer, "Hope," whispered, "And, perhaps, lollipops for themselves."

Thus were preparations made for Christmas in the Umph family at the bottom of the gulf.

Here we must leave them for awhile, and climb up to the top—up into the daylight—and see what is going on there. And where can we look for a sample better than to Mr. Hilary Startcomb, who also, with his twins, was making preparation for keeping Christmas?

Not but that at the top of the gulf there were some who were very unlike Mr. Startcomb. There were, no doubt, people who would "eat the fat and drink the sweet"; but there were also people who would "send a portion to him for whom nothing was prepared." They were the salt that seasoned the otherwise unseasoned Christmases of the world. But I have not to deal with them just now.

I have not told you up to the present of what Mr. Startcomb's establishment consisted. I don't mean the kitchen and pantry, but the up-stair department. It was very small. The family comprised Mr. Startcomb himself and the twin children, Richard and Mary. The establishment part might be said to have been put up in one parcel, and that not a very large one. It comprised simply Miss Marion Lilly, who, since Mrs. Startcomb's death, had been companion, friend, teacher, guide: all in all to the little Startcombs. She was a distant cousin of Mr. Startcomb's—still, a relative, and, after his twins, the nearest he had in the world.

Marion Lilly's ideas and Mr. Startcomb's were very different, and the latter would most probably not have kept her after his wife's death, had he not known from experience of her visits to the house that he was quite safe with her. Any *young* woman he would have been afraid of. He did not propose seeking a second Mrs. Startcomb, or being sought by anyone who had matrimony in view. And as to *old* ones, Mr. Startcomb did not believe that anyone knew at what age human nature died, and whether it ever did or not; he had not lived all his life at Mincing Lane for nothing. He did not believe in it; and he had no faith in it at all, at all!

Now, Marion Lilly was a great believer in Trusts, and she accepted the care of the little Startcombs as a trust. If only I knew of a Trust Company that had Marion Lilly for chairman, directors, secretary, solicitor, banker, and everything, I should go into it at once—a regular plunger—with almost all I had. I am afraid to think of what dividends I should have; and my capital would be secure. Founders' shares, ordinary, preference, debentures—Marion Lilly, I would go in for them all.

Now, when Marion Lilly undertook this trust, she stood up at once to Mr. Startcomb; and if I might be allowed to use a military expression in a tale in which there are no soldiers, "she stood to her guns" ever after.

On one condition only would she take up her permanent abode with Mr. Startcomb—and that was that she should not be interfered with in his children's education. And this she made Mr. Startcomb put down in black and white. Mr. Startcomb's ideas of education consisted of books and the piano, and he certainly did not want to bother himself about these; but Marion Lilly's ideas were very different. With her, education meant the heart far more than the head; and on that point Mr. Startcomb and she came into collision before very long.

"Here was one such as she had never seen before."—*p.* 298.

Startcomb found out, to his great astonishment and indignation one day, that his Richard, and Mary too, had imbibed a whole lot of ideas, not recognised or known at all amongst the good things of Mincing Lane. His own description of them was that "they were up in a balloon; and," said he, "if they come down in Mincing Lane, where Dick will have to be by-and-bye, there *will* be a smash!"

The ideas which Marion Lilly had been putting into the children's heads were quite out of the father's line: not to live for themselves alone, to scorn the base, to defend the right, to do

good, to fight against evil, to believe that they had been sent into the world for a purpose, to think that there was another world about them besides the one they saw—that there was One above them with whom they had to do. These, and such as these, Marion Lilly thought were amongst the "such other things which a child to its soul's health should know," and she taught them accordingly.

But one day it beamed, or rather it scowled, upon Mr. Startcomb that all this was going on; and it came on him in this wise: Coming home a little earlier from Mincing Lane than usual, he heard a great noise in one of the rooms. He proceeded thither, and there he found his son Dick mounted on, or rather astride of, a house-brush. He was hacking away at the tightly drawn curtains of a venerable four-post bed with a switch, which in his eyes had the merit of making a great noise at every smack, as if it were really going to effect the demolition of the castle against which Dick's wrath was being spent. From inside the tightly curtained bed were heard small shrieks, as of someone in dire distress.

The appearance of Mr. Startcomb did not in any wise diminish his son's ardour. On the contrary, he smote all the more vigorously, calling upon his astonished parent to help. "Deliver her! Save her! Quick! quick! or it will be too late; the giant will devour her! Hurrah! hurrah!" cried the boy, as the curtain got pushed aside under his repeated strokes, and disclosed his sister within, with a bolster for a giant, and her hair all dishevelled, as a maiden's under such circumstances was very likely to be.

"What's all this?" said Mr. Startcomb, turning to Marion Lilly, who had been looking on at the whole affair apparently full of interest, and quite approvingly.

"Oh, this is their afternoon play," said Marion. "Mary is a poor maiden under the power of a wicked giant. That bed is the castle, and Dick is the brave knight who is delivering her, and going to avenge her wrongs."

"And that is a part of their education, I suppose?" sneered Mr. Startcomb.

"Precisely so," answered Marion Lilly. "What people do as boys and girls now, they will do as men and women by-and-bye."

"Then I should like my boy to play at account-keeping, and buying and selling, and going to the bank, and talking to chairs and tables, if you like, on business. If a bed will do for a castle, then chairs and tables will do for people. I'll have that bed taken down to-morrow; 't is old-fashioned now; and these are old-fashioned stories and ideas that you're putting into the children's heads. The idea, too, of attacking a fortress with a battle-axe, or sword, or whatever you choose to call it, and not cannon—on horseback, or donkeyback, too—it's bringing up the children with false ideas altogether."

"If the bed goes," said Marion, "I go too. All that you have seen is only just the children's way of carrying out the story I told them this morning. Dick will remember all this when he grows big, and will take the part of right against wrong."

"And my idea," said Mr. Startcomb, "is this—when Dick grows up he had better mind his own business, and let righting other people alone. And my idea of Mary is that she had better not be taught to go through life screaming and with her hair like that."

"Mr. Startcomb," said Marion Lilly, taking from her pocket a little case: "there, on that paper, in your own handwriting, is your agreement that you will not interfere with the education of these children."

"Nor will I—with their nouns and verbs and sums."

"I teach them much outside of grammar and arithmetic," said Marion; "and if I am to stay here, you must not interfere with that either. There, look at all that love. Is not that worth teaching, if love can be taught?" And Marion Lilly pointed to the young knight-errant, who (I am afraid contrary to all laws of chivalry) was hugging and kissing the delivered damsel in a far-off corner of the room. "That boy is happy at having done a good deed; and to teach that good deeds bring happiness is education, in my mind. But the bed and I go off to-morrow, if you please."

"Well, I can't go into the matter now," said Mr. Startcomb. "I'm expecting Totup, the cashier, every moment; we'll see about it."

"Ho, ho!" said Mr. Startcomb to himself, as he went out of the room, "there's a spicy piece of goods for you!" Then came visions of who might come in Marion Lilly's place if she went off, and Mr. Startcomb determined mentally to let the bed stay where it was.

And Marion Lilly—she also said something to herself, and it was this: "The child is father to the man; and if even in their play these little ones are taught to have the noble and the pure before them, they will love and take the sides of such in after-life."

It was Christmas Eve—or rather, it was the afternoon—when Mr. Jacob Totup, the cashier of the well-known house of Startcomb and Company in Mincing Lane, made his appearance at his employer's West End house. He had come with a small bag of new silver, got on purpose from the bank for Christmas-time. It was a theory of Mr. Startcomb's that half a crown in new silver looked more than three shillings of dirty and perhaps worn coin; and therefore he could on some occasions, and with some persons, make, say, a florin do the duty of half a crown.

Mr. Startcomb had tea and cake brought into his study—it being Christmas-time—wherewith to show hospitality to the cashier.

I don't know whether Mr. Totup would have ventured upon any other than a business subject to his principal, had he not been emboldened by the

exhilarating influence of a cup of the finest Bohea —for the sponge cake, which he pecked at, was so trifling as not to be worth mentioning.

Thus emboldened, he ventured to ask after the health of little Master and Miss — to speak of the former as some day (he hoped it might be far off) the worthy successor of a worthy father, the continuer and upholder of the glories of the house of Startcomb in Mincing Lane.

A second cup (even without the help of another sponge cake) sent Mr. Totup a-going still more, and he proceeded yet further to hope that the little Startcombs were growing up in the way in which they should go, and to the satisfaction of their excellent parent.

"Well, Totup," said Mr. Startcomb, "we won't go into family matters. They 're young ; but, between ourselves, there 's one thing troubles me about them—they 're extravagant—give away all they have—will give away, if they can, their Christmas-boxes out of this new money."

"Would stop it, sir," said Totup—"would stop it, if I may be so bold as to give an opinion, with a high hand—would stop it this very Christmas—nothing like beginning in time : 'a stitch in time saves nine ;'" and Totup, feeling that very unusual tea about to make him talkative, and so perhaps get into a mess, had the good sense to take himself off before he got into trouble.

But what he said had had its influence on his employer's mind, and Mr. Startcomb determined that his children should not give away their new money this Christmas.

It is a peculiarity of this great gulf in London town that, though there is in one sense a tremendous distance between the top and the bottom of it, in another sense these two extremities are very near each other. Thus, under the very shadow of Westminster, with its Abbey and Houses of Parliament and palatial residences, may be found poverty, and wretchedness, and vice of the lowest kind ; and hence my reader need not be surprised that, not such a great distance from where Mr. Startcomb lived at the top of the gulf, in the sunshine and fresh air, lived John Umph, cobbler, down at the bottom, in air close and stifling, and in what may, to put it at its best, be termed comparative gloom.

It was therefore no great venture on the part of the Umph twins to present themselves at dark before Mr. Startcomb's hall door : not only before the door, but—it will scarcely be credited—even on the steps, under the portico itself.

Mr. Startcomb's house had an advantage above that of any of his neighbours, in that it had not only a portico of unusual grandeur, but also quite a little garden ; and, moreover, in that garden a great tree ; and that tree stood right opposite Mr. Startcomb's bedroom window.

Having sung in vain before three or four other houses, the twins Umph now started their carol at Mr. Startcomb's hall door. Presently the thick curtain which covered the plate-glass therein was cautiously drawn aside a little bit in the centre, and four bright eyes peeped through. They belonged to the Startcomb twins, who were playing in the hall at the time. Then they were drawn open a little more, and the twins at the top of the gulf were within an inch of the twins at the bottom of the gulf, only, as of course there ought to be, there was nearly half an inch of plate-glass between them. But you see that half-inch made all the difference — at the Startcomb side was a bright fire in the hall stove, and carpet, and light ; at the Umph side were darkness, and uncovered stone, and biting cold.

The Startcomb children could hear the words of the carol quite distinctly—

> "Jesus Christ is very good ;
> He came on Christmas Day :
> And Jesus said He never would
> Drive anyone away."

Oh that it were Christmas Day ! They should then have money—something to give ; for the brilliant light from the hall showed that the two little faces outside were wan, and pale, and thin. But the Startcomb twins would run to their father, and say the words of the carol to him. He had plenty of new money : this they knew, for he had jingled a bag of it before them, and told them that their Christmas-boxes were inside. Perhaps he wouldn't mind giving them to them a little bit before—on Christmas Eve.

They found their father toasting his legs before the study fire, and rushed in to him, as children will rush, and repeated the carol to him, and begged for the Christmas-boxes now, that they might have something to give ; but Mr. Startcomb was furious. "Here," he said to himself, "is Miss Marion Lilly again. This is the way she 's bringing up these children—giants and knights inside my house, and brats of carol-singers outside it. I 'll put a stop to it at once."—"The impudent brats," said Mr. Startcomb to his children. "I'll soon make them go ;" and he was jumping up for the purpose, when he was caught by each leg by one of the children. They kept saying—

> "And Jesus said He never would
> Drive anyone away."

The children, no doubt energised by the spirit which Marion Lilly had fostered in them, stuck close to their father, who kept saying, "Well, if Jesus wouldn't, I will." But he had at last to give in, and he pulled two threepenny-pieces out of his pocket. "Begone !" said Mr. Startcomb, as he gave the Umphs the money, "and never come back here as long as you 're alive. If you do, I 'll give you to the police." With that the angry man slammed the door, but not before the twins Umph had perceived that the twins Startcomb had bestowed upon them sundry Christmas nods and smiles. Enriched with which as much as with (perhaps more than with) the money they had received, the twins Umph

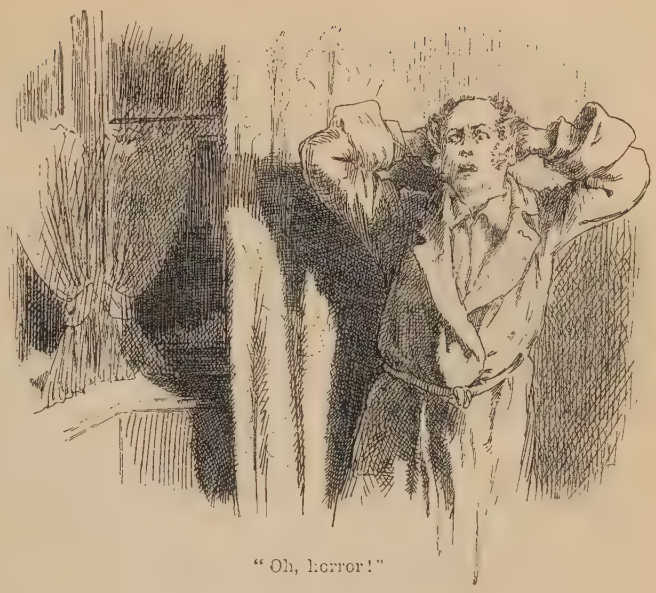
descended the portico steps; but not to go away all at once, only as far as the big tree, under which they stationed themselves, hoping that by some happy chance they might again see the bright faces which had given them kind looks on that—to them—cheerless Christmas Eve. They intended to remain just a few minutes, and then make for what they called "home," and see what they could get to make father a Christmas feast.

There stood the twins Umph close up together, with their backs to the tree, not knowing the meaning of "minutes," when spent in biting cold, to those who are ill-shod, ill-clad, and whose systems are enfeebled by long want of proper food. A treacherous slumber soon began to steal over the weary children—not "tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," but "tired Nature's kind deliverer, deadly sleep." They slept as they stood, leaning backward on, and supported by, the great tree; and as they slept the blood crept more and more slowly through their veins; for it was thin blood, such as is often found in people who belong to the bottom of the gulf, and such as was never intended to do battle with frost and snow.

"The twins now started their carol."—*p.* 303.

Mr. Startcomb had not slept well that Christmas Eve. Somehow or other he was haunted with that terrible thing which he had said, that *he* would do what Jesus would not. He had told those two children never to come back to his house as long as they were alive; but what if they should come back when they were dead? Pooh! pooh! Who ever heard of such a thing? That might do for one of Miss Lilly's fairy-tales or ghost-stories (perhaps they were educational too!); but he was a Mincing Lane man, a man of the world, and they did not believe in ghosts in Mincing Lane; and so Mr. Startcomb fell into a troubled sleep. But it was not for very long. After dozing and waking on and off until

about two in the morning, the troubled man got up and drew up the blind, and looked out. Oh, horror! There under the tree, leaning against it, were two white things, the outline certainly of children, and of the same size as those he had told never to come back to him alive. Could these be those children? and if so, whence had they come? why were they that shape? why were they so white? The horror-stricken man staggered back to his bed, and covered his head with the bed-clothes, and lay there shaking until morning came. Then when the servant came he found his master partially paralysed.



"Oh, horror!"

Ere long the gardener, going along the path to look after the greenhouses, saw the white figures standing, as it were, under the tree; and going up to them, and seeing that they were snow-covered human beings, immediately called the police.

An inquest was held, and the verdict was returned, "Died of exposure"; and much perplexity was caused by the fact that each of the children held an *old* worn threepenny-piece. Mr. Startcomb had grudged them even a new one: as he must give, he had given the worst he had.

In a couple of months Mr. Startcomb was taken abroad, but he never lifted his head any more—nor did he ever appear in Mincing Lane again, or see another Christmas Day. He was always holding inquests on those children within his own heart, and the jury were always bringing all sorts of dreadful verdicts against him. He firmly believed that Heaven had flung back to him the dole he had so unwillingly given.

* * * * * *

Many Christmas Eves have come and gone since the eventful one of which you have now read; and Startcomb House now keeps the festival in a way very different from that of old.

On Christmas Eve great preparations are being made, and on Christmas night what they are made for comes to pass.

Then may you see a young man and woman—scarce a young man—scarce a woman—and a lady bright and beautiful still (though not absolutely young any longer), feasting in the Startcomb kitchen as many children as it will hold; every child comes in a white pinafore, and receives a new threepenny-piece and half a crown besides.

This year there will be there the vicar of the parish, to whom the eldest of the party is about to be married. The Court of Chancery had put these young people under that lady's care, and means them to remain there until they are twenty-one.

It only remains that the reader's possible curiosity as to two other persons before mentioned should be provided for, by saying that the Christmas Eve when the little Umphs went forth to sing carols, their poor father was in terrible pain—pain worse than usual—and by way of easing it, he ventured on a double portion of his sleeping-draught. This was too much for the feeble frame, and he never woke from the sleep it produced.

Thus the Umph family—the father and the two children—all went out of the world—all out of the bottom of the great gulf—together. They were not much missed; there are too many going and coming, and not staying long, at the bottom of the gulf, for that.

The 'strologer also, it is possible, the reader may like to hear something about. Under the aliases of Mother Parallax and the Wise Woman of Perigee, descended in direct line from, as she asserted, not one, but all of the wise men of the East, Miss Lavinia Apogee met one day with a gentleman in a blue coat and shining buttons, on whose wrist there shone a silver band. He personally conducted her to a place where the planets could do little for her, and the last that was heard of her was in a refractory cell, speaking evil in a very loud voice of Saturn, who she said was a low cad, and had brought her into all this trouble.

Time, which does so much for us all, has softened down for Richard and Mary Startcomb the sadder features of that long-past dreadful Christmas Eve. Year by year they commemorate, as I have told you, the children's death; and, better still, day by day they try even more and more to live as lived the One whose carol was sung at their door by the two small people known at the bottom of the gulf as the little Umphs, but at its top as—

"THE SNOW TWINS."

SUNDAYS WITH THE YOUNG.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR FINLAYSON, AUTHOR OF "THREEFOLD SALVATION," ETC. ETC.

LIFE'S CURE: THE GOSPEL REMEDY.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"—HEB. ii. 3.

A YOUNG man had suddenly and unexpectedly come into possession of a large sum of money. He was naturally anxious to lay this out to the best advantage, so as to gain more, and therefore sought advice from many quarters. In talking over the matter, a friend said, "Well, if I had any money to spare I would invest it in pills."—"In *pills!*" was the astonished reply. "What would you do with them?" The friend smiled as he said quietly, "Why, sell them, to be sure." The young fellow was silent for a few moments, as though thinking the matter over, and then asked, "Have you any special secret as to the making of these wonderful pills?"—"None whatever," was the cool reply; "but in the world," continued he, with calm confidence, "you will always find plenty of people with ills of various kinds; some of these may be fanciful, and some painfully real. And you will always find some people ready to try any remedy, however fanciful, which promises relief." The young man looked up, and said sharply, "But do you think it would be honest to propose as a remedy that which is no remedy at all?"—"Ah!" rejoined the other, somewhat abashed, "I would honestly do my best to make a good pill, so that if it did no good it should at least do no harm; and I firmly believe that in many cases, especially in imaginary diseases, the victims would find magic in my remedy."

The man's statement was based on his experience of men and things. There are many ills in life, and there are many who seek an escape from such evils by resorting to various remedies in the hope of obtaining relief. "A drowning man," says a proverb, "will clutch at a straw." Now, in the spiritual world there is a similar experience. Many, in their attempt to escape from the evils of sin, try various human remedies, but, as the woman in the Gospel found, who had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather worse, so these human remedies are useless for the soul's sickness: they merely aggravate its spiritual condition, they afford no permanent cure, and, worse still, they direct the soul's gaze from the true remedy. It is always well to try and better one's self, but it is well to try wisely; and it is folly to try any other remedy when the best is within reach. To listen to the voice of God and to apply the Divine remedy for human ills is the height of wisdom. Now, in the Bible God provides us with a remedy for sin and for all the ills of life. The remedy is certain to cure, because it comes from God Himself, who knows everything, and can do all things. God's remedy for sin is so simple that the youngest child or the poorest person can apply it, and rejoice in its relief equally with the greatest saint or the wisest philosopher. It is certain, because it comes from God, and not from man. It is certain, because it throws the soul on God, and not on man. The Bible explains this remedy. It tells of ruin by sin, of redemption by Christ, of restoration by the Holy Spirit. It reveals God's love to sinners, Christ's work for sinners, the Holy Spirit's work in sinners. This is the Gospel remedy; it is the very thing our souls require.

Not long ago a nobleman in Belgravia, as he was passing from his door to his carriage, met a sweep who had been cleaning his chimneys. The sweep, astonished by the wealth and luxury of the house he was leaving, said to the nobleman as he passed, "Have you the wealth of Christ's salvation?" Two months later the nobleman was dying, and he sent for this sweep, and from him received the knowledge of God by the power of the Holy Ghost. The nobleman shed tears of joy as he rejoiced in the unsearchable riches of Christ. In this happy condition he died, passing to the brighter and better world, where no pain comes, no sin defiles, and no shadows fall. Now, I want you to rejoice in Christ and in His salvation every day of your life. I want you to know and apply Christ's cure for the soul afflicted with the malady of sin. He covers the sin, casts it completely away by His life of perfect obedience to God's law and by the shedding of His precious blood; He clothes the soul with the robe of His perfect righteousness; He consecrates or sets apart the soul to the service of God by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. I want you to "rejoice in the Lord" daily, and to know that there is succour to every soul which, surrounded by sin, sorrow, or suffering, surrenders to Christ. When we once know and apply God's remedy in Christ Jesus, life is full of brightness and joy unspeakable.

The Bible reveals our fallen condition; but it also reveals Christ's free salvation. We are sinners by nature (Psalm li. 5)—sinners by our own actual transgressions; born in sin, and therefore out of Christ; living in sin, with sin unpurged. "All have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23). This is our condition by nature. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalm xiv. 3). This is the Bible standard. God has given us His holy law, which declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel xviii. 4, 20). And although for degrees of sin there will doubtless be degrees of punishment, yet God's one penalty for sin is death. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). Some sins are worse than others, but all sin deserves punishment. The lives of men and women, boys and girls, vary greatly, but all are alike in one respect—all are sinners. "There is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23).

A mother said to her little boy, who was playing with his bricks on the floor, "Now, Charlie, remember when I leave the room you must not touch any of these apples on the table." The child continued his brick-building, but presently he thought he would just look at the apples. There on the table was a plate with twelve splendid rosy-cheeked apples. He looked at them one by one, and at last he took one beautiful apple in his hand, "only to smell it," as he said to himself. But, alas! he had broken his mother's command by touching it at all, and then he thought there could be no great harm in tasting "only one;" so he bit it, and finally ate it. There were eleven other apples; these he did not touch at all. But that child disobeyed his mother by eating the single apple. Had he eaten all the apples, his fault would have been worse; but he disobeyed by taking the one as certainly as if he had taken the whole. So, although some sins are worse than others, and some persons are more wicked than others, in God's sight "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

The boy who prides himself on his good behaviour may be equally sinful in God's sight as some wicked youth who has had less privileges and greater temptations. This is a terrible discovery, but the sooner we make it the better. The earlier a sick person calls in a physician, the more likely his prospect of being cured. We lie under sentence of death. We cannot hope to save ourselves, for we are already "under the curse" (Gal. iii. 10). Human effort to procure pardon is clearly useless. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). What, then, can I do? I read in God's Word my condemnation. Shall I then despair? Ah, no! God be thanked, there is a way of escape. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*" (1 Timothy i. 15). God's Word tells of my ruin, but it also tells of redemption. It reveals the disease, but it also shows the way of cure. How? The Divine law declares that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). "For it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). Why? The blood represents the *life taken* or forfeited. The Lord Jesus Christ, by His life and death, hath made an atonement for us. He makes us at one with God. He stood in the sinner's stead. He died as the *Sin-bearer*. "For when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). God says so, therefore I believe it. I humbly take the place of the lost sinner, and claim the Lord Jesus as my Saviour. This is the height of wisdom for you and me. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). From the cross of Calvary there come life, light, liberty, and love.

A man climbing over the rocks and boulders on the sea-shore, by some means entangled his foot in a huge chain, and, with the tide coming swiftly in, a blacksmith was hastily sent for, in order that he might be set free. But the smith's implements failed to rescue him from the flowing tide, and he was drowned. Ah! how useless those tools must have seemed to the poor man as he felt the chain curbing him and the water rising around him! How similar, and yet how different, is the position of the Christian! He is tied and bound by a chain of sin of which he cannot rid himself. Man's efforts at rescue only increase the entanglement. But the blood of Jesus applied to his soul snaps the fetters of sin, and sets him free, with the message, "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. vi. 14). Many who are enslaved by the fetters of sin seek a remedy, but they are doomed to disappointment, for they seek not the remedy which God provides. Human efforts to save the soul are as useless as the blacksmith's tools of our illustration. God's remedy is thorough and effectual. It is a cure which can be tested every day of our lives.

The Lord Jesus offers pardon for sin, peace with God, and power to overcome sin, to all who surrender their hearts to Him, and their lives to the claims of His Gospel. Christ offers a present salvation from the penalty of sin, a present salvation from the power of sin, and a future salvation from the presence of sin. Our standing is in the first salvation, our calling is to the second, our complete emancipation in heaven will be realised in the third. The remedy offered by the Lord Jesus provides three things: Justification, that sin may not condemn; sanctification, that sin may not reign; glorification, that sin may not be. Hereafter I hope to show you distinct aspects of these truths. To-day let me impress upon you one fact in reference to life's cure by Christ.

A man was accused of a terrible crime, but he made light of the offence, and was utterly indifferent to the charge. The day for the assizes drew near. As he heard the herald's trumpet announcing the coming of the judge, he cried anxiously, "Get me an advocate!" See here your case and mine. We have sinned. How shall we escape the just consequences? We need an advocate. Christ undertakes our cause; He becomes our Substitute; He is our Advocate. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous (1 John ii. 1). He bids us plead guilty. We are lost. Then the Great Counsellor enters in heaven a plea for us which will bar all further action against us. Christ pleads, "My Father, I stood of old in the place of those who have committed their case to My hands, and who plead guilty at Thy judgment seat. I suffered for their sins; I died that they might live; I obeyed Thy law on their behalf, and now the righteousness which I have achieved I have made over unto them." The Great Judge of all admits the plea. "We are accepted in the Beloved" (Ephes. i. 6). We may go free because the blood of the Great Substitute for sinners blots out all our sins; we have now imputed to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and we are justified by the faith which is in Him. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (St. John iii. 86). That is a present salvation from sin's penalty. This is a sure foundation. "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 33, 34). This is our Justification. I want you

daily to live in the strength of this glorious truth. Will you yield your heart to the Lord Jesus to-day, and your life to the claims of His blessed Gospel?

I told you of a nobleman who died rejoicing in the riches of Christ. Now let me tell you of a burglar who lived and fought against sin, trusting in the strength of Christ. One night the burglar was waiting for his companions not far from a mission-hall where the Rev. Hay Aitken was preaching. The weather was miserable, and as the man had still some time to wait, he entered the hall for the sake of shelter. The preacher's message went like an arrow straight to his heart. He was convicted of sin. He remained behind to see the preacher, and said to him, "I'll tell you the plain truth: I am a burglar, and have a job on to-night." The good clergyman, in the course of conversation, tried to sound him as to whether he would give information to the police and stop the intended burglary. But the man fired up in a moment with unmistakable indignation at the suggestion, saying, "I'd die first!" In an agony of mind, he said, "I don't know what to do. I can't go on with that job, and yet I don't like breaking faith with my pals." That night, through God's grace, he broke away from his sinful companions, and that week, during a fearful time of trial, suffering, and temptation, he was able manfully to say, "I've done with sin, and have given myself to God." "That man," says one who knows him, "has never looked behind him. He obtained honest employment soon after, and has led a steady, consistent Christian life ever since." I tell you this to show you what the Gospel of Jesus Christ can do. The Lord Jesus is equally willing to work miracles of grace in your heart and mine; the one condition is that we surrender to Christ, in order that He may work His cure. Yonder is a sick man; medicine is placed on the table beside his bed; that medicine, if taken, will effect his cure: but he must take it if he is to be cured. So Christ has wrought out our salvation. We must accept His salvation, and daily live in the strength of it.

THE APPLES.—*p.* 307.

"HAST THOU FOUND ME?"

BY THE REV. A. T. WAUGH, M.A., CANON OF RIPON, AND VICAR OF ST. MARY'S, BRIGHTON.

"And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"—1 KINGS xxi. 20.

THE story of this chapter may remind us in some of its features of that tragedy in old Scottish history with which Shakespeare has made us so familiar. Ahab, with his wide domains, has the lust of another man's land upon his soul, as Macbeth, with his double honours, has that of his Sovereign's throne. Neither king nor thane, though willing to wrongly win, dared of himself play false; but each had at his side and ear an adviser, pitiless and unscrupulous, through whom the foul deed is done which brings success—to the king, the vineyard of Naboth; to the noble, the crown of Duncan. Ahab had Jezebel, Macbeth one whose name is as well unknown: each of them a wife who, herself without conscience or mercy, played upon the weakness of her lord to carry out her murderous will. There is not much hope of integrity for the infirm of purpose when mated thus. Man needs at home one who shall love his honour more than his success, whose ambition it shall be to see her husband good rather than great, and who will use her influence in gentle persuasion to virtue, rather than in incitement to wealth or glory at whatever cost; but such as this, man's best earthly possession and woman's highest ideal, had neither the King of Israel nor the Scottish lord, and each was impelled by a stronger will than his own—in the one case, to permit, and in the other, actually to commit, what his own nature would have shrunk from in very fear.

We are concerned here with the deed allowed by Ahab, for which, though planned and executed by others, he was justly held responsible. It was all over, that tragedy of Jezreel. The hapless man, who had dared to obey God rather than the king, had paid the penalty; he was stoned, and was dead, and his lands lay forfeit to the crown. And Ahab, thinking that, as it was done, it was well done, had gone down to the vineyard to take possession; no thought had he of the murdered owner, no expectation of any interference from God or man, as he went to feast his eyes upon the long-coveted acquisition. His end was gained; the vineyard was at his disposal, and if the means employed would hardly bear investigation, well, they were not of his contrivance or execution. With a light heart, then, he stood and looked upon the pleasant spot, which now, at last, he could call his own. But he had reckoned, as men will, "without his host," without regard to that all-seeing Eye which had marked every stage of his sin—the covetous desire, the unmanly depression, the infamous plot, the weak assent, and now the full consummation. A surprise was prepared for him at the moment of his enjoyment. "The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab, King of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it." No more unwelcome ambassador could the King of Heaven have chosen for His purpose; no more ominous visitor could have attended at such a time and such a place. It was many years since Elijah and Ahab had met—not since that awful slaughter of the prophets of Baal. From that time to the present the Tishbite had not openly appeared in the coasts of Israel, and the king may well have hoped and thought that he would trouble him no more. But, lo! he is here on the scene once again, and, in spite of the lapse of years, there can be no mistake as to that well-remembered figure: the shaggy hair, the flowing mantle, the leathern girdle, are those of Elijah and none other, while his stern visage is enough to tell that he is no prophet of good concerning Ahab. It needs but his presence to alarm the conscious king. Elsewhere he might have stood unabashed, but here, on this fatal ground, why, he would as soon have seen, as Macbeth thought he did see, the spectre of the murdered man. His conscience accuses him, and, with an exclamation, half-fearful, half-defiant, as of the man that is driven to bay, he breaks out, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"

Yet what had the prophet said or done to be thus accosted? True, there had been no friendship between the two men in former days—a servant of the Lord could not have had fellowship with a worshipper of Baal, king though he might be—but personal enmity there had been none. Why, then, should Ahab address him as his enemy? Why, but that he knew instinctively that the prophet was aware and disapproved of his deed, and was there to condemn him? Everyone else in Israel might condone, or fear to say a word against the murder of an innocent man and the confiscation of his inheritance, but Elijah, at least, would feel strongly and speak plainly in the name of the Lord; and, therefore, before he so much as opened his mouth, he was the king's enemy. There was offence, too, in the very character of the prophet. There is a hatred of the wicked against the righteous, simply for their integrity, which is felt to be a silent but standing

reproof unto them. The excellence, which we are not humble enough to admire and imitate, is wont to be regarded as a personal injury, which, if we cannot openly attack, we depreciate and resent. The Athenian citizen who gave his vote for the banishment of Aristides the Just because he could not endure to hear him so constantly singled out for praise is the type of all who cannot acknowledge and do justice to the higher graces and attainments of others; and Ahab could not thus reverence another's virtue. Elijah was upright, while he himself was guilty; and that alone was enough to make him the king's own enemy. Had he but known it, he had no truer friend than the prophet: not the wife of his bosom, who had devised, not the poor creatures of her suborning, who had carried out, the scheme by which his covetousness had been gratified, deserved so well of him as did the man whose presence overawed him with the contrast of goodness, and whose speech so plainly told him that he had "sold himself to work evil." Jezebel and the elders of Jezreel could aid and abet him in his wickedness—in other words, could help him on to destruction; Elijah would reprove and mortify, but only to stay him in his evil course and save him from the end of death. Ah! it is easy for us to see who it was that Ahab should have called his friend; but do we distinguish any more clearly between friend and foe? Are we not given to resent the words of the righteous, who may smite us friendly with reproof? Do we not, with strange confusion, connect the person who will convict us of sin with the guilt of our actions, as though he had in some sort brought it upon our heads? Ahab spoke almost as if Elijah had committed the murder and the robbery, and laid them upon his shoulders; whereas he did, at the most, but point out the sins which were already his own acts and deeds. And, whenever we stand convicted of sin by another's faithfulness, it is our own fault, not his; and, if it be brought home to us by his word, it is for our repentance and amendment. Whatever indignation we may show should be spent on ourselves, not on our friend, to whom our debt is one of gratitude, not surely of resentment, for his aid towards our restoration.

And there is another voice which, speaking to us of our sins, is too often treated, after the manner of Ahab's treatment of Elijah, as that of an enemy, or, at least, of a too officious friend, who must be silenced: I mean the voice of conscience, that witness and judge within us of every thought, and word, and deed. Invaluable monitor! which will tell us, in a moment and in secret confidence, the true nature of our lightest conceptions, as well as of our deliberate actions, yet, strange to say, too often ranked amongst our enemies. It is in some degree intelligible how a man will not brook the open rebuke of his fellow; but that he should resist and stifle his own inward moral judgment, because it condemns his conduct, argues perversion, indeed, of reason. Yet many there are who regard conscience much as Ahab regarded Elijah. They have no room in their lives for this prophet of the Lord; they have succeeded in banishing it from their dominions; and if in some rare emergency it does reappear, they look upon it as an enemy of whom they thought to be quit, and are vexed and indignant that they should be so molested. But among the present voices of earth man never has had, nor can have, so true a friend as his own conscience, which, from the nature of the case, seeks only his good—tells him so frankly, but so quietly, of his sins. God help us if we have mistaken and lost such friendship!

But once again, it is very easy to mistake and miscall as hostile those other attendants upon sin—their retributive consequences. Often are they regarded as a wanton and vindictive visitation, rather than as a remedial correction for the sinner and wholesome warning for others. When a man has to reap as he has sown, to consume the fruit of his own devices, to remember the iniquity of former days, he is apt to take this dispensation as though it were the work of an enemy, a hardship, an unmerited affliction; and he wonders and complains that there should be such spontaneous evil in the creation of a good and almighty God. But temporal punishment, bitter and painful though it be, is just another friend of the sinner. If he find it in the very place where he had promised himself pleasure, waiting on him in the vineyard whither he has gone down to possess it, if it wear but rough garments and speak in harsh words, for that very reason it is to be accounted not foe, but friend. Is it not better to be chastened and corrected in this world, that so we may know the nature of sin by its results? Should we not have just cause to complain if God had allowed us to think that, for all that could be seen or felt, there was no material difference between righteousness and unrighteousness, and that then, in another world, we were to discover that all heaven lay between them? Oh! let no man, when he finds himself visited for his sins and plagued for his offences, when he is made unhappy in himself, disappointed, vexed, and harassed in the consequences of his evil deeds, let none ever say that he is found by an enemy. It is a prophet of the Lord, a messenger of his Father, who speaks to him, and faithfully and lovingly brings his sin to his remembrance, only that he may repent, amend, and live.

To sum up, then, the lessons of this story of a crime, we have two which are most prominent: the first, our readiness to mistake friend for foe and foe for friend; the second, the certainty of retribution upon sin. As to the first, I do not know that Ahab is any more conspicuous an instance than many another in our midst—perhaps ourselves—only he happens to be before us. He took Jezebel to be his friend, because she provided the means for the gratification of his covetousness, and Elijah for his enemy, because he told him of his sin and announced its punishment. We see his error plainly. But there are men and women still, more

than can be numbered, who take the same inverted view of friendship and enmity; who count the aiders and abettors and companions of their sinful and intemperate desires as those who love them best, and the circumstances which afford means and opportunity for indulgence as the highest prosperity; and, contrariwise, those who would warn and restrain them, as their enemies, and the place in which they cannot gratify themselves as one of adversity. Will no experience teach us the true light in which to look at persons and things, to believe that those which would dispose and help us to righteousness are our best friends, those which lend themselves to unrighteousness our worst enemies? God grant us grace to learn this much.

Then as to the second lesson—the certainty of retribution upon sin—there is no surer truth than this in the government of God, and there ought to be none surer. It would not be a righteous dispensation which did not mete out appropriate consequences to every action, and it would not be a fatherly discipline which did not, by fit and loving correction, seek to win us from sin. Therefore, we must expect, and ought to wish, to be visited for our offences; the certainty of punishment is but the certainty of our Father's love, and of His desire for our restoration, if He may but bring us to repentance and to salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"TRY WEE WATTY!"

MIKE GRADY'S lodging-house was not by any means a fashionable resort, albeit a very popular one. Indeed, Mike scarcely even aimed at a very high standard of respectability. Dark and disorderly, very scantily furnished, and only ventilated by a broken window or two, it did not seem a particularly inviting place for any weary traveller, either in health or sickness.

Nevertheless, Mike Grady's was a scene of revelry, mirth, and song, one cold December night, when a pitiless mixture of snow, sleet, and rain had driven a number of inmates home earlier than usual to the shelter of that hospitable roof.

Revelry and mirth, did I say? Ah well! they called it that in Mike Grady's, though maybe the jargon of senseless oaths, coarse jests, and ribald ballad would have made a saint weep—an angel shudder!

Yet they were presumably happy, for the moment, after their manner. The hucksters had brought home some savoury messes for supper; the beggars had laid aside their crutches and patches, and no longer affected the tones of whining misery; the tramps had laid themselves out for a long, luxurious stretch before the fire, or as near that as might be. And so the midnight hour came on, and the Sabbath morning was at hand.

But they were not *all* making merry in Mike Grady's. One poor fellow—a tramp—very ragged, and worn to a mere skeleton, had staggered in that night for the last time. His earthly wanderings were over. Nature, outworn and outraged, had given in at last, suddenly and without warning. He was dying fast on that crazy truckle-bed in the darkest, coldest corner of the men's dormitory. The landlord would have had him removed somewhere if that had been possible; but at that hour of night and in his weak condition there seemed nothing for it but to let him lie, and Mike could only hope for a speedy end to the life-drama, since there was no chance of recovery and little hope of the night's lodging being paid. Paying in advance was the rule, but this man had been in so faint a condition that they had let him pass. Mike blamed himself now for being too charitable and sympathetic. "I was allays a soft-hearted kind o' chap!" he said apologetically.

Presently the dying man revived for a brief space. He sat up in bed, staring wildly about him. "Help, some of ye! I 'm goin' fast, and I must hear them words again before I go, or it 's all up with me!"

Most of the men were by this time silent and sunk in heavy, in some cases drunken, slumber, but they roused a little at this urgent appeal.

"What 's he arter now, bad luck to him!" muttered one.—"Can't the fellow go off quiet and let us have a wink o' sleep?" growled another; while curses more or less audible made up the burden of the sympathy expressed.

"It 's the good words," said the dying man in a low voice. "I had them once off by heart, but I lost 'em! Help, some o' ye, to find them for me! Ye 'll all be dyin' men like me, some day! Help, for the sake o' your own souls!"

What memory was it, garbled and dim, that came back to "Long Jeff"—so they called the tramp—in that solemn hour? From some long-forgotten and better past—some childhood not altogether unblessed? Whatever it was, it would not let him alone, and he would not let his companions rest. Again and again his weary cry came, breaking their slumbers, till at last some of them really bestirred themselves. They were human still, and they wanted him to die in peace.

"Fetch a Bible, some o' yez lads," said Bill Martin, an old huckster: "that 's what he 's craikin' arter. I once had one myself somewheres, but I don't know where it 's got to!"

One by one the company denied even the faintest recollection of having seen a Bible lying about anywhere in Grady's; while as for the suggestion made by Pate Davis, that somebody might repeat a verse of a psalm, one man shouted "Rule Britannia!" and another drowsily muttered "God save the Queen!" neither of which was likely to be of much use.

"*Try wee Watty!*" said a young fellow, not so hardened-looking as most of the others there, and who seemed really concerning himself now with the unfortunate Jeff. "Try Wee Watty! *he* knows a lot of that sort of thing."

This suggestion was immediately acted on. Watty, a boy of eight years or so, sleeping beside his father on a sack in one corner, was summarily roused and told to gather all his wits about him.

Watty obeyed without demur or question; he was used to being thus knocked about.

"Now, Watty, my lad," said old Martin, who took upon himself the conduct of this affair, "look sharp, Watty! This mate of ourn wants to have a chapter o' the Bible read to him. Thinks as it might do him some good, do ye see? him bein' taken bad suddent. Haven't you a Bible somewhere about, Watty?"

Watty rubbed his eyes hard and stared blinkingly at the gas-jet which, much to Mike Grady's annoyance, had been set flaring again. At last the boy did comprehend what was wanted of him. He was a bonnie fair-haired little chap, and had a pleasant obliging way that made him a general favourite.

"I've got a Testament," he said slowly, "but—I left it at the schule!"

"That's bad, Watty, very bad!" said Martin, shaking his head; "but can't ye rattle off a spell o' somethin'? Try like a man!"

Alas! Watty had not been such a diligent student as he might have been, and he had only attended Miss Greville's Sunday class twice or thrice during a curriculum of six months. But, happy thought! he had the lesson-paper that lady had given him last still in his pocket, and there was a verse of the Bible on that, he was quite sure. He fumbled away, and at long length found the treasure in a corner of his jacket pocket, along with a choice selection of rusty nails, bits of broken pottery, half-sucked "gundy," and such-like! Poor Miss Greville! She would hardly have recognised the nice clean paper she had given her restless little scholar! It had a picture of some Bible scene, as well as the lesson and the question and the hymn, all on it, and the anxious teacher had counted greatly on the picture to make Watty take some care of the thing. So it had; else, probably, it would not have been forthcoming now.

"Watty read the words of life again."—*p.* 313.

"I can read this fine!" said Watty, with not unnatural pride, and he was lifted up at once beside Long Jeff. The man ceased his moaning as soon as Watty began to read, and kept his eyes fixed on the boy as earnestly as if his very life depended on his hearing aright. Ay! maybe it did!

"*Him that cometh unto Me*"—so Watty spelt out; and Long Jeff uttered something like a sigh of relief, like a thirsty man who sees a stream of water afar—"unto Me—I will in no wise cast out," continued the young reader; and then he too sighed as if he had got well through some rather arduous task.

"Again!" said Jeff entreatingly; and Watty read the words of life again.

Perhaps in the weakness of his dying hour Jeff's mind could not take everything in at once, for he next asked feebly, "*Who* said it, laddie? Can you tell me that?"

"Ay! it was the Lord that said it! It was the Lord Jesus," was Watty's rather hesitating answer.

"That's it—that's it!" said Jeff.

He lay still awhile, apparently in peace of body and mind; then the glazing eyes opened with an eager, questioning glance, and he said: "*Where* is He? Where is He now?"

Watty was getting into deep waters, but he bravely stemmed the tide. He tried hard to remember all that Miss Greville had told him at that Sunday class, which he now suddenly resolved he would attend more regularly in future.

"He's up yonder—in heaven!" he answered, pointing reverently enough with his little black finger to the smoke-grimed roof above them.

"I know! I know!" said Jeff eagerly. "I mind it all now!"

His memory had re-awakened, and he was probably hearing better theologians than little Watty at that moment; and yet surely once more that night, out of the "mouths of babes and sucklings God had perfected praise!"

"This is a picture of Him!" said Watty, pointing to the little illustration to the lesson. It was of our Lord standing in the Temple, and was not wholly indistinguishable, even after its hard usage in Watty's pocket. But Long Jeff heeded not. His eyes were rapidly closing in death now. It was the Word—only the Word—he could now receive, but that Word was enough!

Before the sun of that Sabbath morning had gilded the wide market-place where Mike Grady's stood, Long Jeff, the tramp, had crossed the River, and laid down his earthly burden, whatever it was. Watty crept back beside his father, and found a well-earned repose; while the rest of the lodgers tried to forget this troublesome awakening now that a coarse coverlet had been thrown over the dead.

Watty did not fully understand—nor did Miss Greville ever learn—what good that Sunday-school lesson had done. They were only sowers—both she and little Watty—sowing the seed, and knowing no more of its fate. But surely the Lord of the Harvest knows!

ROBINA F. HARDY.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES ON CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

ENFORCED SABBATHS.

THE surgeon may sometimes tell you to rest your arm, and leave you to do as he advises. In more serious cases he knows that you neither will nor can give the rest necessary. He therefore makes sure of the matter by splints and bandages. So God has given to us the constantly recurring Sabbaths, which He bids us put to Sabbath uses, *i.e.*, to purposes of rest and recuperation, to the restoring to the spiritual life of the tone which it may have sadly lost in the varied activities and worries of the week. He calls us to come apart into a desert place to rest awhile. But sometimes, like the surgeon, He has to ensure the rest, taking the matter out of our hands. He forcibly takes us apart, secludes us from that which hinders our rest and healing, gives us the enforced Sabbaths of loss of work, the sick-bed, or domestic grief.

"MUST I BE DROWNED IN A DITCH?"

Courage to do right is required always, and to the end of life. It is not enough to do our duty on great occasions, and for a short time, and then escape from the common round and daily task. Meeting with a storm in the Thames when he was very near home, after rounding the world, Sir Francis Drake was heard to say, "Must I, who have escaped the rage of the ocean, be drowned in a ditch?"

PREACHERS OF THE AGE.

Theology is only alive when it shines forth in the hearts and lives of men. Some such thought as this must have moved the Archbishop of Canterbury to give to his new collection of sermons the title of "Living Theology" (Sampson Low). Dealing with a wide variety of subjects, Dr. Benson proves himself to be one of the model "Preachers of the Age,"

and thus rightly inaugurates the series under that name which Messrs. Sampson Low and Co. have recently commenced to issue. Several of the sermons included in this volume were preached by the Archbishop on memorable occasions—some of them occasions of great historic importance. It was fitting that the utterances of the preacher should be preserved, not only for the sake of the events commemorated, but for the great intrinsic value of the discourses themselves. This little book will be read, we are sure, by thousands who seldom read sermon-literature; and all may find in it not only intellectual pleasure, but deep spiritual profit. The Archbishop's volume is lovingly companioned by one from a leading and much-esteemed Nonconformist who is a truly representative "Preacher of the Age." Dr. Alexander MacLaren's contribution to this series, under the title of "The Conquering Christ," is what all who know his work would expect it to be—rich in beauty of expression, dignity of thought, and wealth of spiritual experience. A series of "Preachers of the Age" thus happily launched ought to be sure of the large measure of success which such an enterprise deserves.

THE GARMENTS OF CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOUR.

The invitations of the Gospels are free, but the requirements of the Christian law are strict nevertheless. The prodigal son was not allowed to continue to wear in his father's house the rags in which he was welcomed. The body is indeed more than raiment, but the raiment is something, and something not unimportant. The outward must accord with the inward. In the teaching of the parable, as in the teaching of the more dogmatic parts of the New Testament, it belongs to the Father to provide the new and clean raiment, but it belongs to the Son to wear it.

"THE WEALTHY LOWER ORDERS."

It is very painful to hear some people speaking of those who have less money than themselves (though they may be richer in character and culture) as "the lower orders." Such persons should be reminded that there are "the wealthy lower orders."

A CHILD'S BITTER CRY.

A correspondent writes:—One summer's evening, as I strolled through a poor district on the outskirts of the celebrated University town in which my days are spent, my attention was arrested by a small crowd of persons moving slowly along the middle of the street. On approaching, I found that the centre of attraction was a drunken man, whom, with the greatest difficulty, a little lad was endeavouring to lead home. A case of drunkenness viewed under any circumstances cannot fail to be a depressing sight, but this one, seen at the still hour of sunset in one of the great centres of religious life and learning, seemed to be especially saddening; and what intensified the sadness was the sight of the drunkard's little girl, a tender child of six, who was walking beside him, bitterly weeping, and beseeching him to "come home." Ere long the trio neared a public-house with its glaring lights and open doors. The drunkard stopped. He would enter, he said: and he moved in the direction of the door. But the little maiden stepped before him, begging him, with clasped hands and upturned tearful face, not to enter, "because mother was not well." Down came a savage blow upon the thin shoulders of the ill-clad child, which made her utter such a cry as must have moved the very hardest heart, and which caused a mother from among the little crowd of onlookers to step out and take the child under her protection. But the little one was not to be comforted. Clear through the still night air, with a pathos touching beyond all description, her childish voice rang out: "Oh, *how* he will beat mother! *how* he will beat mother!" At this point a policeman wisely stepped forward and prevented the man from entering the public-house, and the last I saw of the drunkard was when his unsteady steps were making for his own door. Further I could not go. But who cannot conceive something of the wretchedness which must have reigned in his home that night! And who can think without sorrow of the legacy of sad and bitter memories which that little maiden will carry with her into life! No father's voice to warn her of its treacherous shoals and quicksands: no hallowed memory of a father's godliness and manliness to last a lifetime. Only the memory of a drunkard's home, of a poor mother worried and weary, whose life was one long period of sorrow and of tears. The child's bitter cry still rings loudly in my ears as a call to active service; and I hand on the call to all who need awakening to a sense of their duty to poor weak humanity and to tender childhood.

"Do you question the young children in their sorrow
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow,
Which is lost in Long Ago.
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost:
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers
In our happy Fatherland?"

NEVER MADE A MISTAKE.

A gentleman, fond of country life and sport, once persuaded a town-loving friend to go with him for a day's shooting. When they got among the turnips a covey of partridges rose: the townsman shut his eyes and fired. It happened that his unaimed shot brought down a bird. He shouldered his gun and said he would never try again: he could now say he had never missed a partridge, which was more than his sporting friend could say. Possibly something parallel to this may be found in other and more important matters. Christian workers in various fields

of usefulness often make mistakes, especially if they be enthusiasts. But what would the world be like if it were not for its enthusiasts? If we in our anxiety not to make mistakes were to secure ourselves from the risk by doing nothing at all, we should make the gravest of all mistakes—the mistake of disobeying our Lord's call to Christian service, and should incur the condemnation of the man who hid the talent committed to him.

"CONSIDER THE LILIES."

One often hears a nurse saying of a little child in her charge that it "takes great notice." There is no better test of intellectual capacity. Nothing pleases a clever child so much as picking up new flowers, watching new insects, and collecting pebbles and shells. This delightful exercise of the powers of observation should in all ways be encouraged. And if it improve our intellectual powers to observe and study flowers, we know on the Highest Authority that the heart and moral principle may be taught by them. Consider the lilies how they grow, and learn that He who clothed them will not allow you to be naked or hungry. No wonder that we speak of the "language of flowers."

DR. MASON ON BAPTISM.

Dr. Mason's new work on "The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism" (Longmans) is one of the most valuable contributions in modern times to a subject which, historically considered—as it mainly is in the present volume—is of the greatest interest, not only to the members of that Communion of which Dr. Mason is a distinguished ornament, but to all Christian people. The book itself, however, is addressed to the more thoughtful and educated reader, and will be best appreciated by ministers and students for the ministry. The principal object of the book is to prove from Scriptural and patristic evidence that confirmation, as formerly practised by the episcopal churches, is only a complement, or consummation, of the rite of baptism. Into the merits of this question it is not within our province to enter: we can only bear witness to the learning, research, and sincerity which mark every page of Dr. Mason's book. We do not necessarily identify ourselves with the writer's personal views when we say that no ordinary theological library can henceforth be regarded as complete without Dr. Mason's important contribution to the subject of baptism in its various parts and aspects.

THE EARTH-SIDE AND THE HEAVEN-SIDE OF DEATH.

Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning used to say: "I can't look on the earth-side of death—I flinch from corpses and graves, and never meet a common funeral without a sort of horror. When I look deathwards, I look *over* death and upwards, or I can't look that way at all." Certainly the "earth-side of death" is very ghastly, and we add to it by some of the arrangements of our funerals. It is no wonder that there are those who, looking at this, are all their lives through fear of death subject to bondage. Let us look over and beyond death.

THE TWO MESSAGES.

We have just read in a newspaper that a man called Haswell has been driven mad by sudden news of success. The managers of the forthcoming Exhibition at Chicago invited designs for a "World's Fair Souvenir," to be sold to visitors, a portion of the receipts to go to the Exhibition, and the balance to the successful designer. Haswell, who was always regarded by his friends as a genius, saw a fortune in the scheme, worked hard, and after drawing and rejecting a hundred designs, got one that struck him as "a wonder." He submitted it. Three weeks after—a period of increasing anxiety to him, for he had staked his all upon it—he received a telegram announcing that he had been awarded the prize. He fainted. When he came to himself his mind was a blank. All he could say was, "It is mine, mine, mine!" Attaching exaggerated importance to small things, and *vice versâ*—that is to say, not seeing things in their true relations and proportions—

is a characteristic of unbalanced minds. Those are saved from this madness who allow themselves to be influenced by the "sweet reasonableness" of Jesus Christ. Even suppose this poor man did gain the fortune he expected, it would increase only a very little, or not at all, his happiness; but there is good news about forgiveness of sin and an eternity of happiness, to the announcement of which we listen only with indifference or in a condescending manner. Is it because we are Gospel-hardened—or why is it?—that a telegram about dollars arouses more attention than an invitation to heaven?

A COMMON MISTAKE.

One of the most common and one of the greatest errors that can be made, is to act on the supposition that happiness is to be obtained by the pursuit of large pleasures and strong excitement. These are followed by reaction, lassitude, and weariness. Not so, listening to birds singing in the spring evenings, observing the growth of the first leaves, playing with children, and other so-called "small pleasures."

"Come to me, oh, ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.
In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
In your thoughts the brooklets flow;
But in mine is the wind of autumn,
And the first fall of snow."

Happiness is made, and not found. It comes from within and not from without. The poet teaches us that, if we would after a certain age find enjoyment in life, we must become again like little children, open our hearts to the healing influences of nature, and cease to despise simple pleasures.

"A MAN WITH DIRTY HANDS."

We should hardly consider it a compliment if told that our hands were dirty. We regard cleanliness as essential alike to health and good manners. But in the South Seas a high compliment is paid when it is said of a person that he is a man with dirty hands. Obviously it is not the dirt that is commended, but the will and ability to engage in work that has caused it. The compliment consists in a recognition of the industrious and thorough character of the man who digs, weeds, plants, and is ready to do whatever has to be done, without being afraid of soiling his hands; and the admiration for such a man will not be diminished if, when the work has been accomplished, he gives the hands that have accomplished it so thorough a washing that the dirt upon them ceases to have there more than a figurative existence. The missionaries who labour in the Southern Seas have to be ready to turn their hands to all manner of tasks, and to merit this complimentary character of being "men with dirty hands." The way in which they have shown this readiness has given point to the Maori saying: "Gentleman gentleman thinks no work unworthy of him; pig gentleman does nothing." The man whose anxiety to be reckoned a gentleman is as eager as the validity of his claim is doubtful, feels that he must be very careful how he engages in what he suspects to be ungentlemanly occupations. The missionaries exhibit none of this solicitous anxiety. They, as in the case of the late Bishop Patteson of Melanesia, are free to do anything, from sermon-making to house-building, from preaching to gardening and cooking.

"GIVE ME THY HEART."

"It is a good thing," said a man to me the other day, "to have a bad heart."—"How do you mean?" I asked. "Well," he said, "whenever I get angry, or hurry too much, or do anything in excess, 'my sealed heart knocks at my ribs,' as Macbeth says. In less poetical language, my heart, which is not a strong one, gets a pain in it when exerted, and this pain warns me not to trifle with it. I take the hint, try to restrain temper, and to be moderate in all things. There is another way this bad heart has been a good one to me. A medical friend once told me that it might 'carry me off any day,' just as if my poor heart were an undertaker. 'Well,' said I to myself, 'if this be so, I had better give my heart to God, get a new one, and allow my life to be guided by the "sweet reasonableness" of Jesus Christ. This will save me from heart-breaking excess, and make me content either to live or die as God determines.' Yes, it is a good thing for me that I had a bad heart, for God's grace has converted this weakness of mine into strength."

SOME NEW BOOKS.

Residence in the Holy Land has given the Rev. James Neil the right to speak with authority on the customs of Bible-lands. It is marvellous how many illustrations of Scripture are to be gathered from the everyday occurrences of modern life in Palestine. Mr. Neil has collected many of these life-pictures to form a volume, which he calls "Pictured Palestine" (Nisbet and Co.). The book is well and abundantly illustrated, and is one which every Bible student ought to see, and to keep by him.—Similar in subject, but more in the way of a traveller's record of what he saw in the Holy Land, coupled with a student's researches, is "The Cradle of Christianity" (Hodder and Stoughton), by the Rev. D. M. Ross. The book

is less ambitious than Mr. Neil's, but is equally interesting, from its different point of view. The illustrations are reproductions of excellent photographs. In a measure, it does for Bible lands what Mr. Neil's book does for Bible customs.—A capital text-book—if such one may call it—for use with children, and admirably suited for reading to them, is "The Story of the Exodus" (Longmans), by Frances Younghusband. Those who remember the corresponding volume on Genesis, which was published some time ago, will be glad to see its successor.—In Archdeacon Farrar's new volume on "Social and Present-Day Questions," issued by the same publishers, there is, at any rate, no lack of variety in the subjects treated of. Statesmen (English and foreign), authors, scientists, preachers, and men of letters, are all passed in review in turn, together with most of the subjects that have occupied their attention. Many of the chapters are apparently sermons, but, whatever be their form, it is no exaggeration to say that there is something worth reading in every one of them.

"IS THERE ANYTHING IN THE WINDOW?"

Douglas Jerrold said to a shallow young gentleman who longed to see himself in print, "Be advised by me, young man: don't take down the shutters before there is something in the window." One is tempted to say something of the kind to those persons who, the moment they have turned their attention to religion, think that they are not only justified, but even bound to take upon themselves the responsibility of a preacher. "My brethren," writes St. James, "be not many masters" (*i.e.*, teachers), "knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

THE BOARDS WE CARRY.

Recently there died in Guy's Hospital a poor "sandwich-man," who at one time had been earning £10 a week, but who, like thousands of our countrymen, was ruined through drink. It was a melancholy fact that the first boards he carried advertised a play called *The Profligate*. In this way he was, perhaps unconsciously, labelled with his autobiography. On every one of us, quite as visibly, is our history written. Our lives make our faces. The sensualist acquires "grog-blossoms" and a pasty look. You see a man sour and forbidding-looking, and you pity his family, for you know he "has a temper." The open, pleasant countenance of another shows that he is frank and unselfish. We distrust the man with slouching shoulders and shuffling gait, but we are ready to follow the lead of him whose kindly eyes and firm mouth show that in his life there is a purpose true. Thus it is that we carry our labels upon us, as the "sandwich-men" do their boards.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF MONEY.

When Murray, the publisher, offered Washington Irving twelve hundred guineas for his "Tales of a Traveller," that writer, replying, suggested fifteen hundred, and said, "Don't think me greedy after money; but in fact, I have need of all I can get just now, as I can do five-pounds' worth of good with every pound I can spare." Certainly money is a great power for good when possessed by one who looks on it as a trust from God, and endeavours by thought and study to put it to a right use. It is not enough, however, to mean and desire to do good, for, without thoughtfulness and knowledge, a distributor of money will do a shilling's-worth of harm for every sixpence-worth of good.

"PACING THROUGH THE FOREST."

There are people who have visited nearly all the most beautiful scenes of the world without carrying away a single distinct image for the inward eye to behold afterwards. They rushed through these places, and did not give themselves time to see them. A single walk through a wood near home, if taken leisurely, would have been more profitable. A harvest comes to a quiet eye from everyday sights that are scorned by many, and only because they can be reached without an excursion train. How much a bed of daffodils shaken by the wind was to

A WOOD NEAR HOME.

Wordsworth because he took time to look at it! He says:—

> "I gazed, and gazed, but little thought
> What wealth the show to me had brought
> For oft, when on my couch I lie,
> In vacant or in pensive mood,
> They flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude.
> And then my heart with pleasure fills,
> And dances with the daffodils."

In the woods we see the beautiful things that God has made, but many people fail to notice them because they are common. The trees in our illustration are not so close that, like some Indian and African forests, they nearly shut out the sight of the sky. Let us take care that as we wander through the beautiful woods of our native land on summer days, the thought of the Father in heaven who created them and us is not shut out from our minds.

GOOD LIVES AND GOOD WORK.

Strangely contrasted are two works which come to us from one firm of publishers. That earnest and veteran temperance advocate, Mr. Thomas Whittaker, J.P., of Scarborough, is responsible for the first, an interesting volume entitled, "Brighter England: Incidents on the Way to It," published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. Mr. Whittaker will forgive us, since the idea was his own, for saying that probably the most interesting feature of the volume is its frontispiece, which shows five occupants of one magisterial bench, whose average age is eighty-one, and who are, one and all, teetotalers. Mr. Whittaker is still with us, advanced in years; and with this fact in mind a pathetic interest attaches to the volume which claims our attention with his own, "A Young Heart of Oak" (same publishers), which enshrines memories of Lieutenant H. S. Boldero, a promising young naval officer who was called away in his twenty-fifth year, after having served his country in many different scenes, and having given evidence of a decided and practical Christianity. The work is prefaced by a few lines from the Dean of Gloucester, and is dedicated most appropriately to that real friend of sailors, Miss Agnes Weston. —Miss Evered Poole is the author of a little volume of evening readings for the young, entitled "Good-night Thoughts about God," published by Messrs. Nisbet. The book contains readings for the thirty-one days of an ordinary month, and special readings for one or two particular anniversaries.—A popular abbreviation of "The Newly Recovered Apology of Aristides," together with an account of its discovery on Mount Sinai, is issued by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. There is a special interest in a work of this class, which puts into present-day form matter which has long lain hidden.—We have two stories before us that deserve a word of notice. The first is "Love's Victory," a tale of humble life among the colliers, written by Annie Lucas, and published at the office of *Home Words*. The other is a story of the times of William the Silent, and is entitled, "Rudolf of Rosenfeldt" (Hodder and Stoughton), a good example of what may be done in the way of coupling historical teaching with the easy reading of a story.—Just as we go to press there comes to us "The 'Darkest England' Social Scheme: a Brief Review of the First Year's Work." We must give a word of merited praise to the admirable manner in which the records of the year's hard work are presented. No "report" more attractive in appearance has ever reached our hands.—We have also to acknowledge the receipt of the annual volumes of *Biblewomen and Nurses* (Cassell and Co.), *The Mother's Friend* (Hodder and Stoughton), and *The Fireside* (*Home Words* office); and also "Great Questions of the Day" (Morgan and Scott), "Joe and Joë" (G. A. Brannon, Newport, I. W.), "This Way Out" and "The City of the Seven Hills" (Nisbet and Co.).

TWO SORTS OF OLD MEN.

There is a variety in old men, as in all else. "Variety," the proverb says, "is charming," but we must take this proverb with a grain of salt; and in the case of old men, as well as in many others, old age has very opposite tendencies. It hardens or it softens, it mellows or it embitters; it makes the sweet sweeter, and the bitter it makes more bitter. And this old age is, as to its kind, the outcome of life—a kind of sum-total of the past, a kind of footing-up of days and months and years, of struggles and efforts and discipline, or a certificate that during days or months or years all these have been neglected; and the tree, instead of having been pruned and being now fruit-bearing, is by natural law decayed and withered, and fit only to be chopped up. The sum-total of life is often read in the face, and if we could look within, we should certainly find it written on the heart. A loveless, selfish old age is the outcome of a loveless and selfish previous life. Age is a confirmer, not a converter—let us remember that.

The time for securing that there shall be mellowed fruit in autumn is in the bud- and leaf-time of earlier life. In nine cases out of ten, as is man's spring and summer, so shall his autumn be.

KNOWLEDGE AND CHARITY.

"Knowledge is power," but it is charity also, for the greater number of the unloving judgments we pass upon others are based upon ignorance. Said an American, "Oh! Jones! I hate that fellow!"—"Hate him?" asked his friend, "why, I did not think you knew him."—"No, I don't," was the reply; "if I did, I guess I shouldn't hate him." When the collier suggested to his mate that half a brick should be heaved at the new parson, it was only because the reverend gentleman was new, and unknown to him: nothing personal! One of the best things about treats and "outings" for the poor is that they bring them together and enable them to see each other from a different point of view. A poor woman was heard to say of another when returning from a day in the country, "Now, she ain't such a bad 'un as one would think" (*i.e.*, before singing hymns, playing "rounders," and partaking of a cheerful tea in her company), "considering the way she behaved to my Billy—is she now?" The more the "classes" and "masses" see of each other, the less will be their dislike. The poor will appreciate the grace, culture, and wider interests of the rich, and the latter will gain quite as much, or even more, by coming to know the patience, the unself-consciousness, the self-sacrifice, and the hopefulness of the poor.

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from November 21st, 1891, up to and including December 22nd, 1891. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver" Waifs Fund:* Sunflower, Kilburn, 5s.; A Greenock Friend, 5s.; J. J. E., Govan (50th donation), 5s.; Mrs. McIntyre, Ballachulish, 5s.; G. J., Birmingham, 2s. Mrs. Travers, Altringham, 10s.

For *The London Aged Christian Society:* Mrs. McIntyre, £1.

For *The Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society:* Waterloo, 5s.

For "*The Quiver" Lifeboat Fund:* "A Reader," 5s.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

37. Of what special act of rebellion against God was Jehoiakin, King of Judah, guilty?

38. What is known of the contents of this roll?

39. In what cruel manner was Jeremiah the prophet treated by King Zedekiah?

40. Quote a passage from which we gather that in old time it was customary for many people of the same trade to live in one street, which thus took its name from that trade.

41. What important covenant did King Zedekiah make with his people at the commencement of his reign?

42. By whom was Jeremiah delivered from the foul dungeon into which he had been cast?

43. What words of the Psalmist were fulfilled in the case of Jeremiah?

44. Why was Zedekiah so severely punished by the king of Babylon?

45. For how long was Jerusalem besieged by Nebuchadnezzar at its final destruction?

46. From what passage should we conclude that Zedekiah the King, in order to escape from Jerusalem, disguised himself as a workman?

47. Quote a passage from the prophecy of Ezekiel, made during the Captivity, which speaks of the sure return of the people to their own land.

48. What vision was shown to Ezekiel to assure him of this restoration of the people?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 240.

25. Pride and drunkenness. (Is. xxviii. 1, 3; Amos vi. 6.)

26. "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation." (Lev. x. 9.)

27. It was built by Omri, the father of King Ahab, and named Samaria after Shemer, the owner of the hill. (1 Kings xvi. 24, 29.)

28. God slew the Assyrians who had come to destroy Jerusalem. (Is. xxxvii. 14, 15, 33—36.)

29. Ps. xxxiv. 17.

30. St. Paul, who says, "Taking the shield of faith, wherewith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." (Eph. vi. 16.)

31. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Is. liii. 6.)

32. "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 7, 8.)

33. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Is. lv. 1.)

34. The freedom of the Children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. (Ex. xv. 13.)

35. Jer. xxxi. 29.

36. The promise of a new spiritual covenant of love and forgiveness. (Jer. xxxi. 31—35.)

"ONE SURE WAY."

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.

CARLYLE relates how in the darkness he was once tossing restlessly about, sleepless and miserable, when, "on the black bosom of the night," these words seemed shining out: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy will be done." As he repeated that prayer, he grew calm and peaceful. "A sudden check came," he tells us, "to my imperfect wanderings, with a sudden softness of composure which was much unexpected." Prayer is still the certain road to rest, the path out of fog and mist into light and gladness. Our needs and circumstances vary, our difficulties and burdens are perhaps beyond human help, but even the weakest can take the pathway of prayer, and thus most surely reach the help, the heart of Him who appoints all that can befall.

"Good prayers never come weeping home." The answer may not appear in the form our mortal ideas expect, the Master's ways being far above our own; but the present response is renewed assurance of His protection, and the petition that went up in darkness shall be fruitful yet in glory beyond our dreams.

Some who read this page may be unable to reach the house of prayer, or even to be present at the family altar; but bodily infirmity need not hinder the seeking, trustful soul from communion with the altar's God. On Faith's triumphant wing even the heart that is afflicted and laid low can fly to the Master's breast, and there gain new supplies of quietude and confidence. We need not count over our perplexities, wondering how we can sustain such a load of care, shrinking from the furnace that seems waiting on the morrow, when the road of prayer is clear and open for us all, this moment, and it leads by the way of the Cross, where burdens fall from the weary and heavy-laden. Perhaps we have neglected stealing away to the mercy-seat, and now we feel as though we should be strangers there. The soul that has no inclination for prayer is in peril and in need the greatest; may not these troubles have come to set that soul praying, and to bring it into contact with the Giver, whom we need far more than His most bountiful gifts? Make of to-day's affliction a "spiritual promotion"; let it be the messenger that guides into the presence of God, and teaches the stricken heart to pray. "Though *here* is *nothing*," cried an earnest preacher once in our hearing, "yet *there* is *all*, and help to the uttermost is to be had for the asking. Though all things may be against you, God is for you." What matter the stress of circumstances, the pain which is but for a season, the tears that shall yet be wiped away for ever, when He who was once a Sufferer, and carried our every sorrow, listens still to the faltering cry, "Lord, help me," and is nearer than the fires of the seven-times-heated furnace?

Those who, with some petition trembling in their souls, have sought the presence of royalty, find it is difficult to obtain access to the Sovereign—many guards, many regulations, bar the way—but there is nothing between thyself and thy Lord, oh, praying heart! Thy need of Him is Thy passport to His feet; thy helplessness is thy claim upon His tender mercies; thy broken spirit and thine appealing cry shall not be despised nor forgotten by Him Who is very pitiful, and Who knows the pressure of sorrow's crown of thorns. Luther was so assured of the power of prayer that he remained in earnest supplication during the critical time of the Diet of Nuremberg, and he ran from his house crying "*We have gained the victory!*" just when the edict came forth that granted free toleration to all Protestants. Legions of praying hearts have echoed, and are echoing, the cry. We have gained the victory if we abide at the Master's feet, whatever seem to threaten us, whatever wait in store. We look to the right hand and to the left, and find no helper; but the Lord Himself shall fight for us, and we shall glorify Him who can make for His people a path through the sea, and drop down manna in the wilderness.

It is a cause of grief to many that in illness and infirmity they seem to lose the power of expressing themselves in prayer. Once words with them were eloquent, but now they seem almost dumb, and they mourn over spiritual deadness. To such we would say—does not the Great Physician Who made your body understand its every weakness, and its reaction upon the wearied mind? Be of cheer! you may have lost eloquence, but you have not lost your Redeemer; even if you can only breathe a sigh for succour, even if you can only stretch out your trembling hand in humble faith, turn to Him this hour, seek and touch the prayer-answering Lord.

"The paths to trouble are many,
And never but one sure way
Leads out to the light beyond it,
* * * * *Let us pray.*"

M. S. HAYCRAFT.

[*Drawn by* LUCIEN DAVIS.]

EVENING THOUGHTS.

(*See p.* 330.)

SUCH A SUITABLE MATCH.

BY L. FROST RATTRAY.

"I CERTAINLY think he should propose to her; they are so exactly suited to each other. The one is so evidently the complement of the other, that it was quite providential Mr. Wilkins had to return to England, and found a clergyman ready to take his cure at once. These New Zealand country-places offer little inducement to a clever man."

"But, Mrs. Bentham, you can hardly call Malbertown a country-place; it is barely five miles from Auckland."

Mrs. Bentham put her empty cup, with due regard to its being her hostess's best china, on the dainty little table at her side, and rose up, saying very decidedly: "Well, someone really ought to point out to Mr. Sturmer that his attentions to Mrs. Cendle are so very marked that all the parish is talking about them. You must have heard it said that he calls on her at least twice a week. Have you not seen him there yourself, Mrs. Shipley?"

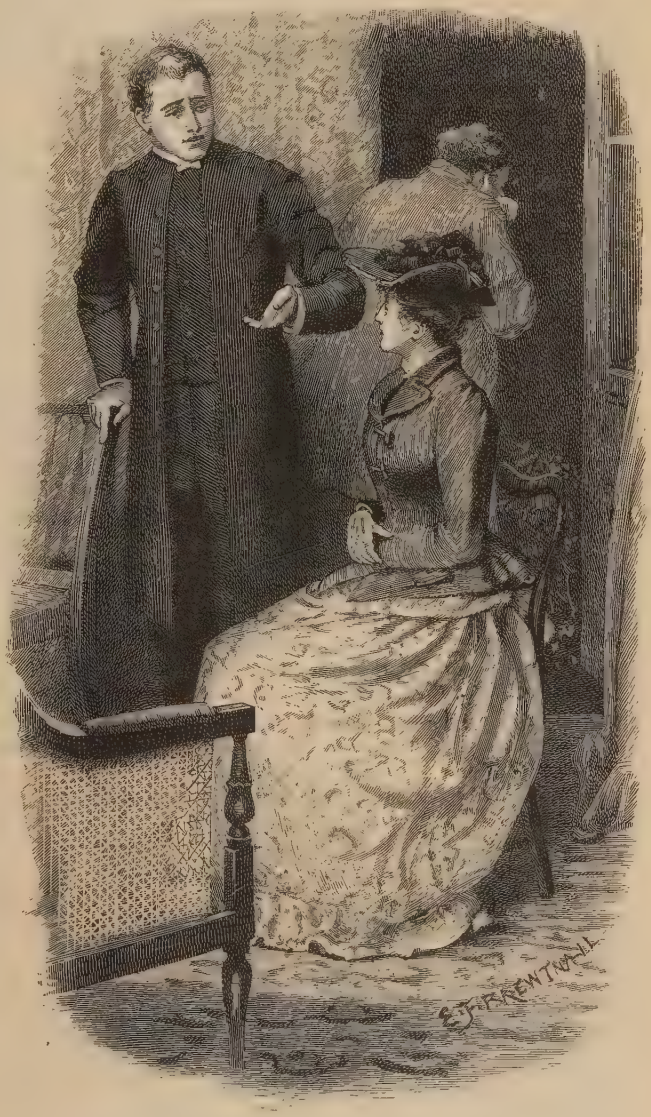
"I think he only goes to ask her advice about his two little girls," said Mrs. Shipley. "It is quite natural he should, as her house is so close to the Parsonage; and she has children of her own, you see."

"So have I, and so have a good many other ladies in the parish who have had a great deal more experience than Mrs. Cendle. What can she know about girls when she has only boys? But since he has made such a fuss about her, and, as I said, they seem so perfectly suited to each other, he really ought to propose at once. It is not fair to keep other people in suspense."

Mrs. Shipley laughed. "Meaning yourself?" she asked.

"Certainly not. But there are many young ladies in the district who entertain strong ideas of their own fitness for the position of clergyman's wife in Malbertown. I must say I do not think it quite fair—despite Mrs. Cendle's suitability—that a widow should take one of the very few eligible men about. She might let someone who has not yet had a husband have a chance."

The Rev. Stephen Sturmer had no thought of marrying pretty Mrs. Cendle. He was a grave, absorbed student, and looked upon the kind widow as one who was opportunely placed close to the Parsonage in order to give his little Bessie and Alice the care which, since their mother's death, they had sorely needed. He had no relations in the colony, and had been unfortunate in his servants. So the neglected children very frequently ran across to the cosy home and warm motherly welcome which always awaited them; and their father rather too frequently called for them on his return from visiting other parishioners. The good



"'What do you suppose she meant, Mrs. Bentham?'"—*p.* 326.

man would have been greatly surprised and very much annoyed had any of the local gossip concerning his fair neighbour and himself reached his ears.

Once or twice a hint had been let fall in Mrs. Cendle's hearing, and she had been rather cold and stiff when next Mr. Sturmer dropped in. But though he seemed conscious all was not as cheerful as usual in the little drawing-room, he only inquired kindly if his hostess had a headache; and should he take Frank and Cecil back with him for the evening, and leave her for a while in peace?

A sudden compunction for her frigidity towards this innocent man made Mrs. Cendle offer to take the two little girls into town the next day, and buy them summer hats and dresses. The weather was becoming warm—it was October; and their winter clothes were too heavy; she did not add, too shabby. Mr. Sturmer thanked her warmly, and actually offered to accompany them.

Blushing and laughing at his obtuseness, she declared she could manage much better by herself, privately wondering what on earth Mrs. Bentham would say if she heard that the widower and the widow had gone shopping together!

Mr. Sturmer then pulled out his purse.

"What shall I give you, Mrs. Cendle?" he asked. "I suppose a sovereign will cover everything?"

They were standing by the door, he having risen when he suggested taking the children over to the Parsonage.

Mrs. Cendle saw how little there was in the clergyman's purse. His stipend was just £100 per annum, paid as regularly as the uncertain amount of the Sunday collections allowed. He had very little private means.

"That will be ample," she said hastily.

But two neat straw hats came to four shillings, and she bought ribbon, resolving to trim them herself. Gloves were much wanted, and boots: these she could not make, and the sovereign had gone before the dress question was even touched upon. She had a nice little income of her own, and she fancied that she could provide these little waifs of girlhood with serviceable best summer frocks, which, as far as their father would be aware, would be purchased out of the wonderful sovereign.

But those quiet, apparently unobservant, men are very treacherous. The frocks were made by a dressmaker at Mrs. Cendle's house, and with the plain but pretty hats were duly sent over to the Parsonage.

In the evening Mr. Sturmer appeared in the widow's drawing-room. It was not his usual hour for calling—he had not his usual excuse: "Are my little girlies here?"

"Mrs. Cendle," he said abruptly, "did all those things come out of a one-pound note?"

"It was a golden sovereign," she said, a little tremulously. It was the first time, almost, they had been quite alone. If it was cold or wet, the little ones were with them indoors; if bright and sunny, and they sat on the verandah, the four children were playing close beside them.

Mr. Sturmer took one of the little hands which were busy making a pinafore for Alice, and held it in his own firm large ones.

"Dear Christian sister," he said, "you have been very charitable and kind, but I really cannot accept this, even as done to one of the little ones. It is more than a cup of cold water."

"You are very proud," she said softly.

He dropped her hand.

"Is it pride?" he said quickly. "I fancied, when I came here and accepted a small living, a wretched stipend, burying myself from all the literary life and culture that I loved, that I had conquered pride. I see I was mistaken. Forgive me; I was not even going to pay you now all that I owe you. I was going to ask you to wait until my last quarter's stipend is paid, for I have only a few shillings in my purse."

An almost irresistible impulse came over Mrs. Cendle to fling herself into this man's arms, and cry, "Stephen, Stephen, marry me! I have enough for both." She was on the verge of proposing to him! But her boys saved her this terrible breach of one of society's unwritten but most infrangible laws.

A pillow-fight had been progressing very satisfactorily in Frank and Cecil's room, but the noise had not reached the interested couple in the drawing-room. Frank had, however, landed his pillow in the water-jug, and had hurled it, dripping wet, at his young brother. This Cecil did not consider fair play, and at once proceeded to lay a complaint before his mother. His appearance in evening attire rather astonished Mr. Sturmer, whom he did not at first perceive, and whose arrival had not been heard by either of the boys.

"Mother, Frank 's a mean sneak! He soaked my pillow and pitched it at me. I'm just drip—— Whew——!" and Cecil fled when he caught sight of the surprised and somewhat taken-aback visitor.

Mr. Sturmer hastily said "Good-night," and Mrs. Cendle, a good deal flustered, proceeded to administer justice in her sons' room.

"I say, mother, what did old Stick-in-the-mud want to-night? It 's not his proper time for calling, so I really didn't know he was there."

This speech, which was meant as an apology on Cecil's part, rather jarred on Mrs. Cendle. She wondered how even an irreverent young colonial could term the tall, grave, scholarly gentleman, with the clear-cut, refined face and polite manners—when he was not too absent to remember them—"old Stick-in-the-mud." She applied herself to a vigorous scolding, which only resulted in an empty pillow-case being deftly placed as a cap on her head by Frank, whilst she was pointing out to Cecil that calling clergymen names was neither respectful nor witty.

"That cap 's awfully fetching!" said Frank. "I

say, mother, you must wear it at the next hen-party you go to."

Fortnightly working parties in aid of the Melanesian Mission, held alternately at various ladies' houses, were thus designated by these degenerate youths.

Poor Mrs. Cendle came to the conclusion that her lads needed a firmer hand than hers to manage them, and she flushed scarlet as she recollected how very nearly she had asked someone to undertake the charge of them, and of herself too.

Mrs. Bentham's quick eye noted on the following Sunday that the little Sturmers were uncommonly well dressed. This was, of course, only in comparison with the shabby garments which they had worn during their six months' residence in Malbertown.

"I wonder where he got those frocks made?" she observed to her friend Mrs. Shipley, scarcely waiting until they had gained the porch.

"Who?" was Mrs. Shipley's laconic but very natural question.

"Didn't you see the little Sturmers' dresses? And such stylish little hats; and actually gloves! I don't think silk gloves at all necessary for a poor clergyman's daughters; cotton or Lisle thread would have answered the purpose perfectly."

Mrs. Cendle was just behind the speaker, and began to fear that she had been extravagant: had actually wasted Mr. Sturmer's money! Perhaps had Mrs. Bentham had the spending of it, she would have managed hats, dresses, boots, gloves, and perhaps some other clothing, out of the sovereign. The widow had not thought of cotton gloves; she had fancied herself economical for not indulging in the best kid. Therefore she felt a trifle uncomfortable when Mrs. Bentham remarked how well the little girls were dressed, and wondered how one hundred a year allowed of such nicely made frocks.

"I have always thought he was in need of a wife; but if he has such excellent taste he is better without one. She might not dress to please him," continued the loquacious lady.

Mrs. Cendle rose to the occasion. "I think it is very hard that bachelors and widowers should always be looked upon as targets for all sorts of matrimonial projectiles. Surely a man may wish to remain constant to the memory of his dead wife, or may not feel inclined, for various reasons, to marry at all, without provoking such criticism and comments. Before you were married, Mrs. Bentham, you would not have liked to hear every gentleman who spoke to you accused of wishing to marry you."

Mrs. Bentham was much surprised at this outburst on the part of gentle Mrs. Cendle. She had not made up her mind whether the widow cared for the clergyman, and was hurt at his visiting her so frequently without justifying his conduct by an offer of marriage; or whether she simply looked upon him as her pastor and a near neighbour, and considered his visits solely due to these reasons and gratitude to her for her kindness to his little girls.

After all, six months was too short a time for either of them to know their own minds—probably they had not, either of them, given a thought to the subject.

This view of the case was Mrs. Shipley's, and Mrs. Bentham at last decided that it was the correct one, and said she would adopt it.

But spring passed; Mr. Sturmer had said nothing more about paying for the summer frocks, but had called on Mrs. Cendle just as frequently as usual, talked over with her all the ailments of the parish, and finally asked her to assist him to entertain all the decorators of the church on Christmas Eve at the Parsonage. To this she demurred, pleading that everyone would want to hurry home after they had finished, to prepare their own houses for the Christmas festivities.

"Well, let me give them afternoon tea, at least; all ladies are fond of that, and some of the gentlemen assistants may not disdain the refreshing beverage. You will look after it for me, will you not, Mrs. Cendle?"

"I would much rather you asked Mrs. Bentham. She is the wife of your churchwarden, and, as such, has a higher standing in these affairs than I have. Please let her take charge of the afternoon tea," entreated Mrs. Cendle.

"I do not see why I may not ask you if I like," said the curate-in-charge, surveying the widow's disturbed countenance with a puzzled look. "Why will you not do it?"

In despair, Mrs. Cendle blurted out the truth. "Because I do not choose to be talked about any more!"

She was standing outside her own gate, and after she had flung this explanation at the uncomprehending man, she made a rush through it, up the little scoria path, and entering the drawing-room by the French window, deliberately closed it behind her, though there would be no dew for some hours yet.

Stephen Sturmer gazed blankly after her retreating figure. What did she mean? He did not want to talk about her, but to her. Surely she did not mean he was not to have that privilege any more? He vaguely realised that the loss of Mrs. Cendle's society would be a great deprivation to him. He did not attempt to analyse exactly how it would affect him. He was quite under the impression that she was still a dear Christian sister and fellow-labourer with him. He had not the slightest idea of regarding her in any other light.

The words, "I do not want to be talked about any more," kept mixing themselves up with his Christmas sermon, which he intended to be a particularly good one. There was very little to say on the subject that had not already been said by abler and cleverer men, yet he fully hoped to arrest the attention of his hearers by his unique and skilful arrangement of this great fact of Christianity. His sermon was much more peculiar than he had bargained for. He made the shepherds of Bethlehem discuss in

hushed voices the knotty problem: Why should they be talked about any more? And then he found that he was not thinking of them at all, but of a certain graceful figure, clad in a simple black and white zephyr, raising a pair of rich brown eyes to his face with a half-pathetic, half-defiant look, then suddenly letting her black lace hat conceal her features as she stooped to unlatch the gate, and turning her back on him to hurry up the path.

What did she mean? Of course the simplest plan would be to run across and ask her to explain the riddle. So the Rev. Stephen Sturmer put away his sermon, and went into the hall for his soft hat. But a knock at the door caused him to replace it on its peg.

His visitors were his churchwarden and Mrs. Bentham. They had come to talk over a new system of decoration, and Mr. Sturmer forgot his puzzle, and gave the subject his full consideration. After a definite plan had been decided upon, and the various parts portioned off amongst the lady members of the flock, subject to their own approval, Mrs. Bentham said: "I was wondering, Mr. Sturmer, whether you would lend us your drawing-room for afternoon tea. You see, decorating is hard work, and in the last clergyman's time his wife always refreshed us with a cup of tea at four o'clock."

"Certainly," cried Mr. Sturmer warmly: "the very thing I was proposing to Mrs. Cendle. She——" He stopped abruptly. Would it be any use asking Mrs. Bentham to explain the mysterious words?

"Oh," said the churchwarden's wife, a little stiffly, but with all a woman's interest in the progress of what she considered a promising match; "then *she* will take charge of the tea?"

"No; she refused to do so. She said she did not want to get talked about any more. What do you suppose she meant, Mrs. Bentham?"

The churchwarden choked with laughter, and walked to the open door. Looking out, he remarked that it was a lovely night, and asked the curate-in-charge if he had studied astronomy. All the student awoke in Mr. Sturmer, and he suggested to Mrs. Bentham that she should come and see the southern cross, which was still an object of curiosity to the "new chum."

Mr. Bentham received a proper scolding from his wife as they walked home in the starlight. Such a magnificent opportunity to tell him what people were saying! and she could have done it in such an apparently innocent way. Was he really so absolutely stupid as not to know what being "talked about" was? The idea was preposterous! If he really was so ignorant, some kind person should set him right at once. She had no patience with such idiots.

As in duty bound, his churchwarden defended the absent parson.

"My dear, he is one of the most simple-minded, single-hearted fellows I ever met. I would not for worlds disconcert him by telling him the idle gossip of a little township. If he loves Mrs. Cendle—and I suppose you would not wish him to marry her without loving her—he will find it out for himself. If he does not, it would only make things uncomfortable all round by telling him it was his duty to propose to that too fascinating little widow."

"But she would make such an excellent clergyman's wife; and it is so very much better for the parish when there is a capable lady at the Parsonage," urged Mrs. Bentham, forgetting for the moment that she did not think it fair for any woman to indulge in the luxury of a second husband.

Mr. Bentham thought it was time to assert his marital authority. He sincerely liked Mr. Sturmer, and was resolved he should not be driven from the parish by the recital of a little foolish gossip.

"Ellen," he said decidedly, "I absolutely forbid you to interfere in this matter. There must be no hints, even, on the desirability of a lady to guide the feminine part of the parish, nor of the comfort Mr. Sturmer and family would experience were Mrs. Cendle and her family to agree to a union of hearths and hearts. Do you quite understand?"

And, very reluctantly, Mrs. Bentham did promise, mentally resolving to stir up Mrs. Shipley, and set her to undertake the duty of pointing out to their clergyman the step it was so desirable he should take.

Mrs. Cendle felt that the next meeting with her pastor might be an awkward one, and accordingly took defensive measures. She drove into Auckland, and invited a young cousin to come back with her, and remain over Christmas. Amy Lendon was charmed at the prospect. They lived in Ponsonby Road, and viewed a country visit as a refreshing change in summer from the heat and noise of the city. But she could not be ready that afternoon. She would take the Malbertown omnibus the next day. It passed Mrs. Cendle's door, and the Ponsonby tram would bring her into Queen Street to meet it.

So far, so good; but Mr. Sturmer would be quite sure to be looking out for Mrs. Cendle as she passed the Parsonage. Little Alice had begged to come with her, and must be safely returned. True, the carriage might go home by the Great North Road, and up the New North Road into the Malbertown township, but it was a long way, and there was just the chance that the clergyman might not, after all, be at home when it passed. But as the Parsonage came in sight, Mrs. Cendle recognised the tall thin figure that was just entering the gate.

Mr. Sturmer paused as the sound of wheels and horses' hoofs reached him, and retraced his steps, waiting on the footpath until Alice's clear voice called out, "Oh, papa, I've had such a jolly drive!"

"I hope the children have been good?" was the stereotyped remark with which he lifted his little girl down, then turned again for the other.

"The children! Why, only Alice came. Is not Bessie indoors?"

"I do not know," he said, roused by the alarm in

her tones. "Please wait one moment, and I will see."

He ran quickly into the Parsonage, calling, "Bessie, Bessie!" The one maid-servant told him that she had seen nothing of the child since the early dinner, and concluded that she had gone into town with Mrs. Cendle and Alice.

"She is probably at my house," said that lady, when Mr. Sturmer informed her that Bessie was missing. "I will drive home, and find out whether she has been there this afternoon. Alice can come on with me, and will run back and tell you."

But Bessie was not to be found. She and Alice had indulged in a little quarrel after dinner, ending in Bessie declaring she would never speak to her sister again, whereupon Alice ran over to Mrs. Cendle's, and drove into town with her. The widow felt keenly that it was only her strong desire to avoid Mr. Sturmer which had prevented her insisting on Alice going home to fetch Bessie to enjoy the little outing. Full of remorse, she walked back with Alice to the Parsonage. Mr. Sturmer was searching house and garden, church and burying-ground, for the missing child. Mrs. Cendle offered to send her coachman round to the neighbours' houses to inquire if Bessie had taken to paying calls on her own account. She spoke cheerfully, but her heart ached for the grief-stricken father, who was sure some harm had befallen his golden-haired darling.

"Perhaps she has only wandered over the rocks with some other children," the widow suggested, as she met Mr. Sturmer on the road, after sending the coachman off on his errand. An extinct volcano had strewn some acres of land in Malbertown with huge boulders, which, piled in picturesque confusion in masses, or split into smaller pieces, now covered with ferns, "lawyer," convolvulus, and various bush creepers, formed wild and delightful places for picnics and rambles. There were several caves, too, some being reported as leading to an underground tunnel, used by one Maori tribe in escaping from a stronger tribe who were attacking their pah.

Alice suddenly recollected that Bessie, Frank, and Cecil had long promised themselves to undertake a complete investigation of this tunnel. Perhaps they had gone there. But this hope was dispelled by the appearance of the two boys, who had been down to the Manakau Beach, and were ravenous for their tea. But as soon as they heard of Bessie's disappearance, they at once jumped the stone wall dividing the rocky waste from the high road, and disappeared behind the karaka bushes.

Mrs. Cendle turned to Mr. Sturmer.

"My boys are sure to find her," she said. "They know all that ground so well. I do not think you need be anxious now."

But her face betrayed her own fears, and Mr. Sturmer said he would explore further on, where the ground was more open. Bessie had become weary, perhaps, and was sleeping peacefully on the grass and ferns.

"Meantime, Mrs. Cendle"—he spoke in a protecting, half-authoritative tone, which the widow did not feel at all disposed to resent—"you go home and take a refreshing cup of tea, and I trust we shall soon bring you our dear one safe and sound."

Had Mrs. Bentham been at hand, she would certainly have felt justified in constructing those words into an expression of a tacit understanding, if not a positive engagement, between these two; but Mrs. Cendle felt sure that they were only meant to convey to her the idea that he perfectly understood she was nearly as much interested in the recovery of his child as he was himself.

"I cannot rest," she answered; and then, with a little natural petulance at the clergyman's stupidity, "you men seem to imagine that a cup of tea will cure any woman's troubles."

He looked at her in surprise.

"I beg your pardon," he said humbly; then turned quickly to meet Mrs. Cendle's man, who came down the road, speaking hurriedly and rather breathlessly as he drew near.

"No one has seen or heard anything of her."

"Put the horse up, Barnley, and then come and help us to look for the little girl.—Don't let me delay you, Mr. Sturmer; you will walk much faster than I shall;" and Mrs. Cendle moved towards a broken gap in the low wall.

"If you are going across here, let me be with you," Mr. Sturmer said eagerly. "It is not a question of fast walking, but of careful searching. Bessie could not possibly have gone very far."

"My fear is that she has fallen down between the rocks. There are so many crevices completely covered over with bracken and creepers, that, if she were not very careful, might easily deceive her as to their safety."

They walked on for some time in silence. At first, at any particularly rough place, Mr. Sturmer waited, and carefully assisted Mrs. Cendle to surmount the difficulty, but as time passed, and twilight began to steal rapidly upon them, the father in him rose above all other feelings, and he left the lady pretty much to herself as he rushed from rocky glen to rocky glen, shouting, "Bessie, Bessie! my little darling, where are you?"

Completely exhausted, Mrs. Cendle sank down on a large flat stone, where she was presently found by her boys.

"Dear mother, how white you are! Do go home. We'll find Bessie."

"Frank, I think you had better run and get further help. All the neighbours would come willingly."

"We thought of that at first," said Cecil; "but we didn't want to lose time. Besides, we might have dropped on her any moment."

Suddenly Mrs. Cendle started to her feet with a little cry. "I know where she is! Boys, do you remember that funny cave underground, and the only opening we could find was from the top? You know

Bessie was with us that afternoon, and nearly fell in, because you can't see anything of the hole until you are close beside it."

Frank and Cecil instantly started off in the direction of the cave. In the gloaming they had some difficulty in finding the exact spot, and Mrs. Cendle arrived just as Frank, lying flat on the ground, was peering down into the darkness, and calling, "Bessie, is that you?"

Cecil, in an ecstasy of impatience, was demanding: "Is she there? Quick, Frank! let me look; my eyes are better than yours. Get out of my light. Oh! there *is* something. Look again, Frank, in that corner: that's a frock! Where's a light? Coo-ee! Mr. Sturmer!"

None of the searchers were far away, and as the cave was not very deep, Frank was carefully lowered into it, holding on to Barnley's coat, which had been taken off to serve as a rope.

The party was not provided with candles, but two boxes of matches were speedily forthcoming, and Frank struck one as soon as he reached *terra-firma*. The earnest watchers above listened in terrible suspense for his first words.

"Yes, it's Bessie. She's asleep. No, she's unconscious. Shall I lift her up?"

"Is there room for me, Frank?" Mr. Sturmer's hoarse voice was scarcely recognisable.

"Yes, plenty. And I would so much rather you moved her." The awe-stricken tone brought the tears to Mrs. Cendle's eyes. Frank evidently feared Bessie was dead.

Very tenderly her father raised her, and held the inanimate form as high as he could, whilst Barnley stretched down to seize it.

But he could only just touch the dress, and could not grasp Bessie sufficiently to lift her out of Mr. Sturmer's arms.

Mrs. Cendle had promptly despatched Cecil for a sheet and a rope, and when these were brought, she directed the poor father and Frank how to tie the sheet round the child, and knot the rope into it, throwing up the end for Barnley to catch.

Thus, very easily, the little girl was drawn up, and carefully carried home on the sheet by the two men.

"Bring her into my house," was Mrs. Cendle's order; "and, Frank, run to Mrs. Ranson's, and telephone into town for a doctor."

Bessie showed no sign of life, notwithstanding Mrs. Cendle's exertions, and the arrival of the medical man was hailed with relief by all.

Mr. Sturmer was sitting alone in the drawing-room, his head bowed in his hands; the two boys were getting their long-delayed tea-dinner in the dining-room; for, anxious as they were about Bessie, it was some hours since they had tasted food, and a natural hunger would assert itself through their sorrow.

The doctor left, and Mrs. Cendle quietly entered the drawing-room. There was no lamp, but the blinds were not drawn down, and a little moonlight poured in at one window, showing the bent head and grief-stricken form of the clergyman.

Moved by a strong womanly impulse of sympathy—her mother's heart, with its natural longing to console anyone in suffering, overcoming cold conventionalities—Mrs. Cendle laid her hand gently on his shoulder.

"Courage!" she whispered. "While there is life there is hope. Bessie is not dead; she is still a little confused, and does not know any of us; but the doctor thinks she will be better to-morrow."

Mr. Sturmer sprang to his feet, and grasped her hands. "Thank you, oh, thank you!" he said. "Take me to her, please."

Bessie was lying in Mrs. Cendle's own dainty room, on her prettily draped white bed. Her face was flushed now, and she was muttering and moaning.

"My precious pet!" said her father, raining kisses on the hot cheeks, then deftly helping Mrs. Cendle to change the cloth on the burning forehead.

He was not allowed to sit up with her, but would not leave the house; so Cecil and Frank were sent to the Parsonage, and he took their room, Mrs. Cendle keeping the spare-room for herself and Mrs. Bentham, who, hearing of Bessie's accident, had volunteered her services for the night.

The next day Amy Lendon came, and proved a very efficient nurse. Bessie was quieter on Sunday morning, and the clergyman went to his services with a lighter heart, as the doctor assured him the child was not seriously hurt. He sat with her all the afternoon, and she seemed aware of his presence. She had been bruised by her fall, but had apparently not lost consciousness instantly, as she had evidently moved a little from the place where she had tumbled in. This was Cecil's theory, but the doctor said she had fallen into the cave head first, and had simply rolled over like a stone; it was wonderful she was not more hurt, but fortunately a little earth and dead leaves had collected in the cave, and these had saved her from striking solid rock.

By Christmas Eve the little girl was pronounced out of danger, and Mrs. Cendle met Mr. Sturmer on the verandah, as he came for a hasty visit before going in the afternoon to superintend the decorations, and told him the good news.

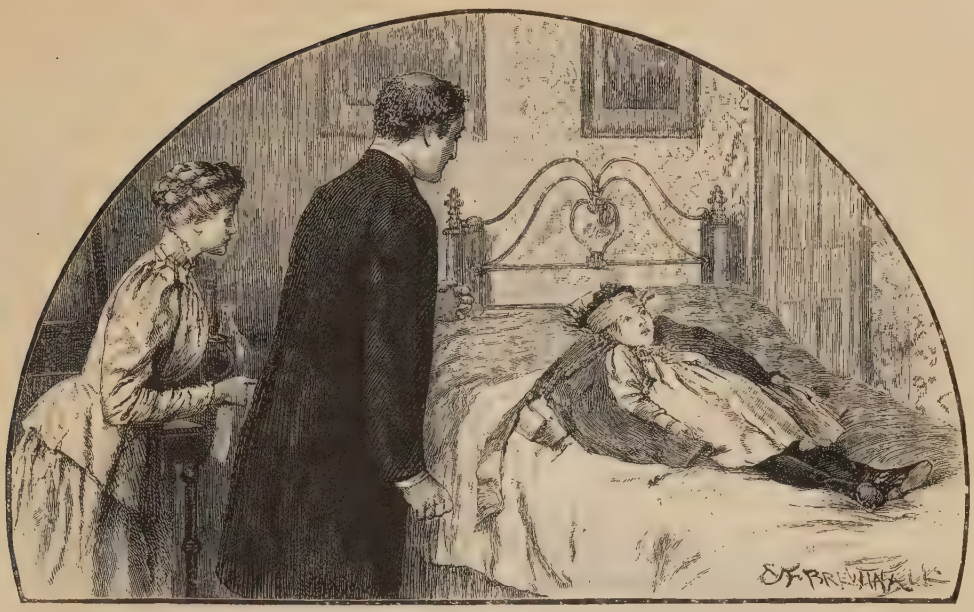
All the doors and windows stood open, for it was very warm, and Mr. Sturmer took his kind friend's hand, and drew her through the French window into the drawing-room.

"I wish you would tell me that in the same way you told me she was not dead." His dark eyes were fixed on hers as if he were trying to magnetise her.

"Oh no!" she murmured confusedly. "That was quite a—a mistake. I would have told my—my brother like that——" She broke off abruptly.

He released her hand.

"Would you? Yes, of course. You are so very sympathetic and kind; one imagines it is more almost than the common love of humanity. Well"



"Bessie was lying in Mrs. Cendle's own dainty room."—*p.* 328.

—as though shaking off some impression—"I am sure you must be right in whatever you do; and yet, I had fancied—— Forgive me, and we will go to Bessie."

She would not see his proffered hand, but abruptly left the room, and went into the next one.

Bessie greeted her with a bright smile.

"Isn't papa there? Oh yes, here he comes. Look! aren't I well?"

"So well that you must begin to take lessons in grammar," said her father; but his tone was not cheerful, and his smile was forced. Bessie's quick perception grasped these facts.

"Have you been scolding Mrs. Cendle, papa? Oh, you don't know how good she has been to me! She 's just as much my mamma as she is to Frank and Cecil. She said she would be—didn't you?" appealing to the still confused Mrs. Cendle, into whose pale face a bright wave of colour rushed.

"It was last night, papa; I was crying, I was so tired, and my head ached, and she did cuddle me so nicely, and called me her darling child—like she does Cecil when he 's hurt; didn't you?"

"Like an aunt," murmured Mr. Sturmer; "only one of the superlatively good kind."

"She 's not!" indignantly from Bessie. "Aunts are not always nice! There 's Harry Benson on the top of the hill; he lives with his aunt, and *she* never even kisses him, and makes him wear old clothes and do all her work, and doesn't always give him butter. I do wish Mrs. Cendle was my real mother."

Dead silence in the room. Mr. Sturmer stole a glance at the widow, but she had walked to the window, and was arranging the curtain as if her whole life's happiness were centred in its folds.

"I must not stay, Bessie." Then, as he bent to kiss her, Mr. Sturmer whispered: "Try and coax Mrs. Cendle to be your mother, dear;" and then he fled with unclerical haste.

He was remarkably absent over the Christmas decorations, and once only just saved himself from saying "dear" to Mrs. Shipley by a sudden attack of coughing. He was particularly kind to Frank and Cecil, and insisted on their partaking of a liberal portion of plum-cake at Mrs. Bentham's afternoon tea. Naturally, his peculiar manner did not escape that observant lady, and she indulged in an unladylike but effective wink at Mrs. Shipley when the elegant silver cake-basket was again offered to the two boys, who were far too sensible not to avail themselves of this unexpected generosity; for Mrs. Bentham, as a rule, did not allow her rich pound-cake to be devoured by hungry lads, and would not usually have hesitated to tell Mr. Sturmer that on the other table some plain buns had been placed for any children whose mothers brought them to the Parsonage, instead of leaving them to frisk about the church, tread on the evergreens, and pull the geraniums, azaleas, arums, etc., to pieces in their absence.

At length the work was completed, and the usual questions, "How do you think my pulpit looks? Will it do?" "Isn't that variegated periwinkle rather pretty round the rails?" with the usual indiscriminate compliments for answers, had been got over; the verger, with long face and reluctant broom, alone remained, his part—that of tidying up—being the hardest and most thankless of all.

"Papa," said Alice, "Mrs. Cendle has asked us to spend Christmas Eve with Bessie and the boys. Won't it be jolly! Are you ready? because we're to have tea at six."

Mr. Sturmer hesitated. Bessie's words, "I do wish Mrs. Cendle was my real mother," had penetrated like rays of light his darkness regarding his real feelings towards that attractive and lovable woman. In the sudden illumination, he saw that what he had fondly cherished as a warm brotherly feeling towards one who had been so kind to his children, and so helpful in his parish work, was no mild sentiment of that kind, but a true, devoted love for Norah Cendle, as a woman whom any man, himself included, might long to win as his wife.

"But she won't have me, I fear," he had said to his throbbing heart all the afternoon. "I am not nearly good enough for her. Besides, she said she felt for me as for a brother."

So, though he exerted himself to be cheerful for the children's sake, his efforts were not very successful, and there was a decided constraint between himself and his hostess. Had he not been so preoccupied, he might have noticed that she was less herself, more conscious in her behaviour, more reserved than he was.

Bessie had been carried into the dining-room, and laid on the sofa. The boys had taken possession of the school-room for two days, and had allowed no one to go in. They had requested that all the Christmas presents should be duly labelled and handed over to them. After tea, they, in a very ludicrous speech, requested the company to favour them with their presence in the adjoining room. It was the usual one-storeyed house, and the rooms were, as Cecil said, all handy, especially for invalids.

As Mr. Sturmer carried his little daughter to the school-room, she whispered: "Papa dear, I did try to coax Mrs. Cendle to be my real mother, and she cried a little; and when I said you'd told me to ask her, she said you would have to arrange it with her. You will, won't you, papa? And then we'll live here always, and be so jolly!"

The school-room contained a capital Christmas-tree, very prettily decorated with presents and flowers. The two little girls were charmed, as it was the first they had seen. But Bessie was soon wearied, and gladly retired to rest, her last emphatic words to her father being: "Ask her to-night if we mayn't come and live here."

Innocent little Bessie! Into the moonlight went Mr. Sturmer, quite unable to face the merry children again.

"Ask her to-night." He would very much like to do that; but what would she say? Unable to make up his mind to risk his fate, he strolled round the little garden, then up the steps, and into the house again. In the hall he encountered Mrs. Cendle. He took his courage in both hands, and stammered: "I want to speak to you: to—to ask you something. It's quite warm; come into the garden." And Mrs. Cendle went.

* * * * * *

"Wasn't it a good idea of mine?" said Bessie, when experience had shown that Mrs. Bentham was correct, and Mr. and Mrs. Sturmer were really made for each other. "If I hadn't wanted her for my real mother, papa wouldn't have thought of getting her to be his wife."

And happy Mrs. Sturmer laughingly assures her husband that Bessie is quite right.

EVENING THOUGHTS.

MY Lord, my God Thou art!
E'en 'mid this lingering night
In Thee mine inmost heart
Doth own the Truth, the Light;
Here at Thy feet I pray, I wait—
Canst Thou not make the crooked straight?

The path is shadow-veiled,
Perplexed and tired am I:
My human powers have failed,
But yet to Thee I cry.
Thou art the Truth, Thou art the Way,
Stretch forth Thy hand—it shall be day.

Though human counsels
But seem at varying strife,
A Voice Divine doth fall.
That whispers, *Love* is life:
Ah! more than learning's highest skill
Is this—to do the Master's Will.

Oh! Thou who hearest prayer,
On Thee my hopes abide;
How can I know despair
If Thou wilt onward guide?
Shine forth, oh, Star for ever bright!
And lead me, lead me into right.

My soul shall cast away
These shades that round her cling;
Thou art my God for aye.
Redeemer, Father, King—
Send out Thy truth, send out Thy light;
Oh! Christ, Thy face doth end the night.

MARGARET HAYCRAFT.

WASTE.

BY THE REV. HARRY JONES, M.A., PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S, AND HON. CHAPLAIN TO THE QUEEN.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."—ST. JOHN vi. 12.

IT is scientifically true that nothing is ever really lost; there is no such thing as annihilation. In the world of nature, which is God's, the disappearance of any matter does not mean that it is destroyed, but that it has taken another shape; and even when the thing is not such as we can see or touch, it is not really lost when we lose perception or even memory of it. Thoughts are as indestructible as matter. They may pass away, and so completely may they seem to have perished, that no effort or patience on our part is able to recall them; but they survive; and there have been mysterious moments in the experience of many when they reveal themselves with completeness, as in the cases, well authenticated, in which a drowning man has had a complete vision of his whole life, down to its minutest, unremembered details. There is, so to speak, a book of judgment, in which all our acts, purposes, and motives are indelibly recorded. Nothing is ever really lost.

Nevertheless, the saying of Christ touches a profound truth in the economy of human life. Though it is impossible for anything to be destroyed, since when it disappears it is only changed, it is easy for man to waste that which he uses or possesses. It is not so with Christ. Throughout the works and teaching of our Lord we may see that He improves, what He touches, and does not degrade it. The whole course of Christian procedure is recovery, or an advance towards a higher condition. God does not quench the smouldering flax. He restores peace to the troubled conscience, He bids the desponding sufferer be of good courage, inasmuch as He forgives him the sins which would pull him down. And more, Christ holds before us the prospect of fuller life, fuller power. "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to My Father." He proclaims the eternity, not the end of life: "He that believeth in Me shall never die." Whatever change He foretells in or of those who have faith in Him is towards a higher, not a lower state.

But along with this steady onward progress in the work and influence of Christ, which transforms the mind, and leads from what we call death to resurrection, there may be noticed in it a careful conservatism which checks extravagance. This is conspicuous on the occasion when He fed the multitude with loaves and fishes, and "when they were filled"—for there was nothing niggardly in His thrift—said unto His disciples, "Gather up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost."

Here is, first, a lesson about the use of those material possessions which we may have. It appears, indeed, that the carefulness Christ showed would seem to be hardly required. There was a reserve of power in Him, and one might say that fragments could not be really wanted by any in the company of One who could provide abundance. Why should the resultant fringes of a miracle be cared for? If the disciples had needed a further supply of food, could not He have satisfied them as He had fed the multitude?

A use that is commonly made of this thrift shown by Christ is to the effect that the least of His words or sayings is precious, and must be preserved. An allegorical meaning is thus given to the matter. No doubt there is a hidden or inner sense in all God's ways and works; and yet in this case we may see a direct literal application of our Lord's command that the fragments should be gathered up. It would seem to tell us that though, as a general rule, God provides our daily bread and the necessaries of life, He would have men make the most of them.

And this truth has many illustrations. The thrift of Christ in the case before us points first to waste of food. This is most familiarly seen in the extravagance of some households, where the "fragments that remain" are thrown away, or misapplied after a fashion which leads to dishonesty or peculation on the part of the servants of the family. It is not merely that food is sometimes thus treated which might have been given to the poor. That is bad: it not only deprives some of what they would be thankful for, but breeds social indifference to the condition of such as are needy; it encourages, too, especially with children, a mischievous carelessness about small things, which nevertheless are of value.

And yet these are by no means the worst examples or results of material waste. It is obviously seen in the extravagance of the spendthrift, who throws away money. This might have been employed in the promotion of confessedly good works, but is often squandered on self-indulgence, which not only harms him, but breeds ministrants to vice, who contaminate others; or it is laid out in the gratification of fanciful tastes. which are mere whims for production, and degrade the labour spent upon them. Thus money is wasted which might have helped to turn the wheels of honest toil to the benefit of a whole community. Waste is obviously seen in other common ways: in the use of material by an ignorant workman, who cuts into more wood or cloth than he need in shaping the fabric or garment which he makes. There is waste of seed by a farmer who sows a bushel where a peck would be sufficient. There is waste when we dismiss into the river or the sea that refuse which might have been employed in enriching the soil of the field. Many other examples of material waste might easily be given.

But though the command of Christ to gather up the fragments has these social, domestic, and commercial applications, it has many others. Waste is seen in the misuse of such "opportunities," as well as such materials, as we may have. Much, *e.g.*, has been written and said about the waste of "time," which, say what we will, is given equally to each man as long as he lives; everyone has it to his full,

without robbing his neighbour. And nothing is more commonplace than judgment on a man for wasting his time. Some ingenious calculators have shown, with arithmetical finality, what has been done with the odd moments of life in the case of such as have employed them, say, in learning a language or compiling a book. We may not, however, set much store on these insistent niceties of economy in parcelling out the day. It is impossible for most men to attend to them. Indeed, there are pauses in toil or our common occupations which, so far from their being thus wasted, are not without their distinct usefulness, in allowing us to take legitimate breath or rest; and he who would crowd labour into every corner of the twelve hours may be allowed to entertain or boast himself, without disturbing the consciences of those who like some elbow-room in life.

But there is unquestionably an obvious waste of time by many who are not compelled to employ it in some useful or imperative work. It hangs heavy on their hands; they do not know what to do with themselves; they invent entertainments which shall enable them to get through the day. A phrase has arisen which reveals a still more deplorable consciousness of inability to occupy the hand and mind. Some speak of "killing" time as if they were never to realise how short-lived, in one sense, it may eventually show itself to be. The day may come in which they would give anything for the smallest portion of what they have heedlessly despised.

It is not, however, in respect to our use of odd minutes in life that we should employ the direction of Christ about the economy of time. It has a deeper purpose. If He would have us gather up its fragments, He would here inculcate its right use on all occasions. This does not mean that our spare hours and intervals of work should be utilised in doing pieces of additional labour; but they need not be "wasted." They may, *e.g.*, be well employed in taking healthy rest or following some wholesome recreation. The fragments are really lost when they are devoted to, or spent in, mischievous self-indulgence. Rightly used, say in repose or bracing pastime, they give strength for the discharge of duties which have to be done, or labour which has to be spent in the fulfilment of our calling. Thus there is no "waste" of our time, though it be not filled with productive toil up to the brim.

The economy or thrift of Christ is seen, moreover, in a due application of the "powers" we may have. The ability which God gives is sometimes provokingly misdirected. We see a man use his strength, with a superfluity of force, to do that which needs no such expenditure; he wastes his "power," or he uses it, perhaps, at a wrong, inopportune time. He rows his boat against the tide, when it would have equally served his purpose to wait till it had turned.

Or he wastes "ability." He spends care and patience in the production of some article or fabric which is wholly useless. There are applications of industrious dexterity which are of no value whatever, except to show that the workman had a talent which might have been usefully employed in, say, legitimate ornamentation, or the making of whatever requires extreme nicety of touch. There are other examples of perverse carefulness which might serve to illustrate an employment of intellect, industry, and time, which is simply waste, and show a losing rather than a gathering up of the fragments of opportunity.

Such illustrations as I have given of "waste" may indeed seem to indicate a procedure which is beneath the dignified action of the laws of life, which are God's; and yet they point to a vicious habit of expenditure in the use of the ability which He bestows and of the materials which He supplies, and against which the sentence of Christ is a protest which cannot be disregarded.

The spirit, the drift of our Lord's command to His disciples to gather up the fragments, that nothing should be lost, teaches us to use all that He gives with thoroughness, without misapplication. It not only forbids carelessness about such as are esteemed to be little things, but prohibits that mood of indolent indifference which loosens the bands of life, and leaves a ragged edge to all our labour. The fringes of God's work are never frayed; and there is a completeness in all He does which is required of the true Christian. We are responsible for the details of our knowledge, opportunities, and ability. These are gifts, loans—smaller, maybe, than a talent—of which the Master takes account, and our conduct in using the least of them is noticed by Him. That notice is illustrated in the command of Christ: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

It is not to the purpose to reply that there is a seeming waste in the natural world, which is God's, since, *e.g.*, only one in one hundred seeds may fructify; for the others are not thrown away: they are only put back into the crucible of incessant creation, and are never let go out of the hand of God. The wonderful chemistry of nature utilises the smallest unsown seed, and makes it fill its place in the continuous processes of growth.

But in God's dealing with "man" there is a special giving of opportunity and power which cannot be recovered, or otherwise employed by us, if we fail to apply them to the purpose for which they were given. With us, if not so used, they are "wasted." We do not know what becomes of them, but we cannot turn misused opportunities to account when once we have let them pass. They are to us, so far as we might employ them, lost, though they may be stored against us to our shame.

Our life throughout cannot afford to miss any gifts of God; rather they are to be improved. That fits the way and purpose of Christ, Who exalts what He touches, and does not degrade or shame it. We may notice that in all His recorded dealings with "man" He used exceptional power, not to smite, but to succour. The disciples would have brought down fire from heaven to avenge an affront offered to their Master, but He checks them, saying: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." He brings back that which had gone, He renews impaired vitality. He would gather to Himself, for fresh life, the great and the small, the city and the

household, the strong and the weak. He overlooked no budding promises of growth, which some might deem morsels of humanity, beneath the notice of His grand designs. He took infants up in His arms and blessed them, saying, "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

In all this we see the general advance and exaltation of man to have been in the mind of Christ; and in working together with Him we must needs aid His purpose towards ourselves, by allowing no act or use of time to be in any wise treated as insignificant. The life of Christ is intended to penetrate our whole being, in labour and in rest. There is nothing beneath notice in what He gives. And thus we may take to ourselves, with larger application, the command He gave to His disciples, even when they were filled: "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost."

A CORNER IN LIFE.

A SKETCH.

"'I am so glad that you came now.'"—*p.* 356.

AWAY from the bustle of life, far, far away from the busy world, where the very air rings with the echo of hurrying feet, all anxious to be first in the race for wealth and success, lies Larm-by-the-Sea.

Its very name is expressive, for the little fishing village lies like a glittering tear in a green ravine that slopes to the rock-bound Cornish shore.

One peculiarity of that corner of the south coast is that the sea is never absolutely smooth. For even on the balmiest of summer days, when the land is bathed in a flood of golden sunlight, and the birds are busy with their nesting songs, the white waves of the Atlantic come curling up with a fresh ripple of sound, to break upon the grey rocks that jut out so dangerously far from land.

Indeed, it was often said in those parts that the name of the village had been given to it in sad and mournful memory of the scores of fishing-boats and unknown foreign vessels that had been wrecked on its inhospitable shore, and that Larm was ever weeping for her brave sailor sons who had gone down in sight of their homes, never more to be seen until some pitiful wave flung them ashore into the little creek.

But Larm was not looking suggestive of either tears or shipwrecks on the day on which I turned my back on London and its smoke, and took up my abode in the white cottage on the cliff, that had been christened in smuggling days "The Look-out."

It was as fair a place as could be met with on any day or in any part of England. The road that led up to it was a narrow, hedge-bordered lane, up which, within the memory of man, no carriage-wheels had passed, until the rickety fly that brought me from the far-distant station crushed the mossy turf under its ramshackle wheels, and brought to light ruts that looked as if they had been hollowed out for a Roman chariot track. The wicket-gate led into what was by courtesy called a garden, but which, in its wild luxuriance, was more like one's idea of a wilderness; for geraniums, roses, and wild flowers, grew together at their own free will, and the house was so buried in ivy and myrtle that the windows looked like bewildered eyes, trying to peer out of tangled masses of curls.

But a few days' pleasant labour put everything to rights, and I soon settled down with my one little maid, determined to forget the world and its past, that had been but a bitter one for me, in the quiet enjoyment of the present.

I had very few friends and relations who cared a rap for my existence, and so had few troubles in the way of letters to write or to receive; and I knew that no one was likely to call upon me, for I had ascertained the fact that there were no neighbours in this part of the world, and even the clergyman was a very old man, who lived alone, three miles from Larm, and drove in every Sunday to take the service, morning and evening.

This being the case, I recognised with real delight that for the future I was going to live among my poorer brethren, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," able perhaps to do a little good in my life, certainly far removed from temptations of every kind.

It was early autumn weather, and I was sitting by my open window, literally revelling in the scene that lay before me.

My sitting-room was comfortably furnished, and full of my choicest possessions, each one full of pleasant memories, from the Indian rug that was flung across the sofa, down to the china cup and saucer that stood on the improvised velvet-covered shelves.

It was an old-fashioned room, with quaint corners and alcoves, and deep-embrasured windows, where I had planned most charming low seats, and it was on one of these that I was sitting, looking out into the gathering twilight.

On one side was my writing-table, fragrant with a bowl of late roses, and near at hand a bookcase, full of my favourite volumes.

There stood my richly bound Ruskin and my well-worn Browning, side by side with an assortment of useful literature. And between them a thin volume, dearest of all, as it was full of varied deeper thoughts —"Pensées," by Roux, a book little known to English readers, but full of the germ-thoughts of a hundred sermons, a hundred eloquent lectures.

Below the green slope, on which "The Look-out" stood, lay the village of Larm, consisting of a mere handful of houses, with here and there a red roof among the prevailing greyness of colour.

The lamps were being lighted in every window, and shone like stars through the gathering haze of the evening, while on the stone quay fronting the shore the fishermen were lighting the primitive lanterns that served them for gas-lamps, and swinging them up upon the tall poles, where they hung creaking weirdly in the light breeze.

One or two fishing-boats had just come in, and the voices and shouts of the men at work unloading them were wafted up to my window, blended in clear harmony.

I could hear the thud of the baskets of shimmering mackerel and pilchards as they lowered them on to the quay, and the flap of the red sails as they fluttered against the primrose of the evening sky.

Perhaps it was the influence of the hour and the spell of that Cornish landscape that woke in my heart an old chord of unrest which had lain dormant for many years.

I began to regret what might have been, and to feel that my lot had been, after all, a hard one. There had been a time when I had looked forward to a different and fuller shaping of my life, when I should never have been alone, but always blessed by the presence of a protecting love, happy with the clinging touch of baby fingers against my breast.

But one cloud, one little misunderstanding, had ended my dreams, and somehow, though time had softened the wound, I could never forget nor quite live down the old regret. And as I sat and thought that evening, a big tear splashed on to the window-sill, and lay shining there like a fallen star.

It did not seem at all strange to me at that moment that from the garden near at hand came the echo of a deep sigh, and, when it was repeated again, I raised my head quickly and looked out.

Someone was standing, hesitating, on the garden path, and, as I moved hastily, came forward into the light.

I saw that it was the figure of a woman with a bunch of those silvery seeds in her hand which come from the dead flower of the "honesty."

"Good-evening," she said in a dull, quiet voice, as monotonous as the rising and falling of the sea on the shore below us.

"I am your nearest neighbour, Patience Cawthorne, and seeing that you are quite alone in the world, I have ventured to pay you a visit."

Her voice was that of a lady, pure and refined in every accent, and I rose quickly and begged her to come into the house, saying that I was very glad to see her.

When she had sat down in one of my easy-chairs, and I had lighted the little shaded reading-lamp that stood on a round marqueterie table in the corner of the room, I ventured to take a good look at my evening visitor.

She was a tall, gaunt woman, seemingly far advanced in middle age, for the hair that framed her pale face was of a wonderful snowy whiteness. But yet her eyes seemed to belie the witness of those tresses, for they were full of a marvellous intense youth which positively startled me. Dark and deep-set in her face as they were, they glowed with a fire which could have been kindled only by the hopefulness of a young mind, fresh and innocent in thought.

Her gown, which was scrupulously neat, but so full of patches and darns that one wondered where the original stuff began and where it ended, was of some dull grey material, not unlike the colouring of the "honesty" seeds she held in her hand.

"You must be very rich," she continued; "and how happy to have such a beautiful home!"

Her eyes were wandering quietly round my room, taking in every book and every ornament in their comprehensive gaze.

The newness of this idea struck me with astonishment. I was happy enough, but as for being rich—well, surely my neighbour must be one of the lucky ones of life who deem themselves "passing rich on forty pounds a year," if she thought that my modest establishment and cottage of four rooms betokened a superabundance of this world's goods!

"I am so glad you admire my rooms," I said, with a smile. "All these things are very cherished possessions. But as for being rich—I can assure you that I am what the world would call poor."

"Poor!" she said wonderingly. "With all these books and splendid hangings. And you have a servant, too, which must be very nice for you."

She spoke in quite a happy voice—not a bit as though she were repining at a lot that was brighter than her own, and continued—

"You must come and see me soon, if you will. My cottage is next door, beyond the garden wall, and I have often hoped that someone nice would take this beautiful place. I have only two rooms to live in, but they are very comfortable ones. And, after all, I am only waiting."

"Waiting?" I said mechanically.

"Yes, waiting till the sea gives up her dead," she replied softly. And then, after a few more words, the grey figure slipped out once more into the September evening, and became merged in the dimness of the twilight.

Later, when my little maid came in, she said in her cheerful voice, as she fidgeted round the windows, seeing that everything was made fast for the night—

"And so, miss, you've had the poor mad lady to see you. Eh! but I'm real sorry for her, if all's true what Mrs. Simpson, the butcher's wife, told me this morning!"

"I don't think that Miss Cawthorne is mad, Jane," I replied, with a touch of curiosity in my voice. "But what did you hear about her? I am sure she must have had a history, and a very sad one."

"Well, it's just this, miss, and it all happened nigh upon thirty years ago: Miss Cawthorne's father was the clergyman here, and she had no mother and but one brother, and one night these two gentlemen and the gentleman she was going to marry went out to sea in a fishing-coble, just for a sail. And the boat never came back at all, though they do say that the mast was washed up on shore, days afterwards, with the name of the coble stamped upon it. But every soul on board was drowned, and the poor lady has never been herself again since then. It's a sad story; and the worst of it was that she was left without a relation or a penny in the world, and ever since then she has lived on the charity of her neighbours. They take her in eggs and fish and things, and everyone has a care for her, for they say, though she is mad, she's the sweetest-natured lady in the world."

I sat thinking over my handmaiden's words till far into the night. What were my troubles compared with her life's tragedy of thirty years? And feeling that even a moment's repining would be a wicked thing, I rose and went up-stairs.

The lamps had long ago been put out in every house in the village, but, away at the farther side of the bay, shone the clear revolving light of the distant lighthouse—now red, now yellow, by turns.

The young moon was just rising, and her track was marked by a path of pure silver across the dark blue of the sea. A sleepy dog in one of the farms near at hand roused himself and gave a faint bark at the echo of some passing footstep, and the sound, breaking the edge of the silence, startled the birds in the ivy under my window, and they stirred anxiously for a moment.

But even these voices of the night died into the silence, and nothing remained but the monotonous moan of the waves upon the shore, and I went to bed wondering if Miss Cawthorne was listening to the call of the sea.

The very next day I went to find my new acquaintance, taking with me a tiny present in the shape of some Guava jelly, which a kind friend had sent me from the West Indies.

Her house was a mere fisherman's hut, and as I looked at it on my way through the rickety gate that led up to its one door, a shock of something like remorse came over me at the idea that she should have so little and I so much, comparatively speaking, of this world's goods.

"'Waiting till the boats come in.'"

Miss Cawthorne came to the door at the sound of my knock, with the same gentle, far-away smile that she had worn the evening before.

She held in her hand a cup that she was drying, and she had evidently been engaged in washing up her tea-things; but she begged me to enter with the air of a princess. Her room was plainly, almost barely, furnished with the mere necessaries of life; but all round the walls were arranged texts and pictures on every subject connected with the sea. Above the chimney-piece was written, "There shall be no more sea," and over the inner door, "The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly, but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier."

This was evidently her main thought, and when she had finished her work she sat down opposite me and said—

"I am so glad that you came now, instead of earlier or later, for then you would not have found me at home. I spend a great deal of the day on the cliffs, you know, waiting till the boats come in; for it cannot be long before the sea gives up her dead."

A rush of sudden tears filled my eyes at the thought of this lonely woman, who for thirty years had kept her steadfast watch, and I could say nothing in reply.

"I burn a little candle every night in my window,' she went on, "till the day breaks, to guide them home, for this is such a dangerous coast. And, you see, I took this house because it stands so high up

above the shore, that I can always be watching. It is a very snug little home, and, as you see, my neighbours are so kind to me. Every morning some child brings me my supply of food, and when my dress wears out a new one is sure to come from some friend or another. Did you ever think how kind, how marvellously kind, the world is?"

It had certainly never struck me so before, and I almost trembled at the thought of my black ingratitude before the whiteness of this gentle woman's resignation.

"Now see where I shall put your charming present," she said, rising with a smile, and opening a little cupboard in the wall.

Inside it was full of rare old china, and arranged on dishes were various delicacies, in the shape of a small cake, a few pearly white eggs, and a pot of jam.

She put my Guava jelly down amongst the dainties, and closed the door almost reverentially.

"There will be a little feast for them when they return," she said cheerfully, "for I always lay aside the nicest of my presents for them."

"You must be very lonely sometimes," I ventured to say, disappointed at the pathetic disposal of the present I had intended for her own gratification.

She turned upon me a face positively shining with contentment.

"Lonely?" she said; "I lonely—in this beautiful place, with the hand of God above and around me? Why, it would be the basest ingratitude even to think of being lonely, when He has preserved me from starving, and when He has given me the exquisite scenery and glorious sunlight to rejoice my very heart."

When I bade her farewell a little later, I could not resist kissing her withered cheek with a passionate impulse of admiration.

"Let me be your friend," I said, "and help you when I can, for you can do me more good than I can tell you."

Patience Cawthorne looked at me with innocent, wondering eyes, and when I turned back from the gate to give her a last wave of the hand, the thin, tall figure was still in the doorway, but she was gazing out seaward, watching, with one hand shading her eyes.

I was able to help my neighbour a little in the cold autumn days that followed, and many were the surreptitious baskets of coal that my maid and I managed to convey into the little outhouse, and many the little puddings and delicacies we manœuvred between us to put on her meagre table.

But when autumn passed into winter, and the winter proved to be not the balmy season of a southern coast, but a time of drifting snow and biting winds, when the stone-grey sky lowered over a sea of inky black, churned into white breakers here and there, Miss Cawthorne grew restless; and in spite of all we could do, her footsteps wandered more often to the bleak cliffside, where she kept her patient watch.

Rain or sunshine mattered nothing to her, and the fishermen watched her from their boats with a sort of superstitious awe as she stood between heaven and earth for long hours together—a motionless landmark, with the skirts of her thin grey gown fluttering in the winter wind.

One morning, when the sun broke out suddenly after a tempestuous night of furious storm, my little servant came running up to my room, with a white face, and eyes full of frightened tears.

"Oh, miss! oh, miss!" she sobbed out, "whatever shall we do? Miss Cawthorne is dead. She was out in the storm last night, and they found her at daybreak quite dead on the rocks."

I hurried into my gown as fast as I could, and rushed over to my neighbour's cottage, only to find the bad tidings too true.

Kindly hands had already carried back what remained of Patience Cawthorne, and had laid her on her narrow white bed; but even the sympathetic women who stood round, whispering to one another with hushed voices, could not weep for her, for her face wore a look of such unutterable joy and surprise that one felt sure that she had passed out of this troublesome life to meet her dear ones on the other side of the silver sea of death.

She had been found at daybreak, when the first rays of the sun had lit upon the storm-tossed coast. A tiny flotilla of fishing-boats that had weathered the night had just put in for shelter, and one of the men struggling across the slippery rocks had come across her, lying peacefully above high-water mark, with a spar from some wrecked coble clasped tightly across her breast.

No one knew the motive that had taken her there through the storm, but at her side lay a tiny battered lantern, with a fragment of candle still remaining in it.

But her patient life of resignation was done; and who could mourn for her? For the sea had given up its dead, and Patience Cawthorne's long waiting was over.

HOW ARE THE MASSES TO BE REACHED AND WON?

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR W. GARDEN BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D., EDINBURGH.

IT has a look of presumption for anyone at this time of day to attempt to grapple with a question on which Christian ministers and laymen, with Committees, Church Congresses, Unions, and Assemblies without number, have for many years been bestowing their most vigorous attention. And indeed it would be presumption itself if one were to attempt to give a complete or exhaustive answer. But it is not the philosopher's stone we are in search of; it is not some definite mechanical plan, to be secured by ecclesiastical patent, and worked like the mowing-machine or the telephone; many elements are involved in the answer to our question, some mechanical, some spiritual, some social, some intellectual; and if our treatment of it will serve to bring any of these into more vigorous action, our present paper will not be in vain.

It is true that some fifty years ago a plan was propounded with great confidence by the ablest ecclesiastic of his time, which was maintained by him to be far and away the best: almost, indeed, the only answer that the question admitted of. This was the territorial-mission method of Dr. Chalmers. The present writer was brought up at Dr. Chalmers' feet, with an enthusiastic veneration for his person and an unhesitating belief in his plan. Therefore, if he does not regard that plan as entirely applicable to the present state of things, it is certainly from no want of bias in its favour. Dr. Chalmers counselled the division of large parishes with dense population into districts of about two thousand souls, for each of which a church and a school, with an active minister and teacher, were to be provided; this large district, again, was to be sub-divided into smaller districts, each containing from a dozen to twenty families; for each of these sub-districts a lay visitor was to be found, who would periodically visit the people and become their Christian friend and adviser. Trusting far more to the aggressive than to the attractive principle, he believed that when the people were thus plied with reminders of their duty to God, and of His infinite grace and love to them, and with exhortations to take advantage of the Christian services provided for them, they would spring as it were to their feet, their slumbering consciences would start into activity, and in a very short time the wilderness would blossom as the rose.

In support of his plan he was able to point to the distinguished success of movements of his own both in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The "West Port" of Edinburgh became an *experimentum crucis;* and it seemed as if it was only a question of finding a sufficient agency to recover all Scotland to the church-going habits for which it had once been so famed.

Many of the earlier territorial churches were not less successful than the West Port, but in recent years the success has not been so great. The reason is not difficult to find. In Dr. Chalmers' time those who were living in neglect of ordinances had generally a latent feeling that they were doing wrong; they were conscious of neglecting a duty and losing a privilege, and when warmly appealed to in connection with a fresh undertaking begun for themselves, were not unwilling to respond, and to try to regain what they had allowed to slip from their grasp. It is not so now. There is more rivalry among Churches and less confidence in their disinterestedness. Besides, a new object has arrested the attention of the masses—their temporal benefit and advancement. They have come to feel that they do not enjoy the share of the good things of life to which they are entitled, and to secure that is what they are now bent on. As a rule, they have not that slumbering sense of the obligations of religion and the value of the soul which their fathers had. And hence the method that might have been sufficient for the fathers is not sufficient for the children.

There is little doubt, too, that the sanguine nature of Chalmers led him to form too favourable an estimate of the ability of the average minister and the average visitor to work his scheme successfully. Experience has shown that dull men and dull women, even when very excellent otherwise, make little impression. It is the ardent, the lively, the sympathetic, that get on with the masses.

Men and women with a cheerful sunny glow about them, whose faces and tones of voice carry cheer and comfort wherever they go, and who can so present the Gospel of Jesus Christ that it is felt to be glad tidings of great joy, especially to the children of toil, are the kind of agents needed for this work. If the Church of Christ had an unlimited supply of such agents, full of the Holy Ghost and of power, the winning of the masses would be no longer a problem of despair.

We find no fault with Dr. Chalmers' territorial method; in itself it was admirable, and the best foundation for a comprehensive scheme; but other considerations need now to be taken into account.

As we do not profess to attempt an exhaustive answer to the question of our title, but only to make a contribution towards it, we think it will be well to point out what appears to have been most telling in the methods of some who have had great success in dealing with the masses. We begin with the case of our great Divine Master; then that of His great missionary Apostle; and finally, that of a modern English evangelist—the greatest England has ever known—John Wesley.

1. Our blessed Lord was very successful with the masses: "The common people heard Him gladly." We naturally suppose that His miracles gave rise to much of His attractive power. But for the most part His miracles were performed on behalf of those who were already attached to Him, rather than before the

promiscuous multitude. Still, the miracles, with other things, helped to produce the impression that He was a great benefactor of the race, a being of open heart and open hand, deeply interested in the welfare and happiness of men, eager to do all He could to make them better and happier.

If we read the Gospels with the endeavour to find out what was the most outstanding feature of Christ's life—the feature that would most impress the ordinary run of people in His day—we can hardly fail to conclude that it was His gracious beneficence, or beneficent graciousness: His heavenly humanity, or human heavenliness: that quality which made Him ever ready to teach, to heal, to comfort, and to bless. One of the labouring multitude Himself, He was full of sympathy for them, well understanding their troubles and difficulties, their sorrows and their joys. All His teaching showed that He honoured labour; the employments of farmers, fishermen, vine-dressers, ploughmen, builders, and the like, furnished Him with His ordinary illustrations, and went to redeem those employments from the contempt in which they were held in His day by the cultured men of Greece and Rome. How eager He was to lighten their burdens might have been seen, if there had been nothing else, from that magnificent utterance which shines like a star of the first magnitude in the Milky Way of His teaching: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Bright though the flashes of truth were that were ever radiating from His lips, it was His large, warm, sympathetic heart that chiefly won the hearts of the multitude. It was the discovery of a brother that could be touched with the feeling of their infirmities, and whose soul burned with a desire to raise them to a higher and holier life, that drew them to Him. For even the lustre of His beneficence did not allow Him to slur over the sad truth that men had wandered far from God and from duty, and must be brought back through the path of repentance and faith. But if ever a painful truth obtained a friendly reception through the spirit in which it was uttered, it was the truth taught by Jesus respecting man's sin and its awful doom. Most uncompromising was His testimony regarding it. Indeed, the very awfulness of the doom of sin as He saw it gave an unrivalled pathos and power to His invitations. His example disposes for ever of the idea that it is by broadening the narrow way, or widening the strait gate, or making religion smooth and easy, that we shall win the masses. We must speak the truth, but speak it, like our Lord, in love. Men seem to have an instinctive feeling that the situation as between God and sinful man is a very serious and solemn one, and that the minister who treats it as quite simple and easy is not faithful to his trust. They like a man of truthful tongue and outspoken sincerity, but with a heart that feels what he says, and that feels for those to whom he says it. Such most emphatically was our Lord; and awful though His doctrine of sin and punishment was, the message went home to men's consciences, and His tender tone touched their hearts. Truth, sincerity, and love were a threefold cord not easily broken.

What perhaps is most wanting in the dealings of the modern Church with the masses is our Lord's tone of gracious beneficence. If He were with us now, He would probably have some way of showing that the efforts of the labouring class to better their condition are not, in themselves, displeasing in His eyes. If we have aught of our Lord's spirit, we shall deal generously with labour. No doubt it is better remunerated now than it used to be. Mistakes have certainly been made, even crimes have been committed, and much of what is earned by labouring men is put to a pernicious use; but, on the whole, the toiling multitude is only working its way slowly towards that condition which Christian civilisation demands. Much of the coldness of the working-class towards the Church is due to the suspicion that its sympathies are more with the rich than the poor—with those who enjoy abundance than with those who are struggling for an ampler store.

2. Turning now to the case of St. Paul, we have not the same direct evidence of his popularity with the masses, but we may infer it from the fact that by far the larger part of his early converts were of the poorer class, and not a few of them were slaves: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." His deep and tender sympathy for the children of toil was evinced, if by nothing else, certainly by his bearing toward the slaves. For the class addressed as "servants" in the New Testament were really slaves, and it was the high distinction of the Apostle to give to that class a prominent place in the Church of Christ, by specially recognising them as Christian brethren in not a few of his Epistles. In our circumstances we are hardly in a position to appreciate this act of the Apostle. But it may safely be asked, Was there any community of men in the ancient world, except the Christian Church, to which slaves were admitted on equal terms with the highest and noblest? What must have been the feeling of the slaves at Ephesus, or Colosse, or in Crete, when the passages were read out from his Epistles that contained special counsels to them—thus recognising them as integral parts of the Church on earth, and as heirs to all the glories of the Church in heaven? That was really a deed of very genuine sympathy and of great moral courage on the part of the Apostle, and it must have told immensely in his favour. And what a blessed and soothing effect on the minds of the slaves—to say nothing of their masters—must the words have had that called on masters to give to their slaves that which was just and equal, and to remember that they too had a Master in heaven. In no writing of the Apostle's did his heart flow out as it did when he was pleading with Philemon on behalf of his slave Onesimus. And what a tribute he paid to that poor slave when, sending him to Colosse along with Archippus, he commended him as "a faithful and beloved brother." It needs no conjurer to show how Paul sympathised with the sons of toil.

But it was as a preacher of salvation that St. Paul got nearest to the masses. One thing that must have attracted them was the profound testimony he was able to bear to the efficacy of the Gospel in his own case. Something of egotism is inseparable from a man of strong individuality, and provided it is not offensive egotism, it interests men. And there was

something most interesting in hearing Paul telling his own story, the story of his conversion: telling all that he had been, and what he had become, and that too with the transparent purpose of magnifying the love and the grace of Christ, or inducing others to commit themselves to Him. A Gospel preached in the abstract may be a means of salvation, but how much more powerful when the preacher has so tested it personally that it blends with every thought and aspiration of his heart, and is poured out warm and alive with the throbbings of his own soul! And what a Gospel St. Paul's was!—the pith and marrow of it, comprised in the memorable word "grace," and its whole bearing and tendency to bring out the marvellous beneficence and graciousness of God, and lead men to enjoy, without money and without price, the richest blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven. Men who can put their heart into their message as St. Paul did will have little difficulty with the masses.

Doubtless, too, there was an element of attraction for the Gentile masses in the fact that he was called to proclaim the death of a monopoly—the Hebrew system of exclusive privilege. Here was the one element of Christian communism: sin had levelled down all to the same condemnation; the grace of Christ was free to all, to raise them up to the same forgiveness and to the same renewal of heart and life. We need not surely be afraid of encouraging a lawless and ruinous socialism when we give all due prominence to a socialism so genuine, and in one aspect so blessed as this—equality of ruin by sin, and equality of redemption by Jesus Christ. Nor ought custom to deaden the effect of our announcement when we proclaim to the masses that the way to God is as free to the pauper as to the peer, and that all the unsearchable riches of Christ and all the unspeakable glories of heaven are as readily poured into the cup of the one as of the other. What is needed is simply, on their part, an open, hungry, expectant soul.

3. We have little space for John Wesley. It was his privilege to come on the scene after a long famine of the Word of God, and to proclaim the abundance of Heaven to men and women dying of starvation. And a happy thing it was for him to be able to speak so freely and so fully of the riches of the grace of God. In this respect he had a great advantage over those who are called to deal with a generation so familiar with the letter of the Gospel as to be dead to its living interest.

Two things occur to us in the case of Wesley which may materially help us to solve the present problem. In the first place, he had the power of adapting his message to the actual condition of his hearers: he got in among their living feelings, knew how to touch their most sensitive parts, how to commend himself to thoughts that were stirring more or less consciously in their souls. Little personal impression is made by abstract statements—by merely proving the existence of original sin, or showing that punishment must follow actual transgression; but the case is different when you call a man up, and ask him to name anything he has ever done simply to please God; when you ask him whether he has not spent days and weeks together without thinking of God, and in neglect of all His claims as Creator, Lord, Father, or Redeemer; and when you bid him think how he will feel when God calls him to account, and reckons with him for every talent, and for every day and hour of his life. We include Wesley among the preachers who have systematically tried to get into touch with all that is most sensitive to the soul, and stir it up. It is marvellous what an interest such men have for the masses, because it is felt that they are dealing not with sham or sacred conventionalities, but with the dread realities of human life—with interests that come home most closely to the business and bosoms of men.

The other way in which the example of a man like Wesley may help us to reach the masses bears on the place which he assigned to the work of the Holy Spirit. No preacher ever acted more on the truth—"not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." It is a law alike of the natural and of the spiritual world that only life can generate life. Wesley profoundly felt this, and therefore his work was carried on under a constant sense of the need of the Holy Spirit to generate that life which was the goal of all his labours. For that Spirit he looked, and longed, and prayed, knowing that in the economy of the Holy Trinity it was His function to come into actual touch with the spirit of man, and communicate whatever of God it is capable of receiving. No sermon, no conversation, no book, or tract, or Bible ever could accomplish its highest purpose without the action of the Spirit of God. The presence of that Spirit was altogether indispensable to spiritual success. Being thus valued, honoured, and sought, the Holy Spirit united Himself with His servant, blessed his words, opened the hearts of his hearers, and crowned him with extraordinary success. In these days we hear comparatively little of the Holy Spirit, and prayer for His blessing is, we fear, comparatively rare. If we would really win the masses we must learn to honour the Spirit as the great Divine Agent who quickens the dead; and if we thus honour Him, the appeal must go up unceasingly on behalf of every evangelistic effort—"Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live."

The plan of this paper has restricted us to the gathering of hints in answer to our question from examples in various spheres. But the subject may be viewed in many other lights. It would be well for all the Churches to remember that, so far as they have *not* reached the masses, they have failed in one of their highest functions. It is a simple failure when the light of the world does not illuminate the world, and the candle does not give light "to all that are in the house." We may well consider, too, the urgency of the case. Time is not for us, but dead against us. The masses, if not speedily gained, will not only be far more difficult to gain, but they may become active foes to the faith of Christ. The late Papal rescript shows the effort the Church of Rome is making to win them. It is indeed a strange thing, for the Church which has always withstood popular freedom and independence, now to turn round and proclaim herself their friend. Let Protestant Churches be taught by her example. Defeat in this cause will be a disgrace; success, under God's help, a glorious blessing.

THE DISCONTENTED BRIAR.

A PARABLE FROM NATURE. BY LADY LAURA HAMPTON.

"DEAR, dear, how stupid it is here!" sighed a wild rose to the evening breeze as it played amid its branches.

"And pray where else have you been, fair flower, that you can say it is more dull here than elsewhere?"

"That is just it," she replied. "It is all very well for you, who wander about the world at your own sweet will, and do just as you please; but think of my existence, rooted in this one place."

"I wander, it is true," murmured the wind; "but you are much mistaken if you imagine that I follow my own fancies; for law is the order of the universe, and I do but obey. Hard indeed sometimes the work committed unto me."

"Hard work!" laughed the briar; "well, it may be so to toss my old neighbour the oak as you do when you are angry; but, then, the fun of it! Everything bowing down before you, and even man himself dreading your presence."

"Fun, perhaps, to play with a little thing like you," said the breeze—and it gave a stronger puff at the briar as it spoke—"but where is the fun in being feared? Is it not better to be loved? And who loves the whirlwind and the storm?"

"Is that what often makes you moan in such a dismal manner?" queried the rose. "I do believe, after all, you are as discontented with your lot as I am with mine."

"Not discontented: puzzled, perhaps, sometimes," said the breeze, as it died away in the distance.

"And what have you to complain of in your lot, I should like to know?" said a swallow, as he alighted upon the briar.

"Can you look at my surroundings and ask me that?" it replied.

"Surroundings! what is the matter with them? Fine open country, plenty of sunshine, a friendly holly to help you up in the world, and companions in the shape of ferns and flowers at your feet. What more do you want?"

"Ah! you are only a summer visitor, or you would know how cold it is in the winter-time; and as for the holly, well, I suppose it is kind enough in its way, but think how old it is! And the flowers! why, surely even you can see that, being so lowly, they are quite beneath my notice. Oh, if I could but transplant myself to other surroundings, how happy should I be!"

"Well, summer visitor or not," answered the swallow, "I have seen enough of the world to know that our happiness, like our nests, is of our own building. The twigs, and the clay, and the wool, are made for us; but we must put them together and line them ourselves, wherever we are; aye, and patch them up too, if necessary." And he flew away as he spoke.

"It would be easy enough to be happy with his glorious opportunities," grumbled the briar.

"Well, if you cannot make your own happiness as you are, you would greatly add to mine if you would open your buds a little quicker," buzzed a bee, as he buried his proboscis into a half-opened flower; "but what is the matter this evening?"

"It is so dull here, stuck in the midst of this holly! Positively, if you will only take the trouble to look around this field, there is not another wild rose in sight. What is the use of blooming when there is no one to appreciate one, no one who cares if one flowers or not?"

"It is your duty," droned the bee shortly; "and take my word for it, if you will just set your mind to it, and do it, you will have no time to be discontented, and will find plenty of interests too." And he also flew away.

And the briar, left alone once more, pondered on the words she had heard, whilst the stars peeped out one by one and looked down upon her, and Night threw her dark mantle over the earth till Dawn came with her rosy face and lifted it; and as the rising sun bathed the holly tree in its golden light, behold! its sombre leaves were wreathed in white, and as his rays kissed away the tears of penitence one by one from the opening blossoms, he whispered to the heart of the flower—

"True happiness consists not in wilfulness or power, not in surroundings or in duty; but in being content with such things as ye have. My rays can pierce the darkest cloud and brighten the loneliest spot, and where I shine there is no such thing as dulness."

THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS.

BY FAY AXTENS.

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM the very first moment of seeing him, Felicia had liked Mr. Lestrange, and the more she came to know him the more she liked him. She was not by nature particularly impulsive or emotional. She did not rush hastily into friendships or form her opinion of others without consideration; on the contrary, she was observant and critical, apt to weigh actions and inquire into motives, quick to see a flaw in character, though often slow to speak of it. None knew better than she the faults and foibles of her neighbours and acquaintances, or detected more quickly the under-currents of thought and feeling which prompted speech and action. She had the unusual reputation of never saying an unkind word about anyone; but it was not because she could find no excuse for speaking unkindly—rather because she saw faults so plainly that she feared to suggest to another mind what was perhaps only palpable to her own.

Had Felicia's disposition been cast in a different mould, as her knowledge of human nature increased she might have developed into a satirist, or it might even have been a cynic. But she had another side to her nature: one that glowed with ardent enthusiasm for all that was noble and pure, and imbued with a childlike faith in the realities of those hidden mysteries of good which every soul, awake to the great *fact* of life here and hereafter, yearns to discover and obtain. Thus her knowledge and observation did not in the least tend to weaken her love or narrow her sympathies, but rather gave them a deeper meaning and a wider scope; only it added a certain reserve and caution in unfolding itself to individuals. Her friendship was never rashly bestowed, for, once given, it was given for ever.

Felicia's first instinctive feeling towards Anthony Lestrange was a somewhat rare experience: it was a feeling of entire confidence and trust which admitted of no question.

The first straight, searching glance impressed her with the fact that his nature was noble, and that his mind had attained a higher level than that of ordinary people. She felt her own heart astir with sympathy and fellow-feeling, and, without a moment's hesitation, said within herself that, were it possible, she

would be a true and loyal friend to him as long as she lived. Her first impressions, instead of wearing off, as an after-fear suggested, grew and strengthened with closer acquaintance. She had not expected to find him perfect, and, of course, he was far from being so; but she recognised the strength and stability of his character, the pure tone of his mind, and the tenderness of his disposition. Added to these, Anthony's calm serenity and unassuming modesty—qualities none too common in these days—seemed to Felicia evidences of a generous nature, and set him, as it were, by himself in her estimation.

She would have liked him, if for nothing else, for his affection for Bertram; but more particularly she admired his behaviour towards Rosamond, for whom, when the first glamour was past, she felt but very slight esteem. She found it difficult to understand the self-consciousness and self-assertion of the beautiful heiress, and wondered with a kind of pity, mingled with admiration, at the patience with which her lover bore her caprices, and the unfailing gentleness of his manner towards her.

It was useless for her to pretend that his behaviour that afternoon had not disconcerted her. It would be, she was assured, no ordinary feeling which brought that stern, uncompromising look to his face when Rosamond was endeavouring to explain her position, or that curious expression in his eyes when he had first observed her change of dress. She had never seen him look so before, though she had often felt he had ample cause; and now she dreaded fresh trouble for him—a trouble which she feared could be overcome only at the cost of much pain and anguish.

After they had driven off in the evening, she went back into the dining-room, where they had all been sitting, and took up her work with a thoughtful face. Her father was there, and also Dick, who was stretched out lazily on a couple of chairs, amusing himself with a newspaper. Felicia could not help wishing that Dick were not present, for she would like to have eased her mind by a quiet chat with her father. However, that young gentleman seemed inclined to remain, for almost as soon as she returned he put the paper down and took Bert on his knee. The child was very far from being fond of Dick, but he had learned to submit to his caresses without displaying repugnance, although it was very seldom that he volunteered to return them.

"Well, old fellow," he began, in his cool, deliberate way, "and what do you think of the pet poodle in a tantrum, eh?"

Bert fixed his great grave eyes on him, with a half-scornful, half-wondering expression.

"Don't know what is a 'tantrum,'" he observed diffidently.

"Oh, don't you, now! I fancied you had rather an extensive acquaintance with that kind of article. You had a splendid chance of finding out to-night, anyhow. Look here, old man, did you ever see anything like this before?" And he began contracting his eyebrows and drawing down the corners of his mouth in mockery of Anthony.

Felicia coloured, and kept her eyes fixed on her work. She had seen only too quickly the drift of her brother's remarks. Bertram turned his head away from what he considered an exceedingly disagreeable spectacle.

"You look very ugly!" was his candid remark.

Dick roared aloud. "Something like Uncle Tony, eh?"

"No, not a bit!" cried Bert indignantly, struggling to get down. "Not a tiny little bit. You couldn't never look like Uncle Tony."

"Well, that's satisfactory to know," drawled Dick, provokingly. "Take care, youngster! you'll crack your crown if you don't contrive to curb your fiery energies."

"Don't tease the boy, Dick," said Mr. Hardy, more sharply than usual; but Felicia, rising, came across the room to them, and, holding out her arms to the child, said, in a tone of quiet self-repression—

"It is time for him to go to bed, Dick. He is tired already."

Dick glanced up at her with a sleepy smile, and, putting out one arm, drew her towards him, and made her sit on the arm of the easy-chair in which he was lounging.

"I say, Floy, have you any idea what the rumpus was about? I should have thought poor Miss Wylde had been sufficiently crushed with the drenching and fright, without having Lestrange walking in like a thunder-cloud and behaving like a boor."

"The latter is a matter of opinion," said Felicia quietly.

"Certainly; I merely state mine. But, now I come to think of it, I shouldn't, of course, expect *you* to agree with me."

The marked emphasis on the pronoun, and the look which accompanied it, brought the colour again to Felicia's cheeks.

Her extreme annoyance at the consciousness of this, however, aided her in preserving her composure.

"*I* thought Lestrange showed up in an uncommonly bad light this afternoon," Dick went on. "I wonder if he called that a nice reception to give his lady-love after such a long absence? He might have been a little more gracious, I should say, especially as he has been spending his holiday raking up that old grievance and trying to get her disinherited, if people tell the truth."

"That old grievance!" repeated Felicia, flashing a look of scorn. "That is quite a new name to call it by. Mr. Lestrange has a higher idea of honour and justice than you seem to have, Dick."

"Don't take to throwing stones, Floy; it isn't lady-like; and, really, there's no occasion. As far as I'm concerned, the whole affair is nothing to me; only I like to see justice done all the way round, and it strikes some people as rather unnatural conduct in a lover, don't you see. Lover, indeed! that's a pretty name to call Lestrange. I think it would be more decent of him to break it off at once."

"What do you mean, Dick?"

"Mean?—what I say. It's ridiculous to suppose he's fond of the girl. The wonder is the engagement has lasted so long."

"If he were *not* fond of her, it never could have lasted," said Felicia indignantly.

"Well, why don't they get married? I tell you, Floy, if Lestrange cared anything about it, he would never put up with all this dallying about. He would insist on one thing or the other. I suppose he has got a will of his own. There's Rosamond always about with Lawley, who is over head and ears in love with her, like all the rest of the young blockheads about here, and Lestrange quietly looking on and never saying a word. A man of any spirit would resent it."

"You don't understand Mr. Lestrange," said Felicia. "You are much mistaken if you suppose it makes no difference to him. And as to Rosamond being always about with Will, I don't think you ought to leave yourself out of it, Dick. I think, if Mr. Lestrange condescended to be jealous at all, he might fix on you as easily as upon Will."

Dick laughed aloud.

"That's too great an honour, my dear. I always play second fiddle: it's my *rôle*, you know."

"I don't think your sister is very far wrong," said Mr. Hardy quietly, looking up from his book. He had been attentively listening to the whole conversation, but, seeing that Dick was in a somewhat quarrelsome mood, and not wishing to provoke argument, he had refrained from speaking before. This, however, was a fitting opportunity for a little kindly caution he had long desired to give.

"You know I don't want to find fault, or interfere with your pleasure in any way, but I do think for your own sake and Miss Wylde's—for the sake of all of us, indeed—you ought to be a little more careful, Dick. There are plenty of busy tongues abroad, ready to tell all they know, and more besides; and, all things considered, I think you must see, on reflection, that special caution is needed in your case."

Dick gave a side-glance from under his heavy eyebrows, and assumed an expression of considerable surprise.

"Well, upon my word," said he, "if people have been making up a scandal about me and Miss Wylde, all I can say is, that they are great idiots, and had better mind their own business."

"I did not say any scandal had been made, Dick: I only ask you to avoid giving any opportunity for scandal. This afternoon's occurrence was unfortunate, although I am aware it was unforeseen. I am hardly surprised, however, that Anthony was vexed. As it happened, he and Will travelled from Greychester together, and he had heard from him that Miss Wylde was suffering from a severe headache and felt too unwell to go to Greychester herself, so I suppose he fully expected to find her at home."

"And was very sorry she had so far recovered. For my own part, I don't see why she should not amuse herself as well as he."

"I think we needn't discuss the question any further," said Felicia, taking the opportunity of releasing Bertram. "Come, Bert, say 'Good-night,' and come to bed."

"That's right, my dear. Always avoid unpleasant subjects. We will *not* discuss the question, Floy, for you have some very fine ideas I should be sorry to disabuse you of. There's one thing you would be sure to stick to, through thick and thin—that Lestrange is the saint and Dick Hardy the sinner." And, saying this, he shook up Bertram and handed him over to his sister, who went away with crimson cheeks and eyes that burned with suppressed anger.

It was very foolish of her, she felt, to allow Dick's words to disturb her so much, but this was a point on which she was peculiarly sensitive. Dick's innuendos hurt her far more keenly than he could possibly have imagined. He only meant to vent his own ill-humour by teasing his sister, but his shafts were tipped with poison, and they rankled in her heart. She could not deny to herself that an unkind word or suspicion directed against Anthony Lestrange recoiled on her—whatever wounded him wounded her also. She felt she could have dared and done anything for him, but the very fact of her feeling so made it almost impossible for her to make open protestations of her friendship for him. She could not speak in his defence as she might have done had she cared less for him, and the knowledge that it was so was both saddening and humiliating.

Felicia knew that her brother was completely out of sympathy with Lestrange, and she therefore shrank instinctively from even a casual mention of him. She would have been only too glad to avoid any such discussion as this; but, since it was unavoidable, she had tried very hard to maintain an attitude of quiet, self-possessed indifference. She dreaded lest Dick should see that his words hurt her, or discover the real state of her feelings.

Two minutes after Bert's tired little head had sunk down on the pillow, he was fast asleep. Felicia came back again to look at him, and drawing back the curtains of the crib, she knelt beside it, pressing her lips gently on the mass of golden curls round the rosy cherub face. The sight of the child lying peacefully sleeping, with a serene smile on his lips, all anger and passion forgotten and gone, was too much for Felicia. Her eyes filled with hot tears; she rose hastily to her feet and pressed her hands to her heart in a vain effort to still the strange new feeling of pain which had taken possession of it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROSAMOND had had need of all the self-control she was capable of to prevent her from betraying the anxiety and concern which Anthony's manner very naturally created in her mind. Long after she went to bed that night, she lay brooding and thinking over all that had taken place that day: her interview with Dick, and the frightening disclosures he had made, their unfortunate escapade which had occasioned so much talk, and then Anthony's return at the very moment when he was least desired or expected. Rosamond, who would at any time lay blame on circumstances rather than admit herself in fault, felt that the whole affair had happened very unkindly, and that she had been very badly used.

She had laid very careful plans for keeping that stolen interview a secret, partly in accordance with Dick's particular request, and partly because she knew that Anthony disapproved of her friendship

"'Whose handwriting is that?' he demanded."—*p.* 346.

with Richard Hardy, and had given her a gentle warning of the estimation in which he was held round about Carsthorpe. Pondering and puzzling over the reason of Anthony's displeasure, she was fain to attribute it to one of two causes: either that he had made some discovery whilst in London with regard to the will, or merely that he was angry at the obvious disregard of his wishes which this little incident brought to light.

It struck her as curious that, while she was telling the plausible story of having been overtaken by the storm and rescued by Dick, Anthony had preserved an icy silence, as if he discredited the whole statement. When he intimated that he desired to speak to her, she was seized with alarm, dreading the direst calamities, and lay awake for hours debating in her mind what charges Anthony would be likely to bring against her, and how she should most successfully meet them.

But, if Rosamond's equanimity was quickly disturbed, it was also very quickly restored, and, after the rest of the night and the oblivion of sleep had re-invigorated her body, she found that her mind had taken a fresh impress. That which had looked so black and hideous when the lamplight burned low in the silent watches of the night, seemed a matter of but slight importance by the cheerful light of morning, and she rose rather late in the day, with the full intention of carrying things off with a high hand.

If Anthony really cared for her, as of course he

must do, he would readily believe all that she said, and, if he felt inclined to doubt, a kiss or a caress would be quite sufficient to divert his thoughts or disarm resentment. Rosamond had always been allowed hitherto to amuse herself pretty much as she pleased, and it was ridiculous of Anthony if he supposed he was going to interfere now. With thoughts such as these in her mind, Rosamond went down to meet her lover. He had finished his morning's correspondence, and was sitting out on the verandah, talking to Lady Lawley, when she made her appearance.

He greeted her affectionately, but not effusively; and, as she was ready dressed for a walk, asked where she was going, and whether he should accompany her.

Rosamond, who seemed to be in one of her liveliest moods, laughingly accepted his escort, and they went off together, apparently in the gayest spirits and on the best of terms.

As soon as they were fairly out on the Carsthorpe road, however, Anthony dropped the light vein in which he had parried her playful words, and said, with a gravity that might have disconcerted anyone less frivolous than Rosamond—

"It is good of you to give me this opportunity of speaking to you, Rosamond, for I fear you will not quite like what I am going to say."

"That won't be anything unusual, Anthony," she replied, with a saucy toss of her head. "You know you are always wanting to talk about something more or less tiresome and disagreeable. You need not apologise."

"Do not speak so, dear," he replied; "we need not go out of our way to hurt each other's feelings."

"No, of course not; but you don't mind hearing the truth, I suppose? Don't be cross, Anthony. I am sure *I* don't want to quarrel, if *you* do."

Anthony remained silent for a few moments, trying to make up his mind how best to approach the subject in hand. He wished to spare Rosamond as much as possible; but, at the same time, was determined to know the truth.

At last he spoke with slow, measured speech, as if trying to repress all signs of irritation.

"Do you remember what I said to you, Rosamond, just before I went to London?"

"No; at least, I don't know. You said a good many things."

"About Richard Hardy," he continued in the same grave way.

"Oh, yes; poor Dick Hardy! You made some spiteful insinuations against him, I remember, as people are fond of doing, it seems. I suppose it is another instance of a prophet having no honour in his own country. I never heard a word against him till I came here, and I knew him a long time before you did, you know."

"Very true, Rosamond; but you must not suppose popular opinion here is worthless, for all that. Even your acquaintance with him is not so thorough and extensive as that of Carsthorpe society. However, we need not enter on that question. I think you will allow, dear, that you have perfect freedom and liberty in nearly every respect; but there are one or two points—and this is one—on which I expect you to accept my judgment and abide my decision."

"Expect me!" echoed Rosamond, nettled by this extremely unusual assumption of authority. "Really, Anthony, I shall begin to think you are developing into a Bluebeard."

"You remember that I particularly requested you to avoid walking alone with, or having any private intercourse with, Richard Hardy."

"Yes, I do remember. I thought it very absurd and unreasonable, and I told you so."

"I know you did, but, considering the confidence I always place in you, I think it would have been more honourable on your part if you had stated at once that you had no intention of complying with my wishes."

"I know what you mean," she cried hotly. "You think I tried to meet him out in the wood yesterday. I am surprised at you, Anthony! You know very well it was all an accident!"

"Gently, gently, Rosamond. Hear me first, if you please. I am sorry to seem so rude and unkind, but I *must* have a direct answer to a direct question before we go any further."

He drew a bundle of envelopes from his pocket as he spoke, selected one, and handed it to her.

"Whose handwriting is that?" he demanded.

Rosamond went from red to white, and from white to red, as she recognised the very envelope in which Dick's note had come the morning before. For a moment she was too much taken by surprise to answer a word.

"It is the Carsthorpe postmark," he said quietly.

"Yes, of course," cried Rosamond, recovering herself with an effort. "Where did you find it? That is a note from—it is Felicia's writing."

"Pardon me—no. I happen to know Miss Hardy's writing."

"I daresay you do," she retorted meaningly—"much better than I. Is there a note inside that envelope?"

"Yes."

"Then you need ask no more questions," was the passionate rejoinder: "you probably know the contents already."

"No, Rosamond, I have not read it," he replied, putting the letter into her hands; "and I do not wish to; but I know it is from Richard Hardy, and I know also that your meeting yesterday was prearranged."

"If you have not read the letter, I don't see how you can know that."

"I know it by your face, Rosamond; and now you have as good as admitted it. Oh, my darling! why did you try and deceive me so?" he broke off, in tones of agonised entreaty. It was such a terrible thing to him to find his worst suspicions confirmed. "If you will only tell me the whole truth, I will not be angry with you. I will try and make allowances for you, as you know I always do, dear. Only tell me all about it. Indeed, I can't bear this treatment!"

Rosamond turned her head away. Her eyes burned with an angry gleam, and her face wore a hard, determined expression.

"I don't know that there is anything to tell you, Anthony. You seem to have been playing the spy very successfully."

Anthony coloured hotly. An angry retort rose to his lips, but he repressed it, and kept silence.

"It was quite by accident that I found that letter," he said presently, with all his usual gentleness. "I had no idea of such a thing when I returned home yesterday. Will Lawley, with whom I fell in at Greychester, gave me such a bad account of you that I naturally expected to find you quietly resting at home; but when the gardener said he had seen you go across the park, I went down to look for you, as I saw the storm was blowing up, and I knew you would be frightened. A little boy, whom I met in the woods, told me he had seen you there with a gentleman, and pointed out the way you had gone. Shortly afterwards I came across this letter. You must have dropped it out of your pocket."

Rosamond made no reply. She felt too angry and annoyed to offer any explanation, but her fear that Anthony had discovered the true nature of her intercourse with young Hardy was for the present allayed. Evidently wounded pride was the cause of his anger, and, though secretly she liked him none the less for having at last made some effort to exert his authority, she did not feel at all inclined to submit to it. Anthony watched her with a sickening heart.

"It grieves me, dear, to have to give you so much pain," he said, in tones which told plainly that the pain he was himself suffering was far more acute than hers.

"It does not grieve you at all, Anthony!" she replied, in a hard, strained voice. "You delight in giving me pain. If it grieved you, you would have given me the letter at once, instead of laying a trap to catch me."

"I did not wish to catch you. I had no idea of such a thing, believe me. I did not think I should have to force you to confession. I was foolish enough to believe you would voluntarily tell me the truth."

Again Rosamond coloured hotly. Clearly, she was making a bad business of it, and her efforts to extricate herself were but rendering her position worse. As it was not likely she would gain much advantage on that score, she thought it best to shift her ground.

"If you will be so unreasonable, Anthony, I don't think you ought to be surprised. You know very well I have always done just as I pleased. Papa never dictated to me, and I don't see why you should. If you have not yet found it out, you may as well know at once that, however much you may persist in doing it, I never mean to take any notice."

"Rosamond!" He looked so startled and so stern that she was frightened, and hastened to make amends.

"You provoke me to it, Anthony," she said, feeling for her handkerchief. "I am sure you don't love me, or you wouldn't be so unkind."

"It is you who are unkind—not I."

Rosamond's handkerchief went slowly up to her face. Two great tears started from the liquid blue eyes, hung trembling on the long lashes, and, rolling gently down, stained her delicate cheeks into a deeper pink. This was a sight Anthony could never witness unmoved.

"Rosamond, my dearest, don't!" he protested, feeling sorry and vexed that he should have been the cause of such grief, yet conscious all the time that he was in the right, and was in reality letting her off easily. She felt she had gained an advantage.

"How can I help it? You are so harsh, Anthony—so unlike what you used to be," she returned, plaintively. "Someone must have been saying unkind things about me to you, or you would never have had such suspicions."

"I have had no suspicions that are quite unfounded, dear; I think you must allow that. But we will not talk any more about it. You will be more careful in the future, dearest, will you not? We must not let a comparative stranger come between us in this way."

"I don't know what you mean about being more careful," said Rosamond ingenuously. "I am sure I was *most* careful. No one would have known if it had not been for the thunderstorm."

"I did not mean that, dear," he replied, with a momentary frown. "I never wish you to practise deceits. I mean that you must not allow yesterday's occurrence to happen again. You must not make appointments with Richard Hardy, or go anywhere with him, or allow him to write to you."

This was quite enough to set Rosamond's ill-suppressed anger all aflame again.

"And why must I not?" she asked. "I go out with Will Lawley and the rest, and you make no objection. Why should I not with Mr. Hardy? It is because you are prejudiced against him."

"Not at all, Rosamond, but I have my reasons. It is not to please me that you walk out with Mr. Lawley or 'the rest,' you must remember."

"You surely do not want me never to go out with or talk to anyone but you?" said Rosamond, in a tone that implied such a condition of things would be extremely monotonous.

Anthony hesitated. There were a good many things he did not approve of, but it was not likely Rosamond was going to consent to a complete reformation.

"Well, dear, hardly. But we are engaged, you know——"

"And is not that enough? We do not always want to be together. It would be dull for both of us."

"Would it?" said Anthony quietly. "How will it be when we are married?"

"We will wait till the time comes," replied Rosamond quickly.

"It is better to look facts in the face," he said, a weary look of sadness gathering in his eyes. "If it would be dull for us now, it would be tenfold more so then. Do you never think of it, Rosamond?"

"Oh, Anthony, don't!" she cried, "don't be so heartless. You seem determined to make me miserable. Don't let us talk any more about all this. If we go on in this way you will make me ill, and I shall have to go away for change of air. I really can't bear it any longer!"

Anthony sighed. "Poor child!" he murmured. It seemed so hopeless trying to reason with her; and,

"'Is the engagement broken off?' asked Mr. Hardy."—*p.* 351.

indeed, he was afraid to say any more, lest she should again give way to tears. But his heart was full of sad forebodings for the future.

CHAPTER XIX.

AFTER the conversation had taken this turn, a feeling of constraint fell on both of them, and they pursued their homeward way almost in silence. They passed, without observation, the groups of children who came running out from the Carsthorpe cottages to look at them, and returned with but mere recognition the respectful curtseys of the women who stood at their doors dandling their babies in their arms and exchanging gossip with their neighbours. Even when they had left the village behind them, and were again in the shady, fragrant lanes, looking so fresh and bright and cool after the rain of yesterday, they neither of them seemed able to shake off the feeling. The song of the birds fell unheeded on their ears, the tall hedgerows, where the sunlight played, had no treasures for their eyes. Absorbed in their own thoughts, they went their way, striving to conceal the feelings which surged in their hearts by trivial and desultory converse.

It was useless for Anthony to pretend that the revelations which had come to him that morning had not affected his feelings towards Rosamond. Had she disobeyed him frankly and openly, and confessed to it without attempt at concealment, he could have overlooked it. There were, he felt, plenty of excuses

to be made for her. She was so little used to being thwarted, and apparently saw no harm herself in what she did. But, instead of confessing, she had in the first instance fabricated a story to disarm suspicion, and, when pressed for the truth, had actually told more than one direct lie in her endeavours to shield herself. Worse than that, she did not appear to be at all ashamed of having thus tried to deceive her lover—only angry at his interference. She did not apparently understand how great a shock to him the discovery of such a fault in her must be; indeed, she seemed hardly conscious that it *was* a fault, since she made no effort to excuse herself on that score. But, in whatever light such conduct appeared in her own eyes, Anthony felt that the girl who could not only willingly deceive him, but resort to positive falsehood in order to defend herself, could no longer hold the same position in his heart. It was inevitable that she must fall in his estimation, for she had forfeited that respect and confidence which had made so large a part of his feeling for her. And yet he loved her still, and the consciousness of this added in large measure to the pain and distress which he now experienced.

He had made up his mind to speak to her that morning about Claydon, but, after what had passed, he felt it was quite impossible to enter on such a subject. At any time he knew it would be distasteful to her, since she disliked the mere mention of anything connected with the missing will, and now it would be particularly so. He therefore resolved to wait another opportunity, unless, indeed, he refrained from questioning her at all. How could he tell whether she would answer him truthfully or no?

As to Rosamond, her reflections were of a scarcely more agreeable character. She had penetration enough to see that Anthony was more surprised and disappointed than angry. He had found her out in one of the many little deceptions in which her life had unconsciously become entangled, and now he would always be on the watch. It was clear she must either redouble her vigilance or else she must break off her acquaintance with Richard Hardy. This last course presented so many difficulties that she felt it would be almost impossible to adopt it. In the first place, Richard had a will of his own, and she knew it would be quite useless for her either to refuse to meet him or to forbid him writing to her, if he chose to do the one or commanded her to do the other. The very fact that she was completely in his power was quite enough to make it impossible to act contrary to his wishes, or to refuse him any request. He held in his hand a weapon which made compliance necessary, and conciliation advisable.

But there was a second consideration. In her secret soul she knew she did not wish to break with him. He exercised over her a fascination which she felt herself utterly unable to withstand. He was her master, and she knew it; but, although the thought irritated and chafed her, she was still conscious that it was his personal influence over her which had gained him the supremacy. Her warmest feeling for Anthony was but a kind of lukewarm, stagnant affection, that seldom found an outlet either in words or actions; but this man had wakened in her heart an undercurrent of passion that must find vent in some way or another.

She had always admired Richard Hardy. His handsome face and easy, confident manners had attracted her in the first instance; and afterwards, the cool audacity and masterful determination, which a further acquaintance revealed, completed the spell his personal attractions had begun to weave. A glance or a word from him was sufficient to arouse in her heart emotions such as Anthony's caresses, tender as they were, had failed to elicit. Though she always outwardly resented and held in check Dick's half-avowed and but slightly concealed admiration, she knew very well that nothing would grieve her more than to lose it; only she was too proud to give way all at once.

Pondering over Anthony's words in the solitude of her own boudoir that afternoon, the idea that Dick had presented to her mind at their last interview with regard to her lover's affection for her came back with new meaning.

She had strongly resented the insinuation at the time; but perhaps, after all, Dick was right. She had never been able to understand Anthony's conduct. Surely, if he cared very much for her—as much, at any rate, as she desired to be cared for—he would not be so anxious to deprive her of her inheritance. How was it possible he could really love her when he was always doing something to annoy her?

Following closely on this came another thought—that, if she was being treated badly, as she was now persuaded was the case, Richard had also some cause for complaint. He had done much and risked much for her, as he had more than once told her, and all without any promise or certain hope of reward. Surely, she argued, his disinterested conduct proved that he loved her with a love far exceeding that of Anthony Lestrange. It was a love so strong and deep, so ardent and engrossing, that it enabled him to dare and do anything to give her happiness, and unselfish enough to keep silence until she gave him leave to speak.

As she looked back upon events, she remembered that Richard Hardy had never openly declared his love for her, though he had made no attempt to conceal it; but latterly the thin disguise under which he had veiled his passion was evidently becoming more and more intolerable and hard to maintain. Rosamond's vanity was much flattered by such a reflection. If she had sometimes felt angry and frightened at the bold predictions he had made from time to time of a changed order of things, when he should enjoy the rights and privileges now accorded to Anthony, she began now to consider that it was only right his strong and determined love for her should carry the day. There was something very pleasing in the idea of being thus won by force of will. Her own mental equilibrium was swayed by the varying pressure such considerations brought to bear upon it.

In the meantime there was one thing that must be done at once—Dick must be informed of all that had passed. Rosamond sprang up hurriedly from the couch on which she had been reclining, went to her

writing-table, and scribbled a short note, which she ordered to be despatched by the afternoon post.

When Richard received that note, he gave a significant whistle, knitted his brows, and, taking his hat, went out into the woods to consider in solitude what plan it would be safest and best to pursue.

The direct result of his cogitations was that he spent the evening writing letters. On the following day he hired a horse at the "Carsthorpe Arms," and rode into Greychester. Arrived there, he made his way at once to a small commercial hotel in the heart of the Borough, where he ordered dinner and inquired whether any letters had come for him. He was informed that there were no letters, but that a gentleman had come in about an hour ago who had given instructions that he should be shown to his private room as soon as he arrived. At this information Richard's brow took an ominous frown, but he followed the attendant without a word.

The occupant of the room into which he was shown was seated at the table, studying a newspaper. He had his back towards the door, but, on the entrance of his visitor, he rose slowly, and stood face to face with him. He was a small, spare man, with thin grey hair brushed with scrupulous neatness round the polished baldness of his crown, a face on which caution and cunning seemed to have set their seal, and light, restless eyes, which always seemed to be trying to look honestly at the object before them, yet always failed in the attempt.

"Good-morning, Mr. Hardy," he began, in a low, hesitating voice, evidently taking in at a glance in what direction the wind blew, and quailing before the threatening storm. "You see I have come in person to reply to your letter."

"I see you have; and I should like to know what the goodness you mean by it!" flared out Richard, towering above his companion, and glaring at him with ill-suppressed wrath. "I thought you understood that you were to hold no communication with me except by letter."

"Well, sir," said the other, in the same slow, hesitating voice, "I know you said so, but it seemed to me hardly satisfactory. The accounts I have had lately from you have not been very explicit. I want to know what you intend to do, and how long I am to count on your favour. You know my present position, sir?"

"I know the awful hole you've been fool enough to get yourself into," growled Richard. "I suppose you won't be content till you've dragged me into it too?—prowling about down here and waylaying me like this. But I can tell you, Claydon, it won't be to your advantage, for I promise you I shall wash my hands of the whole business! You needn't suppose Dick Hardy is fool enough to be caught in the same trap. If you contrive to get me implicated, all I can say is that you will ruin yourself, for you will get no more out of me."

"I have no desire to get you implicated, Mr. Hardy, if you mean to act fair and honest by me," said Claydon, with a mixture of servility and arrogance; "though as far as that goes, I know quite enough to get you took up this very day, and in this very house, so threatenings don't come very well from you."

"You had better look out what you're saying, or you may find yourself going out of that window head first!" said Richard, with a look that showed him quite capable of carrying out his words. As he spoke he came a step nearer to Claydon, who drew back and grew rather pale.

"No offence, sir," said he hurriedly.

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, then. After all, I'd be almost ashamed to lay a finger on such a craven coward as you. There, sit down, and let's know what your business is. I don't feel inclined to stop here all day."

"Well, sir, you said in your letter that Miss W. had agreed to settle an income of £200 per annum on me as the condition of secrecy."

"So long as she remains in possession of her patrimony."

"Yes, of course. If I manage to get her disinherited, I couldn't expect her to pay me for the job."

"Of course not. Well, what now? Aren't you satisfied? I think that's a very handsome allowance."

"Perhaps you do, sir; but then you must take into consideration what my feelings suffer in consequence of the state of things which is at present going on. If I hold my tongue about a thing, that doesn't prove that I think it's all right and fair, or that I agree with what's been done. I only do it by way of obliging certain parties. And it's very hard on a man who has always lived a respectable and honest life, and been used to good society, and never had any dealings with the common classes, to be suspected of having done a thing he had never thought of."

"Oh, well, as to that," said Richard carelessly, "I daresay Miss Wylde would make it two-fifty in consideration of your extreme respectability, if that's all you want; but mind you, Claydon, not if you go writing either to her or to me, or get dogging us about from place to place."

"All right, Mr. Hardy, I understand," said Claydon, with a covert smile of satisfaction; "but I just like to make sure that you mean what you say."

"On my honour as a gentleman," said Dick; "that ought to be enough."

"Oh, certainly," said Claydon, with a dubious smile, as if he thought the honour of a gentleman such as Dick Hardy was a thing not much to be trusted to; "it will be all right so long as the payments come regular. Am I to understand that it will be just the same when you and Miss W. get married?"

"What do you mean? Who said we were going to get married?" said Dick, with a red flush.

"Oh, no one, Mr. Hardy; only I suppose you look for some reward as well as other people; and I like to make sure of my position whatever happens."

"Just so. Keep a sharp look-out on the £. s. d.; that's the grand idea, isn't it?"

"Well, upon my word, sir, I think a man needs a little security for compensation when he's driven into such a position—never able to go anywhere or do anything without being watched and dogged about."

Richard gave an uneasy glance towards the door. He knew that in being there he was playing a very dangerous game, but he trusted to his usual good luck to carry him through.

"Oh, you needn't be alarmed; it's all right," said Claydon. "I'm not quite the fool you take me for."

Dick laughed. "Well, it's quite as much your look-out as mine, you know. Now, look here, Claydon: what evidence has our friend Lestrange managed to collect against you?"

"None at all, as far as I know—at least, nothing certain."

"If it does come to a head, which is unlikely, of course you will give no evidence. You will know nothing at all about it. You have never had any direct dealings with Miss Wylde, except on that one occasion which passed unobserved, and I shall keep out of the way. They can't convict you of anything on a mere suspicion. Keep up your courage, man, if you've got any; carry things off with a high hand, and you're safe to come out all right. Now, then, I'm off. You want some money, I suppose?—so here's some to go on with."

He pulled a roll of notes out of his pocket, counted them out, and handed them over to Claydon, who took them with a gleam of satisfaction in his face.

Dick Hardy had another fit of hard thinking as he rode back to Carsthorpe. The occurrences of the morning had roused in him all the spirit of dare-devilry which formed so conspicuous a part of his character. That interview with Claydon would, in all probability, compromise him to a serious extent, and make it necessary to bring matters to a crisis. It was evident that something must be done at once. Richard therefore set his wits to work to gain another private interview with Rosamond, when he determined to put forth all his power of persuasion, and to use all the influence he possessed over her, to win her to his purpose. The time had come for Rosamond to yield to him. On her refusal or compliance his future destiny hung, and he determined, with all that calculating perseverance and dogged intensity of purpose which had carried him through in many another scheme, to bring this also to a successful issue.

CHAPTER XX.

SIR JOHN LAWLEY was not a man much given to visiting. His habits were simple, and his tastes homely, and although, to please his family or his guests, he would allow his household arrangements to be turned upside down to almost any extent, as far as he was concerned, he loved a quiet life. To spend the mornings riding or walking about his estate, his afternoons dozing in the library, his evenings in social intercourse with his wife and son, constituted his highest idea of happiness. He desired no excitement, except, indeed, in the hunting season, beyond the usual round of magisterial duties, county or parish meetings, and social and political gatherings, which he felt himself bound, as the head of a leading county family, to attend.

Very seldom, except on stated occasions, was he to be found enjoying the hospitality of his friends—not even of so valued and close a friend as the Rector of Carsthorpe. He had so many opportunities of seeing Mr. Hardy—indeed, scarcely a day passed without their meeting somewhere between Lawley and Carsthorpe—that it hardly ever occurred to Sir John to make an exception in this case; but since little Bertram had become an inmate of the Rector's household, Sir John had acquired different habits. He had become strongly attached to the boy during his stay at Lawley Manor, and missed him very much when he went, so that it seemed now the most natural thing to drop in at the Rectory sometimes, where, if Mr. Hardy happened not to be at home, he was always sure of a warm welcome from Felicia and Bert.

It happened, the morning that Richard was at Greychester, Sir John made one of his casual visits to Carsthorpe. He found Miss Hardy and her youthful pupil in the cosy morning-room, deep in the mysteries of pothooks-and-hangers, but as soon as his shaggy head and broad shoulders darkened the window-pane, the pen was flung aside, and Bert, with Felicia's permission, rushed round to the hall door to receive him.

"Hey-day, little one! how are you this bitter cold morning?" asked Sir John, sinking down on Felicia's chair, and mopping his head with his handkerchief. "Busy with lessons, eh?—Take care you don't cram this young empty-head with too much knowledge, or he will grow to despise his elders and betters—eh, Bert?"

Felicia made some jesting reply, but she fancied that Sir John was in reality not so blithe and buoyant as he pretended to be. He returned Bert's caresses and replied to his prattle somewhat absent-mindedly, and was not quite so particular in his inquiries about village affairs as he generally was.

By-and-bye Mr. Hardy, who had been busy in his study, joined them. The conversation fell for some time on general topics, but presently Sir John gave the subject an abrupt turn by asking—

"Did you see anything of our young people yesterday?"

"Which do you mean?" said the Rector, with a startled expression in his eyes. "Miss Wylde and——"

"And Anthony."

"No; why, may I ask?"

"I can't make it out at all!" Sir John broke out after a pause. "I can't make out what it's all coming to. It worries me. Hardy—worries me dreadfully. I'm afraid it's a bad look-out for Lestrange!"

"Why, what is wrong? nothing fresh, I hope?" said the Rector anxiously.

Felicia, thinking of her brother, grew crimson, and, taking up her work, began to stitch away as if for her life, but she said nothing.

"Was it the same in our young days, I wonder? Bless me! it doesn't seem so long ago. As far as I recollect, people were rational then. They knew their own minds, and didn't make fools of themselves and each other as they do now-a-days."

"Is the engagement broken off?" asked Mr. Hardy.

Felicia's needle made an abrupt pause. She scarcely

dared lift her eyes, but it seemed that that single moment which preceded the reply was the longest she had ever known.

"That's just what I should like to know," said Sir John testily. "Yesterday morning the two went off as affectionate a couple as you'd wish to see, so my wife says. I meet them on the way back: Lestrange with a thundercloud on his brow; half a glance at Miss Rosamond's face is enough to show that something has upset the apple-cart there. Of course, no explanation. At luncheon Anthony sits stolid and silent, with never a smile. Miss Rosamond, with red tracks down her cheeks, carries on any amount of extravagant banter. In the afternoon Miss Rosamond retires to her room, Anthony disappears in like manner. At dinner the same performance over again. I venture to inquire whether anything has gone wrong, and the rather dubious answer is, "Oh, no—at least, nothing particular."

"Did you speak to Miss Wylde?"

"No; I asked Anthony. Lady Lawley mentioned it to Rosamond, though, but she could get nothing satisfactory out of her. Poor Anthony! I had a long talk with him. He has his troubles, like the rest of us."

"Yes," said Mr. Hardy thoughtfully.

At this juncture Felicia sent Bert out of the room to get some lunch. He would much have preferred to stay with Sir John, but, at Felicia's bidding, he went away without a word.

"You see, it makes it very awkward for Anthony, Rosamond's taking up the attitude she does," continued Sir John, who was evidently bent on relieving his mind. "You and I can understand that it's a point of honour with him to recover that will if possible, and get the youngster his rights, but Rosamond can't see it in that light at all. She seems to fancy he's treating her very hardly, and ought to let the matter rest. She has very magnanimous intentions towards Bert herself, and she thinks that's quite enough. I suppose that was the cause of the upset yesterday. There always is a shine, I believe, when the subject is mentioned."

"Dear me! I did not know it was so bad as that!" said the Rector. "It does not augur very well for their future happiness. Is there any affection between them, do you think?"

"On one side, yes. Anthony dotes on her, there's no mistake about that—and one can hardly be surprised. She is really a most fascinating girl—such good style, and such charming manners. She has her faults, no doubt; but she's thoroughly good at heart, I'm sure. Only a bit thoughtless, you know."

Felicia's chin went up a little higher, and her lips took a downward curve expressive of dissent, but still she kept silence, going on diligently with her work.

"You think, then, she really cares for him?"

"I don't know. I can't make out. I can't make out Miss Rosamond at all. She's a hard riddle. I own to you, Hardy, it vexes me sometimes to see her behaviour with other men. She is a coquette, there's no question about that; but I can't think she means anything by it. Now, there's my boy, I'm sorry to say, making himself miserable over her; he hasn't been like himself at all ever since she came into the house. Haven't you noticed it, Felicia?"

Felicia raised her eyes with quite a start of surprise on being thus suddenly appealed to.

"Yes—no—at least, I don't know," she stammered, scarcely knowing what she said. "We have not seen much of him lately."

"I wish you had," said Sir John heartily. "I wish you would take him in hand and cure him of it, my dear. It's a sad pity—very sad pity!"

"I'm afraid he is not the only one," said the Rector, with a puzzled frown. "There's *my* boy, too, not come home at the very best of times. I have often wished those two were married. It is not Dick I'm afraid of, you understand; but I should not like to think he was the cause of any mischief between Miss Wylde and Lestrange."

Sir John, who had a shrewd suspicion that such was already the case, did not quite know what to say in reply.

"Has Mr. Lestrange been able to find out anything yet about the will?" asked Felicia, who found the subject becoming rather painful.

"Nothing very definite," replied Sir John. "But there is a person whom he suspects—a man named Claydon, late valet to Colonel Wylde. He disappeared rather curiously after the Colonel's death, and there has been a mystery connected with his whereabouts ever since, till Anthony, strangely enough, ran up against him one day in Greychester. They are keeping a watch on his movements now; and I fancy, from what Anthony says, that Russell and Grimsby think there's evidence enough, and want to have him arrested on suspicion."

"But Lestrange won't sanction it?"

"Lestrange, poor fellow, is at his wit's end to know what to do. Duty pulls him one way, inclination another. He has a very strong suspicion against this fellow; and, besides, the affair has really gone too far now for him to draw back. It would place him in such an awkward position with the lawyers and others concerned if he were to try and let the matter fall through. On the other hand, if, through further investigation, Miss Rosamond gets deprived of what she considers her rights, it will simply break her heart, and poor Anthony will, of course, feel himself to blame."

"The will may have been destroyed," said the Rector.

"Certainly. In which case Miss Rosamond's position will remain the same; and, though Anthony will vindicate his character for honesty, he will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has got himself into disfavour with his *fiancée*."

"But surely Rosamond must see that Mr. Lestrange is taking the only course open to an honourable man?" said Felicia, with more than her usual energy. "She can't be so utterly blind to everything but her own interests not to know how much he has suffered, and must suffer in every way, over this wretched affair!"

Sir John shrugged his shoulders. "Rosamond knows nothing about business," said he apologetically, for he could not bear to hear his favourite blamed.

"She can't trust him enough to believe that he will always do what is right and honourable, I suppose. That is proof enough, I think, that she does not care for him as much as he deserves."

"You must not judge too hastily, dear," said Mr. Hardy, in tones of mild deprecation. In his heart he thought Felicia had hit the right nail on the head; but he was a man of a naturally kind and tender disposition, and long experience had taught him to be very slow and cautious in judging of the motives of others.

Sir John did his best to defend Rosamond, and Felicia, who was afraid of speaking too strongly and vexing her father, restrained her impulsive indignation and said no more.

"I thought Lestrange was a rich man," said the Rector. "Rosamond need not fear poverty, surely?"

"Oh no! I don't suppose she ever thought of such a thing. Anthony's means are very considerable, and his estate in Devonshire is one of the finest in the county. But I rather think it's Wyldeholme Rosamond frets about, you know. She is so much attached to the place."

"Ah, well! Lestrange's position is not one to be envied!" said Mr. Hardy, with a sigh. "I've observed him looking very careworn and preoccupied lately; and his manner here, when Miss Wylde took refuge from the storm, was noticeably strange. He had just returned from London, you remember, and I suppose all the worry was fresh in his mind."

"It is always in his mind, I think," said Sir John. "When I was asking him last night what he intended to do about Claydon, he said, 'I must let them do what they think best, I suppose; but I am utterly heartsick and weary, and should be thankful if I could wash my hands of the whole affair. It haunts me day and night!' It isn't like Anthony to give way like that. I hope he isn't breaking down."

Perhaps it was just as well that Sir John took his departure shortly afterwards, for Felicia had heard quite enough to make serious attention to anything like work an impossibility. Her heart was full of tenderness and pity, and her eyes were hot with suppressed tears. How small and bounded her own interests seemed, how insignificant her own troubles! How she wished that it were in her power to offer the noble over-burdened heart some help and counsel, some real comfort and sympathy in this time of distress and perplexity!

(To be continued.)

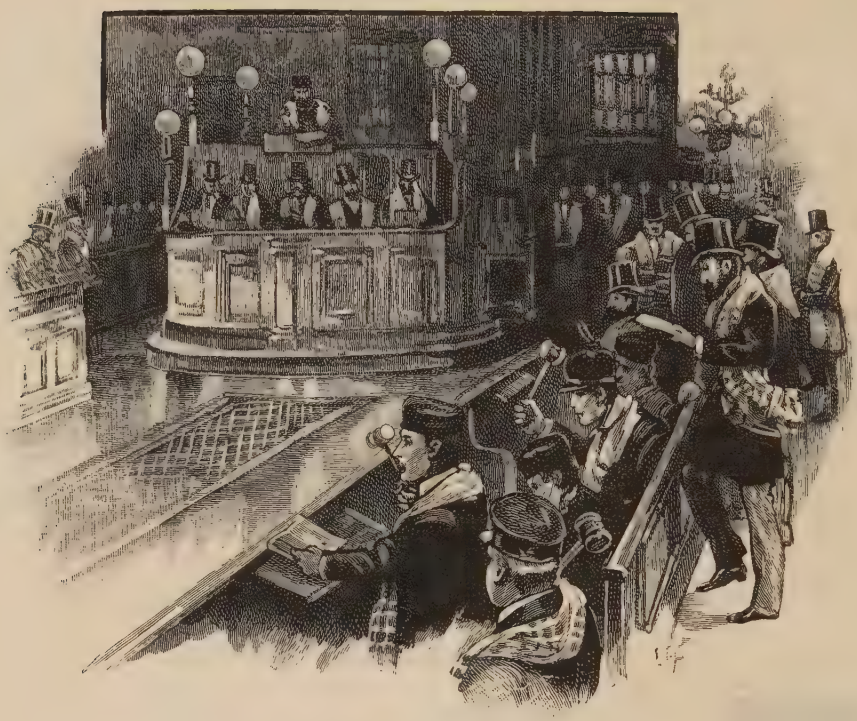
HOW THE MODERN JEW KEEPS PURIM.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BURNET, M.A.

PURIM is an institution still observed by the modern Jews, which, though not ordained in their Scriptures, derives its origin from ancient tradition, and remarkably confirms the history of the Book of Esther. Its name was evidently given in allusion to the casting of the Pur or lot, by which the day was fixed for the destruction of the chosen people. The customs connected with the festival are not only curious in themselves, but valuable as evidences of the truth of God's Word. The late Professor Lee of Cambridge said that the reality of the history is demonstrated by this feast being continued from that time to the present day. We propose, then, to offer some account of the way in which it is observed, and then to add a few remarks on the narrative which it so strikingly illustrates.

In the first place we may observe that the day before this feast is kept as a fast, in memory of the fast commanded by Queen Esther. It is said that eighty-five of the Jewish elders objected to the ordinance, when at first proposed, as likely to interfere with the rest of the Sabbath, and so it was arranged that, if the thirteenth of Adar fell on a Sabbath, the fast should be put back to the fifth day of the week, and never take place on the Friday, because those engaged in preparing food for the Sabbath would have to taste the dishes intended for it. As soon, however, as, on the eve of the fourteenth day of Adar, the stars begin to appear, candles are lighted in token of rejoicing, and the people assemble in the

"All above twenty years of age must contribute."—*p. 354.*



"'Let his name be blotted out.'"

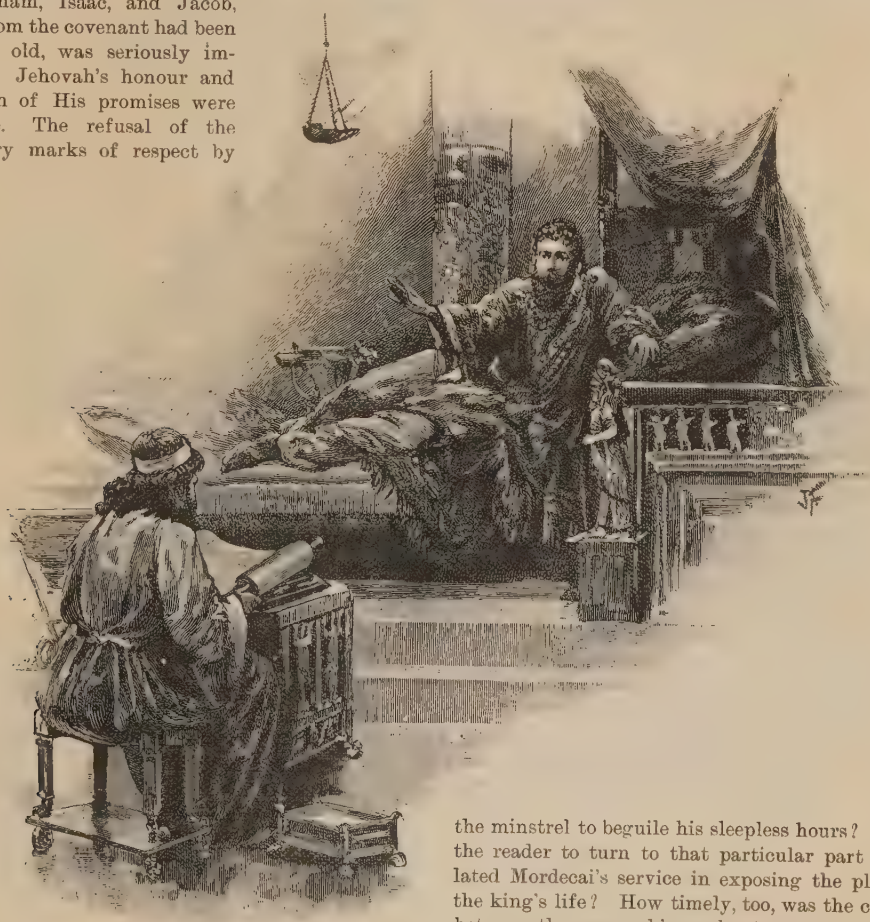
Synagogue. After certain prayers have been recited, and benedictions pronounced, the principal act of the day is performed, in the public reading of the whole Book of Esther, which is known as the Megillah, as being written on a roll of parchment. Four other Books of the Old Testament are distinguished by the same title, viz., Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Lamentations, because they, too, were copied on separate sheets of vellum for the use of the Synagogue. In some places, as at Paris, persons who can afford to do so provide themselves with small copies of the Megillah of Esther, which they all recite aloud, led by the officiating minister, and, whenever the execrated name of Haman occurs, the congregation stamp enthusiastically with their feet, and sometimes the boys are furnished, to their great delight, with little hammers to knock the benches, whilst they shout, "Let his name be blotted out: the name of the wicked shall rot!" This traditional hatred of the Jews' enemy is also expressed by the fact that the names of Haman's ten sons are written in the manuscripts in lines of three, three, and four, as if they were hanging by three parallel cords, three on each line, one above another. The reader, moreover, contrives to enunciate the names almost in one breath, to signify that they were all hanged at once. We feel almost disposed to smile when we see these singular customs still complied with even by rationalistic Jews. But, whether they are always practised with a serious intention or not, they point back to that signal deliverance of Israel, of which both they and the inspired record are the silent witnesses. At the same time there is a tone of bitter vindictiveness about some of the formularies prescribed for the day, which, we are sure, seldom now finds an echo in the hearts of the worshippers. Thus, at the close of the reading, they say, "Cursed be Haman, blessed be Mordecai; cursed be Zeresh, blessed be Esther; cursed be all idolaters, blessed be all Israelites; cursed be also Harbonah, by whose hands Haman has been hanged." Much more in harmony with enlightenment and generous sentiments is the gathering of alms which follows, when all above twenty years of age must contribute at least threepence, in memory of the redemption of the first-born with a half-shekel. Indeed, we may observe, it is one of the most pleasing and praiseworthy features of Jewish worship, that it is generally accompanied by an offertory for the poor or the support of the Synagogue. It seems likely that the primitive practice of a collection for the poor saints on the first day of the week, as enjoined on the Corinthians by St. Paul, was derived from the Jews.

When the services are over, the rest of the day is spent in social rejoicings and merriment. In some countries, after a specially sumptuous meal, a charade is performed, of which the tale of Esther is always the subject. Nor are the poor forgotten in the homes any more than in the Synagogue, for all, rich and poor alike, send presents according to their means to their friends and neighbours.

We must not, however, enlarge upon this part of our subject. It will be more to our purpose if we now

notice one or two points relating to the Book of Esther, from which this Purim festival is derived. It is a singular fact, often remarked, that this is the only part of the Bible where the name of God never occurs. Various reasons for this omission have been conjectured; but it need not in the least shake our belief in its inspired authority, since, although God's name is absent, God Himself is to be seen throughout. Nowhere are the silent workings of His Providence more plainly marked. The safety of His ancient people, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom the covenant had been made of old, was seriously imperilled. Jehovah's honour and the truth of His promises were at stake. The refusal of the customary marks of respect by Mordecai to Haman, though a man of such high dignity at the Persian Court, is not so surprising when we remember that Haman was a descendant of Amalek, Israel's hereditary foe, against whom, through Moses, a perpetual ban had been pronounced. This will also account for the extent of the vengeance which Haman resolved to wreak upon Mordecai's fellow-countrymen. This affront was in itself a slight matter; and yet it was a spark sufficient to kindle a fire that threatened to consume the whole Jewish race. How wonderfully was this grave danger averted! The many links in the chain of events point to the all-wise, all-powerful Hand of that "Divinity which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will."

There was not only the advancement of an obscure Jewish maiden to be the Queen of Persia, just at the critical moment when her influence was most needed: but there was the train of unforeseen circumstances leading to the king's reversal of the decree against her nation. Why, on that eventful night, was he unable to sleep? what moved him to call for the chronicles of his kingdom, and not to summon the tale-reciter or the minstrel to beguile his sleepless hours? How came the reader to turn to that particular part which related Mordecai's service in exposing the plot against the king's life? How timely, too, was the coincidence between the monarch's resolve to reward the faithful Jew's forgotten deed, and the arrival of Haman at the palace thirsting for vengeance. And then there was the fatal climax, when Haman is commanded to heap upon his enemy the distinctions which he had thought could be only intended for himself, and the wicked schemer receives the doom he had prepared for Mordecai.



"What moved him to call for the chronicles of his kingdom?"

"If God is not in the Book of Esther," asks Dr. Kitto, "where is He? We see the glory—the glory of His goodness in caring for and shielding from harm His afflicted Church—shining through every page." There is therefore great propriety in the Jews commemorating this wonderful deliverance, and Christians also do well to mark the signs of God's ever-watchful Providence over His Church and individual people.

Dr. Doddridge is said to have kept a register of the

most remarkable providences in his life; and there are not a few events in most men's lives, which, if they were more noted and remembered, would greatly strengthen their confidence in Divine guidance for the future.

Mr. Robertson of Brighton, whose career as a preacher, though short, was so brilliant, often said that his entrance into the Christian ministry was brought about through the barking of a dog. Lady Trench at one time lived next door to his father, Captain Robertson. Her daughter was ill, and could not sleep, being disturbed by the Captain's dog. She wrote requesting its removal. This led to an acquaintance between the families, and so to the young man's introduction to Dr. Daly, then Bishop of Cashel, who, struck with his strongly marked character and promising talents, persuaded him to refuse a commission in the army, and to enter Holy Orders. So true are still the Psalmist's words, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

If it were so under the dimmer twilight of the Old Dispensation, much more may we rely upon this care and guidance under the Gospel! The New Covenant is made with believers in the Cross of Christ, and upon larger promises.

"MAD" MRS. HOLLOWAY.

BY C. E. C. WEIGALL, AUTHOR OF "THE TEMPTATION OF DULCE CARRUTHERS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"LIFE is very difficult sometimes," sighed Mr. Clowes, the old Vicar of Potterhampstead, as he laid his head on his hand, and looked out of his study window across the fair stretch of green meadow that lay in front of the house.

A sleek Alderney cow was browsing upon the fresh grass and yellow cowslips, and a rough brown cob stood with his patient, sleepy head thrown over the palings, apparently meditating repose.

There were no other signs of life around the house, for Potterhampstead was buried in the depths of the country: so far from everywhere, that to all intents and purposes it might just as well have been the end of the earth, and beyond it—chaos!

Mr. Clowes had been studying with painful intentness a couple of account-books, the receipt and expenditure pages of which did not seem to tally to his satisfaction.

"I don't know how it is," he murmured wearily, the lines of care on his patient face becoming more deeply marked as he pushed the books aside: "no tithes, no rents, no money of any sort, nothing to trust in for bread save the Alonzo mines; and they, thank God, *are* safe. I seem—if one might say it in all religion—to have been born under an unlucky star."

Times had been bad in Potterhampstead, and the tenant-farmers, instead of meeting their difficulties cheerfully, had been roused into something like revolution by a scheming adventurer, and had refused point blank to pay their rents.

The old Vicar had neither the energy nor the inclination to take legal remedies, and had consequently been put to such serious difficulty that he knew not where to turn for help. In his trouble he had taken to speculating wildly with the little capital on which he could lay his hands, believing each flaring newspaper report as to this silver mine or that petroleum well, and hoping, with the confidence of a nature that does not know the meaning of the word suspicion, that each venture would mean wealth for him and his daughter Inez.

His son-in-law, Captain Holloway, was at that time quartered in Jamaica, and Inez, on account of her delicate health, had been unable to join him in that country, to her great sorrow.

The Vicar could hear her voice now, carolling through the garden, and presently there was a soft step behind him, and a pretty hand made prisoner of the account-books.

"Guess who it is, and what I have brought you," said a voice, while one roguish soft pink palm was laid across his eyes.

The Vicar lovingly took the two hands in his and kissed them, and looked up into his daughter's face.

Inez Holloway, as she stood there in her glorious beauty, her ripe red lips and black hair intensifying the Spanish cast of features she inherited from her dead mother, might have stood for a very model of youth and happiness. She threw the letters down on the table before her father, and straightened the bunch of scarlet roses she wore at her bosom. Then she looked up, blushing and dimpling with happy laughter.

"Father darling," she said, "I have had such happy news from Rex. He has got the offer of a good appointment in England, and he is coming home very soon; and he says that you are to come and live with us, and then we shall none of us ever be separated any more. Oh! it is too much joy to bear all at once. Fancy Rex in England, and our new happy home! Why, it is a whole long year since I saw him last!"

She was thrilling in every nerve with the ecstasy of her joy, which seemed to communicate itself to her father, for he looked at her with a smile.

"Dear little daughter," he said, "for your twenty years of life you have gone through much sorrow, and it is very good of your husband to wish me to be with you in your joy. But now you must let me open my letters, for old Thomas is far before his time this morning, and I had not expected them for the next hour."

Inez withdrew into the window with her husband's letter, which she read and re-read, pressing it furtively to her lips every now and then with a gesture of passionate love.

Her father seemed to be strangely silent over his share of the post-bag, and the girl looked round at last with vague wonder and a sense of uneasiness. The Vicar was lying with his head bent forward on the desk. The London paper was spread out before him, and his hand was resting heavily against one of the columns. There was a rigidity about the lines of his figure which frightened Inez, and she came forward hurriedly.

"What is it, father?" she said, and stooping over him, she tried in vain to rouse him from the torpor which seemed to have overcome him. She glanced down at the paper in her terror, wondering what catastrophe could have numbed his senses so strangely, and her eyes took in mechanically two paragraphs which were printed together in the same column in large type—

"Disastrous Failure of the Alonzo Mine Company. Disappearance of the Cashier. Wind-up of the whole Business. Claims to be made upon the Shareholders."

Then further down—

"A sad affair took place yesterday in Upton, Jamaica. A sergeant and six men of the 999th West India Regiment mutinied, and Captain Holloway,

"He laid his wife on the sofa, employing every art he knew to restore her to consciousness."—*p.* 359.

D.S.O., was unfortunately fatally wounded while sallying into the bush to attack the mutineers. This gallant officer will be much missed by his regiment. He leaves a wife in England, to whom he has been married little more than a year."

Her eyes wandered mechanically to the window. The awful shock of her husband's death had swallowed up all realisation of anything else, and she forgot that her father was lying motionless before her.

"Oh, it cannot be true!" she muttered drearily, her fingers playing aimlessly with the fatal paper, as she steadied herself against the table on which it lay. "I know that Rex is coming home soon, very soon, and we are both to live with him. How can they put such lies into the paper—such terrible untruths to frighten people? Father dear, wake up and tell me that Rex is coming home safely. Father——" She laid her hand on the powerless fingers still grasping the paper, and their very touch sent an icy thrill of horror through her soul.

The whole sense of her awful loss came upon her, surging up into her heart like an overpowering flood. She grasped her throat to check the convulsive sob of agony that threatened to tear her very frame asunder.

"Father!" she cried again, "my husband is dead—and, can it be? my father is dead too!" And in another instant her shrieks were ringing through the house.

The servant who came hurrying up at the sound found the old Vicar of Potterhampstead freed from his troubles, his gentle soul at rest, and Inez Holloway at his feet, talking wildly to him, the blessed light of reason quenched in her beautiful, horror-stricken eyes.

CHAPTER II.

"WHAT a stupid sort of individual that Captain Holloway seems to be, my dear," said pretty Mrs. Pearce, as she lay back in her deck-chair on board the *Pelensium*, homeward-bound from Jamaica. "People talk about him being so clever and distinguished, and all that sort of thing, you know, but I can't get a word, good or bad, out of him."

"Well, Florrie, you see he has only just recovered from that nasty knock on the head," said her friend, laughing. "And perhaps he is thinking too much of his wife in England to be able to spare time to indulge in idle chatter."

"Chatter! Mary Hawkins, one would think I was as insatiable for gossip as a boa-constrictor is for rabbits," returned Mrs. Pearce in indignant staccato tones.

Her friend only looked at her curiously, shrugged her shoulders, and walked away to where Captain Holloway was standing, dreamily watching the creamy wake of the steamer.

"Are you thinking of England and your friends?" she said pleasantly; for Mary Hawkins was a girl who always sympathised with the feelings of others, and was ready to listen to the confidences of half a hundred love-sick swains or home-going husbands.

Rex Holloway smiled back at her.

"I am thinking of the wife whom I have not seen for nearly a year," he answered. "I have been a little anxious at not hearing from her by the mail which came in just before I left, and I fear the account of the Upton skirmish must have frightened her a good deal, for she is almost a child in years, and she has no one to console her, for her father is too old and delicate to be troubled by other people's sorrows, and she has not another relation in the world."

"Poor little girl!" repeated Miss Hawkins softly. And they stood together for a few moments, watching the sun set redly in the sea and the soft primrose haze of evening tremble across the sky and fade into the deep blue of night, lit by the steadfast stars.

Rex Holloway set off for Potterhampstead as soon as the boat touched at Southampton, for he could not bear to be parted from his darling for even one unnecessary hour.

The cab that drove him the six miles from the little wayside station was all too slow for his impatient desires, and when its rickety wheels crunched over the gravel sweep and drew up at the Vicarage door, he sprang breathlessly to the ground.

A strange silence seemed to pervade the whole house, and to lurk behind the shuttered windows and closed doors, and with a pang of anxiety he rang a peal at the bell that resounded noisily through the house.

"Are the Vicar and Mrs. Holloway away from home?" he asked of the middle-aged woman who came crossly to the door.

"What do you ring the bell like that for?" she said. "You 'll not waken the dead in that way. The Vicar was buried rather better than a fortnight ago; and Mrs. Holloway was took ill, and she went away with a doctor or some such person that was fetched from somewhere. Hannah, the girl that was servant here, went home to her mother, who lives Londonway, after the funeral; and that 's all I or anyone else can tell you. But, lor, sir! whatever 's the matter? You do look bad!"

For Holloway had staggered against the wall of the house, and was staring at her with white, drawn face. He had not recovered entirely from his wound, and the shock was almost more than he could bear.

"Mr. Clowes dead, and Inez gone away!" he groaned. "Merciful heaven! what can it mean?"

But this was more than the caretaker or anyone in the village could tell him; and, sick at heart, he retraced his steps to the station, and took the train for Lexington, the nearest big town, in the hope of learning something there as to his wife's fate, and where at any rate he could set detectives on her track.

He knew that Inez had no relations or intimate friends to whom he could apply in his trouble, for the girl had lived an unusually solitary life, and had seldom left the little country village, where he had come across her by chance during a walking tour through Lancashire, and had fallen madly in love with her wonderful beauty.

As it was late in the evening, he secured a room in the Grosvenor Hotel, and deferred unwillingly any further proceedings till the following morning.

But rest was for him out of the question. The pale image of Inez weeping alone for her father, with no

one to wipe her piteous tears, was ever before his eyes; and pacing to and fro in the room, he tried to unravel the mystery of her illness and her departure from Potterhampstead.

"What illness could possibly have assailed her?"

Strangely enough, the idea of a mind distraught with sorrow never once entered into his thoughts—perhaps mercifully, for surely the idea of his wife out of her mind and confined in an asylum would have been a far more crushing weight of misery to bear than hopeful uncertainty. He drew aside his curtain and sat down by the open window, staring out into the dewy darkness of the summer night, and cooling his fevered forehead against the cold stones.

He had not been there long, however, when the intense quiet of the street was broken by a wild, sharp cry of "Fire!" and up the road at breakneck pace came the engine and the few firemen that the town possessed. There was a panting, breathless little crowd at their heels; and Holloway, without an instant's hesitation, ran down the stairs and joined them. He could not have told why he did so; but the desire of work, anything to turn the miserable current of his thoughts, was strong upon him, and he kept pace with the fire-engine with the stern fixed face of a man who means work.

The scene of action lay evidently on the outskirts of the town, and they raced along through alley and street, ever keeping in sight the red glare that lit up the sky with lurid flashes of flame towards the east.

There was a cry from some man among the crowd as they drew nearer that it was the lunatic asylum that was on fire, and the thought of the helpless inmates quickened their steps and stirred all their pulses with sympathy.

The great grey stone building was pouring out volumes of smoke and flame as they dashed into the courtyard.

The warders were all drawn up outside, in charge of the lunatics who had been already rescued, and who were making the night hideous with their cries of terror.

"Are they all out?" said Holloway to one of the women, who was looking anxiously up at the flaming windows.

"No; there are about half a dozen up in that front room—God help them!" she said, clasping her hands pityingly; "and it'll be a brave man who dares to bring them out of the jaws of death!"

"I will help to do it," said he quietly; and throwing off his coat, he spoke a few hurried words to one of the firemen, and began to ascend the escape quickly and cautiously.

When the crowd below grasped the fact that this stranger was going straight up into the danger which none of them dared to face, they put up a great shout of admiration, which thrilled through the night air back to the heart of the very town itself.

"Aye! but that is a brave chap," said one of the firemen, following Holloway up the ladder, dimly conscious that he was in the wake of a hero as courageous as any Gordon or Grace Darling.

When Holloway reached the smouldering frame of the window, he peered in through the smoke, and making out two forms crouching in a corner, leaped without hesitation into the room.

Picking up one of the women, he thrust her into the fireman's arms. Then with the other, an unconscious weight pressed to his own heart, he fought his way back through the smoke and darting tongues of flame to the window-ledge where the fire-escape stood.

It was the work of a moment to wind his arms more securely round the slim figure, and to slide to the ground.

As he did so the window-frame fell in with a crash, and as the fire blazed up fiercely for an instant, his eyes fell upon the pale upturned face that rested against his shoulder.

It was his wife Inez, and he had saved her!

Without a word he made his way through the preoccupied crowd, who paid no attention to his departure now that a piteous cry from another wing of the asylum told them that there was yet another victim to be rescued.

He sped back with untiring feet, scarcely feeling the burden that he carried, under the fierce joy that possessed his every nerve.

He hurried up the hotel stairs to his room, and laid her on the sofa, employing every art he knew to restore her to consciousness. And when he succeeded, and the heavy lids quivered and slowly lifted, the soul that looked out of her glorious eyes was as sane as his own.

"Rex," she said faintly, "where am I?—Ah! what a dream I have had! Oh! my darling, have you come home indeed, never to leave me any more? It can't be true."

But the great strong fellow was down at her side on his knees, his arms clasped tightly round her, his very tears of joy on her cheek. And she knew that it was the truth indeed.

* * * * * *

The fire at Lexington Lunatic Asylum has long since ceased to be a ten days' wonder in the neighbourhood.

But whenever it is mentioned, the older inhabitants shake their heads gravely, and wonder for the thousandth time who the mysterious stranger might be who came and went in so rapid a fashion, and whether poor "mad" Mrs. Holloway was burnt to death, or whether she escaped, and is still a lunatic at large.

But the inquisitive gossips are never likely to know the wrongs and rights of the story; for the Holloways never came back to Lexington after that night, and their home on the Devonshire coast is as happy and fair as love and the merry voices of children can make it.

SACRED TIES.

TIES of friendship, firm and true,
These in early days I knew,
Pacing, with a heart at ease,
Underneath the playground trees,
Hearing the familiar voice
Of the comrade of my choice,
While we talked in boyish pride
Of a world as yet untried—
Fain to win, with valour bold,
Fields of fame, like knights of old!

Ties of home, beloved and pure,
Precious links that still endure,
Binding all the past to me
In a lasting memory!
Till this heart shall cease to beat,
Gentle glances, fond and sweet,
Kindly greetings, shall be mine,
Touched with grace almost divine—
Pictures on life's glowing page,
Beautiful through youth and age!

Ties of marriage, happy bands,
Joining willing hearts and hands,
Where the lover finds his bride
Ever fairer by his side—
Doubly dear, through storm and strife,
With the sweeter name of wife!
We are still, as years increase,
Captives seeking no release,
Wearing fetters which we prize,
Closer drawn by sacred ties!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

A LITTLE HOMILY ON DUTY.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM COWAN, M.A., INCUMBENT OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S, LONDONDERRY.

IN the study of her Rector a lady appeared one day. She looked weary and troubled. Many times had she helped him in his work, and to her sympathy and co-operation he owed a good deal of his success. To-day, however, she was in a depressed mood, and no sooner had she taken a seat than she said, "I am so discouraged!" And then, as if this were not enough, and she wished to discourage him too (though this was in reality far from her thought), she added, "I can't see what attracts you to this parish." It is true there were many discouragements—there always are—but they seemed in this instance to rise mountains high.

The Rector, after his visitor's departure, throwing himself back in his arm-chair, fell into a meditative mood. And he expressed the thought which passed through his mind in these words, which he repeated or seemed to repeat to himself:—"There is one word I have made it the study of my life to understand. It is a little word, but it is a grand word. It thrills men; it gives them strength; it steadies their purpose; it has an attractive power; it keeps me where I am. That word is Duty!"

It is indeed a wonderful word; stern, it may be, yet beautiful too, carrying with it an almost irresistible influence.

"Stern lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face."

And the more one thinks of it, and enters into its meaning, the more one understands and realises its power to bring success out of seeming failure, to give courage in the face of what would otherwise dishearten, to conquer the tyranny of indolence, to stimulate to increased activity in the service of man, to keep the soul near to its God. Duty! what a noble watchword it has been to the world's Luthers and Ridleys, and Knoxes and Wesleys, and Lawrences and Wellingtons and Gordons, whose lives it has surrounded with a halo of splendour, and whose deeds have by means of it inspired thousands of their fellow-men to tread in their footsteps! How much might be written upon it—upon the sacrifices it has demanded, the heroisms it has engendered, and the blessings it has bestowed! The "Flying Dutchman," one of the fastest express trains in the world, was once overdue at the Bristol station, while at the same time, in one of the sidings, they were moving some blocks of Bath stone. By some mischance one of these blocks fell on to the up line, along which the express was every moment expected to thunder past. No time was to be lost, for should the block of stone remain upon the line it would wreck the train. Hark! what was that noise? It was the approaching train. A gallant platelayer named Chitty, whose name deserves to be handed down, leaped upon the line, crowbar in hand. The roar of the train was in his ears, and he worked for very life to get the block away and clear the line. He succeeded

"Till this heart shall cease to beat,
Gentle glances, fond and sweet,
Kindly greetings, shall be mine."

"*SACRED TIES.*"—*See p.* 360

in moving the block from the metals; now the line was clear, and the train was safe. But as he plied the crowbar for the last time, the train dashed up, and he was hurled into eternity. He saved the train at the cost of his own life. Well and bravely had the platelayer cared for others and done his duty.

There is an iron ring in the word "Duty" which has always had a fascination for the people of this country. It was the watchword of George Herbert in his devoted pastoral labours at Bemerton. It was Nelson's talisman at Trafalgar: "England expects every man to do his duty." It was the guiding star of the hero of Waterloo. When, in his days of freshness and freedom, the Laureate wrote his immortal ode on the Duke of Wellington, he poured into the praise of duty the full strength of his English heart—

> "Not once or twice in our rough island story
> The path of duty was the way to glory."

And this is a path in which everyone may walk. None so poor, none so illiterate, none so insignificant, but may be governed by this great inspiring motive of duty.

> "Knowledge is a steep which few may climb,
> But Duty is a path where all may tread."

Some years ago a little girl of twelve years of age was passing an old brick prison in the city of Chicago, on her way to school, when she saw a hand beckoning to her from a cell window, and heard a weary voice asking her for something to read. For many weeks after that, she went to the prison every Sunday, carrying the poor prisoner a book from her father's library. Time went on, and at last she was called one day to his death-bed. And as she stood there he said, "Little girl, you have saved my soul. Promise me that you will do all your life for the poor people in prison what you have done for me." The little girl promised, and she has kept her word. Linda Gilbert has been all her life the steadfast friend of the prisoner. She has established good libraries in many prisons, and visited and helped hundreds of prisoners, many of whom are now living honest lives. Prisoners from all parts of her country know and love her name; and surely the God of "all prisoners and captives" must look upon her work with interest and approval. And all this because a little girl heard and heeded the call of duty, the call to help a suffering soul.

And to-day those men and women who are carrying on their shoulders the great work of the Church, or the daily work of what we may call their secular life—it may be in the home, or in the shop, or in the field—and refuse to falter or hesitate, or be turned aside, are those who at every turn are actuated by the thought, "It is my duty." "Where Duty bids" the Christian

> "confidently steers,
> Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
> And trusting in his God, surmounts them all."

A few years ago, when the Westminster Hospital gathered its nurses whence it could, a poor woman, suffering from an acute and dangerous disorder, was admitted as a patient, and on the sick-bed was succoured and comforted by Dean Stanley's wife, who was a frequent visitor at the hospital. In a sudden crisis of her malady it was decided by the physicians that the only means of saving life was by an immediate and terrible operation. The choice was submitted to her of certain death or this fearful passage to recovery. The poor creature shrank at first even from life at such a price; then trembling, she said, "I think if Lady Augusta Stanley were but with me, I could go through it." In haste, a messenger was sent to the deanery, where Lady Augusta was found dressed in readiness to fulfil an engagement at Buckingham Palace. Without a moment's hesitation she wrapped a cloak over her magnificent attire, and went straight to the hospital. When Duty called her, then royalty itself must wait. She stayed with the poor tortured woman, nerving her to endurance by the strength of her sympathy and her presence, until the surgeon's work was ended, and relief and rest had come, and then from the hospital ward went to the palace to apologise to the Queen for her late appearance.

Let us all grasp the idea this great word conveys, and be faithful to every trust, steady in every purpose, and courageous in our efforts to build up the Kingdom of our Lord. This is incumbent upon all Christian people. "Go work to-day in my vineyard." We have been made alive unto God for the very purpose of witnessing for Him, and working for Him, in a world of selfishness, and ignorance, and sin. And if, either through Stoic apathy or Epicurean indolence, we fail to accomplish that end, if our hands hang down in resolved inaction, we not only neglect a manifest duty, but we thereby injure our own spiritual life. We may expect in those circumstances that such life as we have shall gradually be congealed into the hardness and darkness and death of a winter's day. As in a branch, when the sap can find no outlet through bud or blossom, it flows back again and seeks one elsewhere, so when the life-giving and life-sustaining spirit is checked in the Christian's heart, and not allowed to have free course through it, and to come out into open fruitful manifestations in work for God, He abandons that heart, and leaves it to its selfishness.

On the other hand, duty done brings a great reward. We cannot do good without getting good. Work, struggle, resolute activity, brace our spiritual nerves, give us those wrestling thews by which—through God's grace—we successfully meet the great adversary, and throw the world and every hostile power beneath our feet. As the young and slender French lad longing to serve his country declared that he would grow strong in the presence of the enemy, so the Christian becomes strong and vigorous by conflict and victory. "Our antagonist," says Edmund Burke, "becomes our helper." It is a principle in philosophy, and experience confirms its soundness, that the exercise of any power of the soul gives increased strength to that power. On the other hand, if our power and faculties be neglected and never called into active use, they will soon grow weak, and manifest symptoms of decay.

> "An angel's wing would droop if long at rest,
> And God Himself inactive were no longer blest."

The earnest, working, self-denying disciple is always strong, always happy: his faith is always vigorous

and his hopes are always bright and joyful; while the disciple who is indolent and self-indulgent, who acts on the *otium cum dignitate* principle, is always complaining of doubts, and weakness, and despondency.

The philosopher tells us that in the physical world action and reaction are equal; in the moral world a benefit given is always attended by a blessing received, while in the spiritual world the proportion of reward is greater. We can never forget the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "He that watereth others shall be watered himself."

> "The quality of mercy is not strained:
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath; it is twice bless'd:
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes—
> 'T is mightiest in the mightiest."

It is not without significance that it was while engaged in their daily work the Twelve found their Lord. The path of duty was then, as now and always, the path of spiritual growth and the means to special Divine graces. St. Bernard said once that in every duty he found God.

Of each of us, then, let it be said that we have done our duty. This service is laid upon us all in our private life and in our public life, in our home walks and in our Church walks. None can justly say, "I have no sphere; there is no service for me." The weakest, the lowliest, the poorest, as well as the rich and cultivated and influential, have a work to do, a burden to bear, a service to render, a duty to fulfil. You can suffer the hasty word to pass in silence without answering again; you can check the ungenerous judgment in your heart; you can watch for the opportunity of suggesting a more excellent way; you can comfort the sorrowful spirit; you can speak a word of sympathy and approval to one who needs it much; you can encourage honesty, economy, good temper, forbearance, fidelity, and diligence amongst your associates and fellow-workmen; you can cultivate the spirit of trust, of holiness, of work, day by day, in the light of the great judgment to come, and as in the presence of that great Being whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and who knoweth the very secrets of the heart. There is a striking story told by General Lee to his son which has found its way into print. Last century in New England a day of sudden and unaccountable gloom, known yet by tradition as "the dark day," occurred while the Senate of the State was sitting. The universal impression was that Doomsday had indeed come. A great fear came upon many. Suddenly a well-known member stood up. "President," said he, "I propose that lights be brought in, and that we pass to the order of the day. If the Judge comes, He had best find us at our duty." Yes, "at our duty." Let that be our watchword while life is ours: and then when the great day comes we shall receive the blessed commendation—"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE.

BY MARY HAMPDEN.

CHAPTER XVII.

EDITH was walking in the garden on the morning of Hector's return to Abbeylands. Her fancy roved over the future, or pictured the gay sweet Christmas they would have together: how they would sing the old glees, and walk through the snowy lanes to the ivy-covered church where she had worshipped with her mother every Christmas morning of her life, except in the days when she had been too little to do more than stay at home, laughing at the red berries of the holly, and crowing with delight at the merry bells.

This year the simple tale would be changed; there would be another presence in Aberstone parish church. Besides the mother who had guarded her all those years, there would be Hector, her lover! and so it would be through all the years to come; *he* would be with her; in her simple girlish thoughts she added the words which defined her old dread: "He would not go away and marry someone else."

In her wanderings, absorbed in these thoughts, she found she had reached a high bank, where the garden fence skirted the grounds. Looking over into the road below, she saw a man walking, many yards away—his head bent in deep reflection, and quite unconscious of her presence. Her eye noted the tall figure, the broad shoulders, and the dark hair, and she gave a little cry of surprise and happiness. "Hector! Oh, Hector, you are come!"

He looked up with a start on thus being roused from his gloomy meditations, and saw above him his little cousin. Her cheeks were aglow with blushes, her eyes sparkling with delight, her hands stretched out towards him. He saw the dainty little figure clothed in soft furs, and crowned by the sweet oval face; he saw the smiling lips; he remembered all that this girl had done for him—how she had given him so readily her love and trust; and gloomy thoughts were banished. Here was happiness so near, so real; come what might in the future, the present was sufficiently sweet to dispel his forebodings; in all the world there was but one woman whom he loved, and she was welcoming him home. Springing

up the bank, he caught her in his arms, kissing the cheek which nestled on his shoulder, pressing the little hands which twined round his neck.

"Edith, my darling!" he murmured, "my little cousin! I have come to answer your letter. God bless you for your dear words!"

"Oh, Hector! You did not think—I was not too bold, was I? You seemed so far away, and I thought of you all alone and doubting. I don't know whether a girl may write so, but I thought you would understand, and—and I love you!"

"Understand? Yes, you may trust me to understand now and for ever! Promise me that you will always remember that I loved you long before I went away—that if I had not been a poor man, and you an heiress, I should not have gone at all. You will never forget that I left you solely because I could not stay and see you day after day, without telling you, either by words or looks, that you were dear to me—so dear that I could not bear to take advantage of your goodness to me!"

"What does it all matter now, Hector?" murmured Edith, still hiding her blushes on his shoulder. "We are never going to lose each other again."

"What will your mother say to me, Edith?" he asked in a graver tone, holding her from him and looking searchingly into her face.

"I think mamma loves you almost as well as I do. When will you tell her, Hector?"

"This evening, after dinner. I must give her an account of my position—financially I mean—and I can hardly do that without some preparation; but nothing shall prevent her knowing all before another night passes. I do not like this secrecy more than you do. Kiss me, Edith," he added gently.

She reached up her fair young face, and kissed him.

"This is not the first time, dear, is it? But before, I was only kissing my brother. You have changed into quite a different person now. Oh, how glad I am that you liked me from the very first! I think I should have broken my heart if I had never been more than 'Miss Weir' to you!"

"I have found you many a better title—my *love*, my *treasure*. Some day you shall lose the surname by which I first addressed you. I must call you still 'my little cousin' until the time when I may change the words to 'my little wife!'"

In this way did the meeting between Edith and Hector take place. He accepted the position for which he had longed, and which his sister had thrust upon him, determined that the little heiress of Aberstone should never learn to blush because her first love-letter had been written under a misapprehension; otherwise, if it would have involved Edith in no trouble, he would not have scrupled to expose Lilian's deception.

On walking up to Abbeylands that evening, accompanied by Lord Henry Wynn, and arriving, as was his custom, after the Weirs had dined, Mr. Ford was surprised to find Edith changed. She did, indeed, run out as usual to greet him in the hall, but after a few words of rather timid welcome to his friend, she retreated into the drawing-room, and left Lilian to explain the reason for Hector's return. Seeing that Lord Henry had followed Edith into the obscure corner where she had ensconced herself, the Vicar took a chair beside his cousin. "You surprise me very much," he said. "I thought Hector would not be home for several days."

"He did not anticipate leaving his work before Christmas Eve, but he had a special motive to urge him to make every effort to return. You will probably be displeased, Mr. Ford." She glanced across at Edith, who was chatting to Lord Henry, but keeping her eyes bent low over a piece of embroidery.

"They cannot hear," she added. "We can discuss the matter as well as though they were not present. My brother has won her love!"

"Is it really arranged?"

"Yes, or I should have said nothing on the subject. Hector at this very moment is talking to Mrs. Weir in the library. I suppose you are terribly disappointed?"

"I shall not be if this proves to be for Edith's happiness. My dear little girl!" he murmured, as he glanced at her happy face. "I think Hector has won a treasure; I hope he is really fond of her."

"You would think so if you had known his state of mind when he had to leave her. I wonder," added Lilian, with a quick gleam of anger in her eyes, "I wonder why everyone thinks first of Edith. You none of you care what becomes of anyone but that child! Of late she has exercised a few of her spells upon me, and I feel that were I to allow myself to do so I should grow as infatuated on the subject as you are."

"I am glad, my dear Miss Lilian, that you are growing to love your cousin. May I venture to ask you a question?"

"Oh! you may ask anything."

"What has been distressing you, then? Are you not glad of your brother's success?"

"Distressing me?" she cried, with an unnatural laugh. "Oh, nothing at all!—or, at least, if that reply will not satisfy you—I have been regretting my own evil nature—wishing I had been turned out of the same mould as the pattern Edith. There might have been a chance then that someone would have given a little sympathy to me."

"Is it possible that you don't know how much I—Lilian! Can *my* sympathy be of any good to you?"

"Yes—it might be; but how can you understand? You have blamed me all the while in your heart!"

"I think you *have* been to blame."

"Then how can you pretend to sympathise? You don't know how hard the world has always been to me; you do not realise how my opinions respecting the Weirs have changed. I came here prepared to do battle on my brother's behalf against those who had been unjust and cruel to him. You are one of them."

"Yes," assented Arthur Ford quietly. "I am one of them, because I am related by marriage to the man who is dead—my uncle—whose will kept Hector out of the succession to the property and estates; but that is all. I was not responsible for his action; I do not defend it. You have been to blame, because you have tried to sustain your prejudices against us all. You have been cold and unforgiving; you have repulsed Aunt Mary's efforts to win your confidence; in short,

you have fostered a spirit of enmity against those who wished to be your friends, while devoting all your efforts to the bringing about of this marriage."

"And why not? Is not Hector worthy the love of any girl?"

"I cannot judge of that; but your calculations did not depend upon love. You planned a purely mercenary marriage for your brother."

unworthily, it was the knowledge that if he knew he would be disappointed in her—grieved for her—that had made her self-appointed task of deception such a source of misery.

"You are mistaken," she whispered. "You do not know all, or you would despise me utterly."

"I do not want to know any more, Lilian," he answered, "and I do not wish to add to your troubles.

"'By the right of my love for you!'"

Lilian looked up into the Vicar's face with her rebellious blue eyes filled with angry tears.

"How did you know?—but he does love her. No matter what I wished, I have done no harm."

"I hope you are right. My dear Lilian, I knew, because I had made it my task to watch you."

"And by what right," cried the girl passionately, "did you set a watch upon me?"

Mr. Ford bent his head, so that his reply, low-toned as it was, should reach her ear.

"By the right of my love for you!"

Poor Lilian! Those few words took the form of the most severe punishment for her—they roused her to a sense of her own feelings; she understood then why it was that in all her underhanded schemes the thought of Arthur Ford had sent a pang of self-reproach to her heart—why, while she had been forcing herself to act

I will not go on, if you desire me not; but it has become a great hope to me that I may yet succeed in earning your affection. As you know, I am a poor man——"

But Lilian felt that she *could* not listen. Rising, she looked into his face for one moment, and then said hastily, "Stay! I cannot! oh, I cannot! Think as well of me as you can, though I deserve nothing; but don't speak so to me, for I cannot bear it!"

Astonished by her vehemence, Arthur Ford did not venture to continue his proposal.

"I see; I was mistaken in thinking that you could some day care for me," he said sorrowfully. "We will join the others. I hope this will make no difference to our friendship."

But Lilian had not waited for his last words; she had hurried away, leaving him standing alone, with

no choice but to seek Edith and Lord Henry at the other end of the room, where they were chatting.

"I am afraid the parish must have been worrying you, cousin Arthur: you look so tired! Would you like a cup of coffee?"

"Thank you, Edith; I should be glad of one."

In a few minutes Thomas brought in the coffee, and also a message: "If you please, miss, mistress wants you in the library."

"I will go at once," said the girl, with a quick blush, as, with one shy glance at her cousin—a glance which seemed to ask for his sympathy in her happiness, she ran out of the room to obey her mother's summons.

The library was lighted by one lamp, which shed a ruddy glow full upon Hector's face as he stood beside Mrs. Weir.

Her mother was looking tired, but absolutely happy, Edith thought, and it seemed just right to see her seeking the support of Hector's arm. Was he not to be her son?

He wore a smile: rather an anxious one—but then, his had not been an easy task; his tale had been difficult to tell, his explanations lengthy; but all was over at last. The gentle woman appreciated the courage with which he had struggled to retrieve his position, and was willing to condone his past faults. Crossing the room, and colouring under the consciousness of their admiring gaze, Edith came up to her mother, and said, with a little sob—

"You will love him very much, won't you, mother?"

"Yes, dear; not only for your sake, but for his own."

Then the girl turned to her betrothed.

"You don't think you will ever want to go abroad to live, do you, Hector? I would go anywhere in the world with you, dear," she whispered in explanation, "but you don't think we shall have to leave mamma and Abbeylands?"

"No, my darling—my work will keep me in England."

"Then," she continued, standing between mother and lover, and holding a hand of each, "we shall all be happy together. Dear old Abbeylands! Hector has been writing something wonderful, and is going to become quite famous—aren't you, dear? Oh, if I were a man, I should be so ambitious! I know you were made to be great, my wonderful cousin!—Mother, we must not make him vain, must we? but I am sure that no one was ever so handsome as Hector!"

He laughed, and put his arm round the slim figure which was nestling beside him, and Mrs. Weir answered—

"I don't know, my little girl; but we will always be ready to think him the best and dearest man in the world!"

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CHAPTER XVIII.

KATE BURNSIDE had begun to think it a long time since she had heard anything of her friends at Abbeylands. She had grown to love little Edith Weir with a very true affection, and was deeply interested in all that concerned her—her cousin Lilian, her love affairs, but chiefly Hector; for Kate felt a kindly liking for the young man, and was convinced that, were the difficulties of his position overcome, and his good qualities able to assert themselves—as they would do in the peaceful atmosphere of home—he would make the best possible husband for the little heiress of Aberstone. Kind-hearted girl as she was, she had not forgotten his downcast expression when she had met him at the railway station, and had determined that if she could in any way assist him in his absence, she would do so.

It was with this intention that she had tried to arouse Edith's feelings by suggesting the possibility of some day losing her cousin. She knew that her experiment had been so far successful, and the farmer's daughter felt that she had done all that she could, and awaited the result of her work with confidence.

But many days had elapsed, and she had heard nothing beyond the mere fact that Hector had returned to his aunt's house.

Kate was sitting by the fire in the old-fashioned farm-house kitchen when she at length received the news she had so eagerly expected. It came by post, in a happy, impetuous letter from Edith—

"Abbeylands, Dec. 22nd.

"MY DEAREST KATE,—How can I ever tell you my news? This will be the sweetest, happiest Christmas of all my life! Hector has come home, and we—I don't know how best to write it—we have found out that we love each other better than all the world!

"My best wish for you, darling, is that you too may some day find *a Hector*.

"You will come to our party on Christmas Eve, won't you, dear Kate? Hector wants to thank you for having spoken words of encouragement to him when he went away. He has told me *all* about it, and I love you for it. Good-bye until I see you—

"Ever your loving

"EDITH."

"P.S.—I must tell you that Hector has been succeeding wonderfully. Oh, Kate, I know he will be great some day, but I shall not be able to love him one bit more than I do now, however famous he may become."

"Dear little girl!" said Kate to herself; "dear little woman! she has learned what it is to have a heart! I hope Mr. Bristol will be good to her, for she is so young and inexperienced—so spoiled, too, in some ways, though she is always sweet and gentle. Will she find him as true a protector as she has found her mother all these years? I hope so. I think he is very truly fond of her."

Then Kate's thoughts reverted to a sentence in Edith's letter. "She hopes that I may some day find a Hector! It was a poor kind of love that I once knew—with it, out of sight was out of mind! Shall I ever find the love that is different? No!" and Kate roused herself from the reverie, and fell to raking the fire in the grate with aggressive energy; "I ought to be very angry with myself for being so foolish as to sit and think about anything of the kind. Thank Heaven there is plenty of work for everyone to do in this world, if they will but look for it. There's never any need to worry in odd minutes. I must call Jane down to help me lay supper; father will be hungry when he comes in."

The simple meal was soon prepared, Kate herself superintending the culinary operations, when she heard the sound of footsteps approaching the door, and called out cheerfully—

"Come in, father; supper is just ready for you. Is it snowing very heavily? I hope you haven't been catching cold again, dear," she added, hastily going forward to greet him—"or you will be laid up for——"

But the sentence was not ended: for, instead of her father, the open door disclosed the figure of a young man—no other than Lord Henry Wynn, standing on the threshold, in doubt whether to advance or to entreat admittance.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, my lord," said Kate, as soon as she had recovered from her surprise. "You must think me very rude to stand staring at you as though you were a ghost! I was expecting my father, so you startled me. Pray come in to the fire; you look quite chilled."

"Thank you, Miss Burnside. I feel that I ought to offer you an apology for appearing at such an hour; but the truth is that I have been riding into Marchester, and on the way back my horse slipped and hurt his knee; so finding him unable to accomplish the journey home, I came to throw myself upon Mr. Burnside's charity. Would he mind keeping the horse for me until to-morrow?"

"I am sure father would be very pleased to be of any use to you, my lord; but how will you manage yourself? We can't offer a mount such as you are accustomed to ride, but——"

"Oh! thank you—I am quite equal to the walk, if you will allow me to rest here for a little while. It is only two miles to Aberstone, I think?"

"Yes, my lord," said Kate. "Pray rest yourself; my father will be in directly."

Henry drew near the fire and brushed the snow from his coat, well pleased to meet with such a welcome: he thought this warm bright fireside a pleasant change from the snowy roads and bitter wind; it possessed one great attraction for him, in the person of Kate herself. He had been quite in earnest when he had declared to the Vicar his love for the farmer's daughter, and had determined to win her for his wife if she would but consent to share his fortunes. Taking the chair she offered him, he drew it close beside the table at which she sat sewing.

"Miss Burnside, I suppose you know the news from Abbeylands?"

"Yes; it is very pleasant to hear about," she replied, smiling over her recollection of Edith's letter.

"So pleasant, that one is almost inclined to be envious," Henry assented, in so soft a tone that even sensible Kate was aware of a foolish flutter at her heart. "They have true love, confidence, and trust; what more need we wish for ourselves? Miss Burnside," he continued, leaning forward to look anxiously in her face, "could you place your trust in me? could you learn to love me? If it were so, I would try all my life to prove worthy of your confidence."

"You, Lord Henry? you, with your position——"

"What does my position matter?" he pleaded. "There is no rank in life which you would not grace. I can offer you nothing that would not become you. As for myself—I do not know if Heaven has made me the man whom you could love, but my wife should never find herself neglected or lonely; she should be cherished as long as I had life. Miss Burnside—Kate—what answer can you give me?"

The girl rose, and gave him her hand, as steps were heard approaching.

"You are very good to me; I do not know how to thank you; but your offer is too sudden. I should not be doing my duty if I answered you now. Give me till Christmas Eve, when we shall meet at Abbeylands. I will give you my answer then."

Lord Henry Wynn left Oak-Tree Farm with those words continually running in his ears; she had spoken the truth, he was certain, when she had said that his offer was a surprise to her. What would Christmas Eve bring forth for him: a richly prized gift or a sorrow? There were but two days to wait, but the time seemed terribly long.

After a while the white roofs of Aberstone lying in the distance caught his eye, and, rising above them, the ivy-covered tower and steeple of the church. All seemed asleep, still as death, in the supreme cold of the winter night; and overhead, the snow having ceased, innumerable stars had "set their watch in the sky," and were twinkling merrily, as though they laughed at the deep slumber of the country.

It was late, and Henry felt quite a truant as he knocked at the Vicarage door: but Mr. Ford, surprised at his guest's long absence, had stayed up to receive him.

"My dear boy, you must be half-starved and frozen! What could persuade you to stay out so long on such a night?"

"I have taken no harm, thank you; and I have only walked two miles—from Oak-Tree Farm, where I left my horse; he slipped and hurt his knee, so Mr. Burnside is taking care of him until to-morrow. Yes, Ford," he continued, replying to the questioning look in his friend's eyes, "I asked Kate to be my wife; but, try as I would, I could not persuade her to give me an answer until Christmas Eve."

"Cheer up, Henry; she would not have answered you without giving the matter due consideration, if you had pleaded with her for weeks."

"But it seems such a long while to wait."

"You incorrigibly impatient man! Think yourself fortunate that the girl you love is not so sure she cannot care for you as to send you away before you had finished proposing to her, as my lady did to me."

"Ford, you cannot mean it! No girl would be so mad as to——"

"As to refuse me? I asked Miss Bristol only yesterday to be my wife, and she gave me to understand that my proposal was too impossible to be entertained for a moment. There are greater depths of misery than yours, you see. I only wish she had kept me waiting for an answer until Christmas Eve—this year or next—so long as she left me a little hope till then!"

"How can you joke about it? You are the most incomprehensible man! If Kate had refused me, I should be too wretched to joke for years to come."

"To be cheerful is one of the first duties of life.

Why should I make my sorrow a burden to the whole parish by carrying a gloomy face about with me wherever I go?"

"Were you much in earnest? Do you think Miss Bristol would have made you a good wife?"

"I didn't think of the matter in that light at all," answered the Vicar, with a smile, and a sigh which belied the smile. "I found, to my intense surprise, that I loved her, and now that I am refused I would rather not discuss the former question, if you don't mind, dear boy! Time does everything, or nearly everything—you need not worry about me, for I am living still, you see, and mean to go on walking, eating, and breathing as though nothing had happened. I don't say," he added, after a pause, "that life can ever be as sweet to me as it might have been; but then, we do not live for our own satisfaction, but for a higher purpose. Many a man has to learn to say, 'God's will be done,' with greater woe to bear than mine!"

Arthur Ford poured out some steaming coffee for his friend, that he might take no harm from his night's adventure; and Henry watched him with many anxious glances, taken furtively, for fear the Vicar should resent his scrutiny. The younger man's first idea had been, "Ford cannot have cared much for this girl," but after a little quiet study of his friend's face, he was regretfully forced to abandon his former opinion. Arthur was merely taking his disappointment with all the courage of his self-reliant character; he would not allow himself to brood and grieve over this lost hope. He had set himself resolutely to the task of preserving his usual demeanour, with a smile and a joke for every occasion: he would not quail before this sorrow, but would face it like a man, and some day—conquer it!

Henry, keen to read his friend, made part of the foregoing intentions out of the determined lines around Mr. Ford's lips, and liked and respected him all the more for this new indication of his charitable self-forgetfulness.

The coffee having been prepared, Arthur Ford took an arm-chair beside the fire, rather enjoying, for once in a way, the novelty of such late hours, and pleased with the opportunity for a quiet chat with his friend. Henry's next remark led into a different train of thought.

"How happy Mr. Bristol was looking last night! Have you got over your opposition to that match, Arthur?"

"I should not have chosen it, because, as you know,

"'Aye, aye! it's beautiful to look at.'"—*p.* 369.

he was something of a spendthrift, but I am willing to believe in his amendment; events have changed the whole face of things. I never realised as fully how very useless all human endeavours are. What would become of us if we did not know that all things happen for the best? Ah, I wonder what another year will bring forth for all you young people? Happiness, I guess!"

"My dear Ford, surely you have had your share of trouble. Won't you hope that time may bring you——"

"No, Henry; I refuse to hope anything. Let the future take care of itself."

CHAPTER XIX.

"NICE doin's these 'll be! Holly an' mistletoe all over the house—hangin' in the hall for the young ladies—outlinin' the picter-frames, a-suspendin' by the chandyleer, an' a-gettin' generally in everybody's way. I hopes them Bristols 'll prick their fingers awfu'! Now, it's my idee as how plants or bits o' trees is all very well i' the right place, but when you comes to a-stickin' the drawin'-room full o' it, as tho' there was a sale o' green-stuff, it's beyond my admeration. Lor! to think the mess as it 'll make; but it was little missie's notion, an' so there's naught I 'll say agen it. Bless her little heart! I could find it in my soul to wish as how I hadn't got to onderceive her!"

Ben Bassett, on the morning of the 24th of December, was preparing the decorations for the house, but the occupation did not serve to engross his thoughts, which wandered here, there, and everywhere, as they were in the habit of doing.

"She looks that happy, an' that chap has sech a way o' smilin' whene'er he looks at her bit face, as I don't know for the life o' me whether I loves or hates him for 't. He ought never to have come to Aberstone: an' now there 's not a man or a 'ooman as doesn't bless his handsome face for his kind an' affable ways. The chillen runs arter him i' the street, an' as for th' animals—by far an' away the most sensible part o' creation—they follers him where'er he goes. There 's Growler—I never knew that there dawg wag his tail at nobody as com' near him till Mister Bristol took notice of him, an' it 's disturbin' to one 's convictions, like, to think as how the dumb critters dunno an honest man from a bad 'un. It 's my belief as how the 'ooman 'ull turn out the worst o' the two, for it 's she as have bin a-temptin' him all 'long. I heard her through the drawin'-room windy, a'-coaxin' him fur to go in an' win—she 's a darter o' Eve, she is, with a vengeance!"

The old man resumed his work, muttering to himself, as was his wont, fingering deftly the prickly branches of holly, and standing still in admiration whenever he came across a piece containing many of the brilliant berries. He was a great lover of nature, and it gave him real satisfaction to handle the evergreens, to smooth the long narrow leaves of laurel, some spotted green and white; to cut the withered foliage from the ivy and yew; but his reflections went fully as fast as his work.

"A party! Whoever heard o' having a party at Abbeylands? Luckily there 's no one a-coming 'cept Katie Burnside—as nice a girl as ever wore shoe-leather—and him as let me down so awful, the young chap as they calls Lord Henry Wynn. A real 'arthquake it was to all my ambitions when he told me as how he hadn't no intention o' bein' a sooter for little missie, arter I 'd thought o' him so perseverin', and even laid out the gardin as I thought 'ud please him when he come to Abbeylands as master. I asked him how he 'd like the noo flower-beds cut in the lawn. 'What is it to do with me, Bassett?' he asked; and he couldn't understand at all why I did it to his likin'. But I haven't give up my hopes entirely yet. When he sees little missie in trouble, it 's my belief as how he 'll long for to comfort her. 'Never you mind, Missie Edith,' he 'll be sayin'—'t'other chap 's gone; and a good riddance. You put your faith in me, and I 'll never go, you may take yer——"

"Good-morning, Bassett! I've come to see if you are getting my wreaths ready. As I came down the stairs, I heard you saying something about having faith in people."

Edith came running into the large room, dressed in a loose breakfast-gown of soft crimson cloth; her pretty hair floating over her shoulders, and her hands full of mistletoe.

"Good-mornin', and a merry Christmas Eve, little missie," said Bassett grimly, at the thought of the unpleasant news which he had made up his mind to tell that night. "Talking o' puttin' faith in folks—I told you weeks and months ago not to do so to strangers, but you wouldn't take my advice, and it 's my belief as how, afore long, you 'll be sorry as you didn't. Yer wreaths was made hours ago; they're hangin' in the tool-shed. I did 'em afore I went to bed last night, for fear I shouldn't have time i' the morning. Ah! little Miss Edy, d'ye think as how there 's anythin' you could ask me, as I wouldn't try for to do—my very best?"

"Oh, you dear old Bassett!" cried the girl. "No, indeed; you have spoiled me all my life. Why, I remember how I used to tease you when I was quite a little thing, and how I used to make you take me for rides in the wheelbarrow, no matter how busy you were: isn't it strange to think what a long while ago that was? They were happy days, but these are even happier! Look, isn't this beautiful mistletoe?"

Ben looked at the bunch, held up for his inspection, with a distrustful smile.

"Aye, aye! it 's bootiful enough to look at, if you doesn't think o' the use to which man 'll put it."

"Don't you ever approve of kissing, Bassett?"

Edith was making wreaths for herself: twining white ribbon in and out of her favourite mistletoe. She looked up, as she spoke, with a merrily arch glance. "Haven't you ever felt that you would like to kiss someone yourself?"

"I dunno as I ever did, unless it was in my young days, when I was young and foolish. No, 'cept in special cases—as atween parties as have loved each other faithful for years, or in a case where the man was rich an' the lady poor, or when she was rich, maybe, and he loved 'er all the same for *herself alone!*"

"Oh yes, yes," interrupted Edith. "You would allow it, then, would you, Bassett?"

"Well, little missie, if you hadn't taken the words out o' my mouth, as it were, owin' to your bein' in such a hurry, I was a-goin' to say, as if it war all straightforrard, an' sure, an' sartain, as how I wouldn't have no objection to a kiss or two, perwidin' everything was settled. But I don't think as how kissin' and fussin' does much good as a rule, and it leads, as often as not, to a lot o' harm. Don't you let him be too free with it to-night, if you 'll take my advice, little missie, or you 'll find it not so easy to put a stop to 'un i' the mornin'. That 's the worst o' all *concessions*."

"Oh, we are going to sing to-night; we shall not have much time to think of anything else—not even mistletoe," answered the girl, blushing and dimpling at the thought of it. "Do you like white or red ribbon with the holly, Bassett?" she continued.

"White, little missie, white for me. You 'll be wearing a white frock, I s'pose?"

"Yes, all white. Oh, I am so excited at the thought of this evening! not about my frock, Bassett: oh no; but because it will all be so delightful."

"Don't be too sure o' that. There 's many a slip atwixt the cup an' the lip. If you doesn't know the seed to be o' yer own growin'—if you hasn't watched it all its life, like, an' feels sure on it, it 's as like as not, when you've planted 'un with yer best care, as 'un 'ull turn out, when growed, to be no better nor a artichoke!"

"Oh, Bassett! how could my pleasant evening turn out to be an artichoke? I think it is more likely to be a mistletoe-berry."

"Now you're a-larfin' at me, little missie. Well, larf away while you may, for there 's a day a-comin' when no one 'll be able to larf. You know as how I was speakin' in figures, as I may say, but you 're that light-hearted, you don't seem to feel no presagin' o' evil at all: not the least bit. It 's for all the world like the little lamb, a-skippin' by the side o' its mother on the wery day as——"

"I am very, *very* light-hearted, Bassett. I came down here partly to talk to you."

"But, little missie——"

"No, you mustn't interrupt me, or else I shall not be able to go on." Edith playfully laid her little hand on the old man's arm, and stayed his work for the moment. "I am just a little shy about it. Do you know why Mr. Bristol has come home?"

"Yes; an' it 's no good for——"

"Oh, stay, stay!" she cried. "How silly! I interrupted myself by asking you a question! Mr. Bristol has come home for *my* sake, and I am, oh, so glad! People sometimes give a party on the occasion of their—of their daughter's engagement: that 's what mamma is doing to-night. I must go away directly," she added, with many blushes, "now I have told you. Oh, Bassett! I am so happy."

"But, little missie, p'raps——" began Ben; but, glancing at the sweet little enthusiastic smile with which Edith was looking back from the door, he could not find it in his heart to say anything to dim the radiant joyousness of her expression.

"It 'll all be right some day," he cried. "Cheery up, my dear; and if old Bassett can ever do anythin' i' the world for ye, be sure as how he 'll do it!"

CHAPTER XX.

"YOU have done your work exceedingly well, Bassett."

Hector Bristol was standing in the large drawing-room of Abbeylands, which did indeed present a spectacle upon which the old gardener deserved congratulation. The high-domed roof was wreathed round its cornice with thickly clustering holly; the walls were festooned with holly and ivy, and from the glittering glass chandeliers hung huge bunches of the season's favourite—

"The forked bough of spectral mistletoe."

In all parts of the room the decoration of glossy foliage formed a fitting background for the brilliant lights and the fair faces which were to add their grace to the scene, and the sombre oaken wainscoting was relieved by Edith's own handiwork—the holly-boughs festooned with white and scarlet ribbons.

It wanted but a few moments to the hour for which the Weirs' guests had been invited, and Ben, arrayed in his livery, ready to help wait at table, as was his duty on special occasions, was taking the opportunity to fix a special garland of hothouse blossoms and maidenhair fern around a large portrait of the little Heiress of Aberstone which hung on the east wall, facing the drawing-room door.

"It 's to my thinkin' as how this 'ere beats t'other orniments hollow. It 's her sweet little face, like, as makes Abbeylands better nor other houses; it 's her bright eyes, as should never have bin made dim with cryin', if she 'd only 'a took my advice, from her youth up'ards. But them young critters is all alike; they think they knows better nor their elders, and if they suffers for it, they gains experience. There, little missie!" he continued, apostrophising the portrait, "Bless your heart, my dear! old Bassett won't let you be took in no more nor he can help!"

Hector, too happy to be out of temper, helped Ben to arrange the fern in a deep green fringe round the frame, saying kindly as he did so—

"You are quite right, Bassett: there could be nothing prettier than the little mistress of Abbeylands herself! Take all the care you can of her, and I too will thank you. Miss Edith was telling me that you had watched over her ever since she was a baby."

"Ay, that I have watchit o'er her, from the very fust moment as I see her in her nuss's arms—a wee bundle o' fine clothes and a bit o' a face. They was sorry as how it warn't a son born to the old house; but I sed, as soon as I set eyes on the wee lass, 'There 'ull come a day when you 'll be sorry to have wished different; she 'll be the light o' the home—a blessin' as 'ull never want to be flyin' away to furrin lands, 'to see life,' as the boys says, but a angel for the hearth, as it were. Hasn't my words come true, young genelem? Isn't she a joy to all?"

"Very true. You describe her admirably."

"Bless my heart! here is the little missie a-lookin' like a angel o' light! Ah!" muttered Ben, as he left the

room, with a last vengeful look at the mistletoe, "I 'd be tearin' *you* down, if I had my way—though, there! it wouldn't do much good; they 'd as lief kiss wi'out it, I'm thinkin'!"

He was right; no sooner had the door closed than Edith, a fluttering little figure in virgin white, with Christmas roses in her brown hair, ran into Hector's arms; but as the bell rang almost immediately, she brushed back some disordered curls from her brow with a half-petulant sigh.

"Oh, Hector, I want to see them all, but I thought we might have had just a few moments together."

"I have hardly time to offer you my Christmas gift, my darling."

He drew from his pocket a case, containing a ring of simplest design, and, taking her hand in his own, slipped the pearl band on her finger.

"You will wear it for my sake, as a pledge of our engagement, sweetheart?"

"I will wear it, and love it, for both reasons," she cried. "Oh, I never was so happy in all my life before!"

Mr. Ford and Lord Henry Wynn arrived a few minutes before Kate Burnside; and the young man, after his congratulations had been paid to the little hostess and to Mrs. Weir, sat eagerly watching the door. Christmas Eve meant only one thing to him: the arrival—the answer of Kate Burnside. When she appeared, he hardly dared to come forward and greet her, fearing a cold reception, which would tell him that his offer had been considered, only to be ultimately rejected. However, as Arthur had told him, he had little reason to fear. Kate liked and respected him, and found it no difficult matter to love one whom she considered worthy of any woman's trust. The quiet smile and slight blush with which she returned the pressure of his hand satisfied Henry; and he was willing to wait till an opportunity should be available of speaking to her alone, now that his doubts were set at rest.

The Vicar, who had been watching the meeting, turned a congratulatory look upon his friend, and while he was thus engaged Lilian slipped unnoticed into the room, and, passing behind Edith's chair, took a seat in the background. Heavy-eyed, pale, and with a defiant smile upon her lips—a smile whose pride repelled any advances, whether of condolence for her evident headache or of mere friendship—she remained apart and alone, replying in monosyllables to her little cousin's remarks, and harassed by a host of forebodings, which she imagined to be only due to the pain she was enduring.

And then the old rooms of Abbeylands were made to echo to the sound of music; and the pictures hanging round the walls, portraits of Edith's ancestors—men grim and grey, in cloaks and armour—ladies smiling from out Elizabethan ruffs, or mantled by fantastic hoods, all looked down upon a scene such as they had not witnessed for a generation. The quiet deserted house, whose solitary grandeur had won the pity of the sociable village folk, had thrown off the serious air which it had worn so long; gay sounds, sweet voices, and bright faces had brought back the life which it had lacked; and happiest of all was the little Heiress of Aberstone. She had all that she had ever wished, and more: at home, in the midst of all who loved her, she had found the hero of her girlish dreams. Not even the grand old cavaliers, her ancestors, whose handsome faces had inspired her with many a romance—who had peopled her castles in the air—could have been more chivalrous, she thought, more noble than her lover of to-day.

But soon two of the party stole away from the circle of light and the society of their friends, out of the drawing-room to the green shelter of the conservatory.

"You will come somewhere, where we may have a chance of speaking to each other undisturbed?" Lord Henry Wynn had pleaded; and Kate Burnside had not cared to refuse, wishing that even pleasure-making should be intermitted for the sake of the reply which she had to make. No sooner were they alone than she said—

"I told you I would give you my answer to-night, Lord Henry. I hope it may not lead to unhappiness for you, for you must have grand friends, who would have wished you to choose a wife from those of your own rank; but I feel that it would be wrong to deny that I *can* love you—and I do!"

"My brother will welcome you: he is my nearest relation. Kate, *Katie*, how can I ever thank you?"

"By loving me truly all your life: by teaching me my duties in your world, so different from my own: by not being ashamed for your friends to know that you have married a poor girl. In return for your affection, I will do my part. I will try to make you a good wife—Henry!"

And so the difficulties of courtship were over for Arthur Ford's friend.

The Vicar himself, when he had occasion to talk to Lilian Bristol, found her so reserved and silent, that he thought his presence embarrassing to her, and withdrew to his aunt's society. "Poor girl!" he thought, "she is sorry to have pained me. I daresay she expects me to look broken-hearted, or at least to reproach her with having 'wrecked my life, and embittered my existence.' I suppose that is the kind of lover to which she has become accustomed. She *looks* desperately offended with me, but I hope that is not the case." And so he left her to her own thoughts, while Edith and Hector, Kate and Henry, paired off together, after the manner of young people bent on spending the evening as it best pleased them.

Then followed the supper—a good old-fashioned supper, taken at table, and enlivened by toasts, in the style of our grandfathers, though no wine was there: a happy family party, meeting together with full confidence in each other and implicit trust in Heaven to celebrate their joyous Yuletide. The year which was passing away had brought them all together: destroyed the ancient feuds which had separated them; the past, with all its follies, had been buried for ever, and they all looked forward—all save one—to the future of love, which was to take its place. For Lilian there seemed no hope, no future, but a home which she had made intolerable to herself. To Arthur, duty offered a secure and peaceful path—that was all he could expect; but he looked to the

happiness which he hoped was in store for those he loved, determined to seek his consolation in the contemplation of their joy.

In a simple speech, straight from his heart, he proposed the principal toast of the evening—"The health and happiness of our dear Edith. May the New Year bring even greater joys to her; may she pass her life in the shelter of home-affection;" and as all drank, the little heroine of the evening looked with shining eyes upon them, and blessed them for their goodness to her.

"I don't deserve it one bit," she said, in a tremulous little voice. "Oh, please give Hector's health too!"

Her wish was acceded to; and even old Bassett, from his place behind her chair, could not repress something very like a sob as he looked at the radiant tearfulness of his little mistress.

"Isn't it strange, Hector, to remember last Christmas Eve? We had never seen each other—we did not know all that was going to happen this year."

Supper was over, and they were standing together at the window, looking out upon the cold white landscape lying so still beneath the myriad stars, and listening for the Christmas bells to ring out their message to the world, the same now as on the first Christmas: "Goodwill on earth, and peace to men."

"I would rather think of this evening, this moment. What could I know of your sweetness so long ago? *You* have been the gift of the past four months; and do you think I want to go back to those old days when you were nothing to me, my darling? Let me live in the present, in the future; for the past, with all its sorrows and faults, has gone by for ever; we need not call it back, even in thought. Yes, Edith: the year in which we have learned to love each other will soon give place to another. By next Christmas, my dearest, you will be all my own."

The girl looked out on the moonlit snow with a strange feeling of awe. She was standing, as it were, on the second threshold of her life; the childish days were over, the woman's heart within her had found its mission upon earth, as surely as the years had found their own, and guided as surely by the Lord of all, as the shepherds were of old. As she leaned upon the arm of the man who had won her love, the Christmas bells sounded across the hills, startling the silence by their many voices.

"Oh, Hector!" she murmured, laying her hand on his, "God seems to be so near to-night! Let us ask Him to bless us all."

But even as the peaceful chimes rang out their parting note, Ben Bassett threw open the great doors of the drawing-room.

"I 've summut to say to ye all," he cried. "The day o' reckonin' has dawned for them as need to fear it!"

(To be continued.)

A WORKHOUSE EPISODE.

"He stole away out of the room to consume it."

THE union workhouse of a certain large town in the provinces possesses, among other properties of a more usual description, a devoted adherent, who may be designated by the name of the Workhouse Friend.

To that individual, the huge building which holds its position under the firm rule of a Board of Guardians is always a scene of the deepest interest, for within its walls lies hidden a vast store of that human wreckage which the waves of this troublesome world cast up on the desolate shores of joyless pauper-life. Generally speaking, the visits paid to those who, in this world at least, have nothing to hope, are sad and painful enough, but on one sunlit summer day of the present year, the Workhouse Friend was enabled to bring a passing gleam of brightness into every part of that sorrowful abode. It was done by means of an innocent, simple pleasure, which recalled to the aged the happy days of their childhood, and reminded even the sick and infirm that the fair fruits and flowers of summer, in this world, are but the dim reflections of all that may await them in the fairer, brighter home beyond the grave.

In this workhouse, as, we suppose, in all others, it is the rule that while visitors are strictly forbidden to give cakes or other substantial luxuries to the inmates, wholesome fruit of any kind may be bestowed upon them, under the supervision of the officials in charge. This privilege is generally only used to procure a few oranges or grapes for the invalids in the infirmary, but the Workhouse Friend conceived the happy idea of providing a huge strawberry feast, of which every single individual in the vast household was to partake without stint. With the help of the kind master and matron, this bold scheme was fully carried out. On the appointed day the Workhouse Friend, with the officials who generously undertook the somewhat heavy labour involved, assembled in a room where a number

"Who raised their grey heads from their pillows with exclamations of delight."

of enormous dishes, heaped up with ripe, fresh strawberries, awaited their ministrations. Each one of these was as much as a single person could carry, and quite a procession of assistants started heavily laden with the fruit, and followed by others bearing an immense supply of sugar.

First into the ward of bedridden old women, who raised their grey heads from their pillows with exclamations of delight, and stretched out wrinkled hands to clutch eagerly at the "beautiful red berries," as they appeared to them, given to each one on a separate plate with a generous allowance of sugar. In a moment they were all hard at work devouring their portions and interchanging remarks on the delight of having a real luxury, to the enjoyment of which the absence of teeth was no impediment. Then into the ward where their sisters, equally aged, but less infirm, were seated at tables, on which the plates of fruit could be consumed in greater comfort. These were like children in their glee at the unexpected treat. Amongst them was a poor old woman who had been for seventy years in that workhouse, and had never left it once through all the weary length of time. It was the only home she had ever known. She was "not all there," as the other women explained in their phraseology, and had entered it as a little half-imbecile child in the early years of this century. Now, as an aged woman, still physically strong and well, she gloated over the red fruit with great animation.

When all the female wards of the infirmary had been visited, the dish-bearing procession passed on into those of the men. Here, it must be owned—however much it may displease those aspirants of women's rights who uphold the superiority of their sex—that those old gentlemen, in the wards where they were able to be out of bed, were infinitely more greedy than the ladies had shown themselves to be. They hustled each other out of the way in order to grasp at the plates before their proper turn had arrived, and one of them, alarmed lest anyone should wish to share his portion, emptied the whole of it, sugar and all, into his pocket-handkerchief, and, hurriedly giving back the empty plate to the donor, stole away out of the room to consume it in secret. In the ward of the bedridden men, however, there was as noble a specimen of what a true Christian may be, as could anywhere have been seen. A perfectly hopeless cripple, not only unable to move from his bed, but deprived of the power even to turn himself in it, or to move from the one attitude—lying flat on his back—which he had been obliged to maintain for more than fifteen years, yet never in all that time had a murmur been heard to escape him; always greeting those who spoke to him with a bright, patient smile; always cheerful, grateful for every kind word or look, and finding, in the one blissful hope of meeting at last his dear Redeemer face to face, a fount of joy which never failed him night or day. He laughed like a happy child when the Workhouse Friend began to feed him with the largest strawberries to be found in his portion, and the little corner of that ward where he had lain immovably through all the days of his vanished youth, seemed really irradiated as with a light from Heaven.

Another very similar instance of what the faith in Christ can do to render the humblest, saddest lives

divine, was found in that part of the great institution which it was the most painful to visit—the epileptic wards. The strawberries were welcomed there almost more enthusiastically than anywhere else, for the dreary monotony of the inmates' lives is varied only, for the most part, by the attacks of illness to which they are subject, and the effects of their sad complaint on the mind deprive many of them even of the solace which books or writing materials might give them. In a dark corner of the ward sat a man, still young, with a pair of crutches at his side. As the Workhouse Friend went to him with his heaped-up strawberries, he turned his face smiling and cheerful towards them, but did not attempt to take hold of the plate; and then it was seen that he was stone-blind. His hands, more or less crippled, were guided to the fruit, and when it had been so placed that he could easily partake of it, he broke out into expressions of pleasure, not only with the immediate cause of his gratification, but with other sources of enjoyment which he declared he possessed.

From the ward of the poor epileptics the procession passed to the huge nursery where the pauper children, too young to be yet drafted into the school, were housed. Such a round-cheeked, innocent little mob! not one being more than three years old—the majority rather less. They were placed in a row beside a long bench where a heap of strawberries and sugar suddenly appeared before each one. Then wondering little faces were uplifted from end to end of the long row—and startled baby eyes examined the ceiling as if these charming red berries had dropped like manna from Heaven. But surprise soon gave place to enjoyment, and the curly heads were quickly bent, one and all, over the unwonted luxury. After the nursery had been left, a circumstance occurred which alone damped the pleasure of the Workhouse Friend in the successful feast. Amongst the able-bodied men was one with a dark, intelligent face, bronzed evidently by tropical suns, who had been active in helping the invalids and imbecile old men to place their portions of the fruit so that they could consume it comfortably.

It was time that he himself should be served, but when a very generous supply was conveyed to him he waved it aside, much to the surprise of the donor, and said somewhat sternly that he did not want it.

"Why not?" said the Friend, distressed. "Surely you would enjoy the cool fresh fruit on such a hot day as this?"

"No," he answered gruffly, "I don't want it, and I won't have it."

Nothing more could be said at the moment, as the assistants were waiting to go with their load to another part of the house; but when the distribution was finally over, anxious inquiries were made as to the history of the man who, alone out of the sad multitude that filled the paupers' home, had refused to share in an unwonted indulgence. A strange account of him was given. He had drifted into that shelter after a life of very varied adventures. He had been in the navy, from which he was thought to have deserted, as he had since been in Africa, and at the gold-diggings, and in many other parts of the world, judging by expressions which occasionally dropped from him. He had come to the workhouse not because he was infirm or ill, but simply because he had failed to find any other means of support. There he had remained for eighteen years, and during all that time he had steadily refused to share in any extra indulgence which might be provided for the paupers. On Christmas Day they always had a great dinner of roast beef and plum-pudding instead of their ordinary fare; but Bell, the recalcitrant inmate in question, absolutely declined to partake of it—he would have his regular rations, but nothing more. Sometimes a concert, preceded by an entertainment of tea and cake, was organised by kind persons, which gave great pleasure to the rest of the household, but nothing could induce Bell to be present—he remained alone in his empty ward, and there drank his gruel while his *confrères* were enjoying themselves in the great hall. It seemed very sad that a man already heavily weighted with misfortune should thus entrench himself in an isolation which repelled all sympathy from his fellow-creatures. The Workhouse Friend had a great desire to penetrate the cause of this misanthropy, which was evidently not the result of a mere sulky temper, as he showed much kindness to the old and infirm people by whom he was surrounded. Leave was obtained to hold a private conversation with him in a little empty room adjoining his ward—and he was with some difficulty induced to sit down beside his guest, for whom he had placed a chair in perfect silence. A few questions, delicately put, at first only revealed more clearly the attitude he was known to have assumed—he would take the shelter and the food which the State was bound to give him, for that was the law to prevent men dying of starvation; but he would take nothing from his fellow-creatures—they had been against him all his life, and he was against them—pride was left to him, if independence was gone, and he would not be beholden to them for so much as the value of a single strawberry out of all the heap that had been offered to him.

Then his visitor tried to draw from him the story of his past, and asked what had been his occupation when he was outside in the world.

"Slave-catching," was his rather startling answer; but the statement proved to be literally true, and gradually he was led on to give a detailed explanation of it. For eleven years he had served on board a ship, sent out to the coast of Africa to intercept the Brazilian slave-dealers, and stop, if possible, the horrible traffic in which they were at that time very successful. They captured numbers of the unfortunate natives, and conveyed such of them as survived their transit in the suffocating holds of the crowded vessels, to Brazil and elsewhere, to be sold in the slave-markets. Bell gave a terrible description of the scenes of violence and bloodshed in which he and his shipmates were perpetually engaged, during the work of rescuing the slaves from their captors, and it was evident that scant mercy had been meted out even to himself and his companions, in the course of what was on all sides a very cruel warfare.

"I can see," said his visitor, "that you have led a very hard life, and that you have met with a great deal of ill-treatment, so that you have got to believe

there can be no kindness in the world for you, whatever there may be for other people."

"That's it!" he exclaimed, turning round with a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes at being understood. Then he explained that when he had left a life of pain and misery on the burning Afric shores, he had come back to his native place broken down in health and spirits, where no one would stretch out a helping hand to him. He tried to gain a living by work, but he was no longer fitted for it, and he sank at last into the workhouse, where he knew he must remain till he exchanged its shelter for that of an unhonoured grave.

"I can well understand, after such a wild, unhappy life as yours has been, that it seems to you now as if you did not possess a single friend, and you do not mean therefore to care for anyone, since no one cares for you—is it not so?" continued the visitor.

He nodded his head in emphatic assent, and listened with evident interest to the words which followed—"Well, now, do you know that is quite a mistake on your part? In the first place, so far as this world is concerned, you have got me for a friend; I mean to come and see you very often, and I will do all I can for you; *I am your friend*—you believe me, do you not?"

Bell raised his head, and fixed a long, scrutinising gaze on the speaker; then he suddenly stretched out a hand tattooed on every finger with many strange devices, and grasped that of his new-found friend—it was evident there was no longer any doubt in his mind on that point at least, and the clasp of his rough hand was not loosened till the interview was at an end. It lasted a long time, while a low-toned conversation was carried on, dealing solely with the beautiful, blissful theme of the deathless love felt for him, and all the lonely and sorrowful, by the One Divine Friend whom he would see when all of earthly life and pain was over. The effect was like that of ice melting beneath the warm sunshine.

"'I don't want it, and I won't have it.'"—*p.* 374.

Before the new-found allies parted, Bell had understood and taken to his heart the truth which must stand while the world lasts, that he who loves not his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

With great simplicity and an almost childlike smile, Bell quietly stated, as his friend was leaving him, that he would very thankfully receive any strawberries that might be offered to him at a future time. And if he lives to the next twenty-fifth of December, the Christmas dinner in the workhouse will have another grateful guest.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES

March 20th. Review of the Quarter's Lessons.

INTRODUCTION. Have had eleven lessons from the Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel on some closing scenes in the history of the Kingdom of Judah, coupled with descriptions of the Kingdom of Christ, the new covenant which God would make with His people, and the new heart promised to them. To-day have to summarise what has been taught.

I. The Kingdom of Christ. (Is. xi. 1—10.) He should be born in David's royal house, should have the Spirit of God, with His sevenfold gifts and blessings. He should establish His Kingdom in righteousness, extend peace to all nations, banish the enmity of the wild beasts to man, and give all the world the knowledge of God.

Lesson. "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth."

II. A Song of Salvation. (Is. xxvi. 1—10.) In Christ's Kingdom Gentiles should be joined to the Jewish Church, and there shall be a united song of praise. The Church would embrace all who feared God. Their trust in Jehovah would not be misplaced, for their enemies would be destroyed, and their own peace assured.

Lesson. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

III. Pride and Intemperance Rebuked. (Is. xxviii. 1—13.) The woes of Ephraim. Rebuked for three things concerned with the three parts of man's nature: viz., their drunkenness, a sin of the body; their slowness to learn, a sin of the mind; and their pride, a sin of the soul. God will humble them by their enemies, punish their sin, and teach them by slow degrees. The residue who fear Him will be glorious.

Lesson. "Learn of Me, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

IV. Hezekiah's Prayer and Deliverance. (Is. xxxvii. 14—21; 33—38.) Faith and prayer the only help in time of trouble. God will not fail His people. Their enemies shall be destroyed.

Lesson. "What time I am afraid I will trust in Him."

V. The Suffering Saviour. (Is. liii.) He should be received with incredulity; His appearance should be humble. He should die a violent death for the sins of others, which should reconcile them to God, while He Himself should be finally exalted.

Lesson. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

VI. The Gracious Call. (Is. lv.) A free invitation to taste the blessings of the Gospel, resulting in joy, prosperity, and happiness to those who accept.

Lesson. "Hear, and your souls shall live."

VII. The New Covenant. (Jer. xxxi. 27—37.) It should be internal and spiritual, written on their hearts. The effect would be a saving knowledge of God, accompanied by the gift of forgiveness of sins.

Lesson. "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God."

VIII. Jehoiakim's Wickedness. (Jer. xxxvi. 19—31.) The Word of God was hated by wicked princes, because it condemned their sins. Their doom would be increased by rebelling against God's messages.

Lesson. "Will ye not fear Me? saith the Lord."

IX. Jeremiah Persecuted. (Jer. xxxvii. 11—21.) A faithful servant of God must expect persecution, but he shall be protected till his appointed work is done.

Lesson. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly."

X. The Downfall of Judah. (Jer. xxxix. 1—10.) God's Word must come true. Messages, warnings, prophecies, all in vain; punishment swift and sure followed. The king, princes, and people all involved in one fate. So shall it be in the end of the world.

Lesson. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found."

XI. Promise of a New Heart. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25—38.) God has not cast off His people for ever. Repentance is open to them, new blessings await them, a covenant of mercy, restoration to prosperity, and increase of the nation.

Lesson. "With the Lord there is plenteous forgiveness."

March 27th. The Blessings of the Gospel.

To read—Isaiah xl. 1—11. Golden Text—Isaiah xl. 5.

Introduction. The good king Hezekiah on the throne of Judah.

The Assyrian enemies have been repulsed, but Isaiah has prophesied that the people, and even the royal princes, should be carried into captivity at

Babylon, and the treasures of the Temple also. He adds a comforting promise of the future blessings of the Gospel.

I. GRACE. (1, 2.) A message of forgiveness.

Comes from the same God Who has punished.

Is a message of comfort to the sad exiles.

Tells of pardon of sin, and justice satisfied.

Therefore hope may spring up again.

LESSONS. 1. God doth not willingly afflict.

2. Punishment well borne prepares for pardon.

II. GLORY. (3—8.) Who is coming to His people?

The Lord Jehovah, great and glorious. (Ps. xxiv. 10.)

His coming must be—

(*a*) *Announced* by a herald or ambassador.

Fulfilled (St. Matt. iii. 3) in coming of St. John the Baptist.

(*b*) *Prepared for* as for the advent of a king.

Hills levelled, valleys filled in, rough places smoothed.

Straight roads made. What does this mean?

All obstacles must be removed to welcome Christ.

Hard hearts softened; sin put away.

Fulfilled in the Baptist's preaching of repentance and its effects. (St. Luke iii. 8—14.)

(*c*) *Welcomed.* Note contrast to earthly greatness.

Earth's glory fades and passes away.

Christ's glory will shine forth, and last.

He, the Word of God, will endure for ever.

LESSON. "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

III. GLADNESS. (9—11.) All hail to the messenger!

The message must be proclaimed—

Loudly to Zion, or Jerusalem (see Margin), the city beloved of God. (Ps. xlviii. 1, 2.)

Boldly. Without fear of disappointment.

Gladly. Behold, your God cometh!

What is the nature of His promises?

Strength to His people in their weakness.

Food in their want. (Ps. xxiii. 1.)

Guidance in their ignorance. (Ps. xxiii. 3.)

Support in their necessity. (Ver. 29.)

LESSONS. 1. The Gospel is a message of gladness.

Christ the Lord and Saviour is come to men.

2. The Gospel is a message of strength.

They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.

SECOND QUARTER.

APRIL 3RD. THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

To read—Ps. i. Golden Text—Ps. i. 1.

INTRODUCTION. This first Psalm a kind of introduction to the whole Psalter, which thus commences with a Beatitude and concludes with Hallelujah—"Praise the Lord." (Ps. cl. 6.) This Psalm contrasts the righteous and the wicked, and predicts their final separation at the day of judgment.

I. THE STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS. (1—3.) NEGATIVE. He does not—

Walk in—*i.e.*, listen to—the counsel of the wicked.

Stand in—*i.e.*, consort with—sinners.

Sit with—*i.e.*, cast in his lot with—those who despise God.

Examples. Rehoboam listened to the advice of the young men, and lost half his kingdom. (1 Kings xii. 15.)

Judas bargained with the chief priests, and was ruined. (St. Matt. xxvi. 15.)

Demas forsook St. Paul for the world. (2 Tim. iv. 10.)

POSITIVE. Delights in God's law, as David. (Ps. cxix. 97.)

Meditates in it daily, as Joshua. (Josh. i. 8.)

Draws his nourishment from the water-springs of God's grace, as Joseph, who served God from his youth. (Gen. xlix. 22.)

RESULT. He will bring forth fruit in season.

Example. Obadiah, faithful from his youth. (1 Kings xviii. 12.)

His leaf shall not wither—*i.e.*, his works will last.

Example. David, for whose sake God spared Solomon. (1 Kings xi. 12.)

What he does shall prosper.

Example. Job blessed after all his troubles. (Job xlii. 12.)

II. THE STATE OF THE WICKED. (4.) Unstable.

Like chaff, the husk of the corn. Why?

It is useless. God made man for His eternal glory—to show forth His praise.

The wicked live only for themselves and this life.

It quickly perishes. Blown away by the wind.

The wicked shall be turned into hell.

Example. Judas, coveting money, betrayed Christ, and went to his own place of torment. (Acts i. 25.)

III. THE FINAL SEPARATION. (5, 6.) The wicked unable to stand before God in the final judgment.

See parable of wheat and tares. (St. Matt. xiii. 40—42.)

Ungodly cannot be placed with righteous.

For heaven and its inhabitants are holy. (Rev. xxi. 27.)

But the righteous are—

Blessed or happy now. (Ver. 1.)

God knows and approves their ways.

They shall live in happiness for ever. (1 Pet. i. 4.)

LESSONS. 1. "Without holiness no one shall see the Lord."

2. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne."

APRIL 10TH. THE KING IN ZION.

To read—Psalm ii. Golden Text—ver. 12.

INTRODUCTION. Jewish commentators by common consent interpret this Psalm as a prophecy of the expected Messiah, Jesus Christ. It is not inscribed to any author, and the circumstances under which it was composed are uncertain; but the Apostles

(Acts iv. 25), quoting the first verse, speak of David as the author. It may possibly refer in the first instance to the struggle of the Syrians (2 Sam. viii. 13) against David. To rebel against a Divinely appointed king was to rebel against God.

The Psalm contains four stanzas, of three verses each.

I. THE CONSPIRACY OF REBELS. (1—3.) Who are they?

Heathen, *i.e.*, nations (or Gentiles) and subject tribes.

Kings and rulers: *i.e.*, princes and governors of the people.

What are they doing?

Fretting (like oxen) under the yoke of subjection.

Banding together to rid themselves of it.

Prophetical (*a*) Of the opposition to Christ.

Gentiles and Jews, Pilate the Roman Governor, and Herod the King of the Jews, banded together against Jesus, the Lord's Anointed. (Acts iv. 27, 28.)

(*b*) Of the powers of the world and the devil.

Always arrayed against the Kingdom of Christ.

(*c*) Of individuals refusing to submit their wills to God.

II. THE CONTEMPT OF JEHOVAH. (4—6.) Expressed in human language.

God *laughs* at their impotent rage.

Mocks their base and feeble rebellion.

Speaks words of stern denunciation.

Pours upon them His sore punishment.

Proclaims His Son as lawful ruler.

Examples. Destruction of Sennacherib's host. (2 Kings xix. 35.)

King Herod smitten when worshipped by the people. (Acts xii. 23.)

III. THE PROCLAMATION OF MESSIAH. (7—9.) Notice—

Declared to be the Son of God, with power. (Rom. 1—4.)

Made heir of all things in heaven and earth. (Heb. i. 2.)

Able to draw all men unto Him. (St. John xii. 32.)

But with power to destroy His enemies. (Rev. xix. 15.)

IV. APPEAL TO THE REBELS. (10—12.) Be wise in time.

Render willing service with gladness.

Give the kiss—the usual act of fealty. (1 Sam. x. 1.)

If not, God's anger will be aroused, and certain destruction follow.

LESSONS. 1. It is time to seek the Lord.

2. He shall destroy all enemies under His feet.

JESUS IN THE MIDST.

BY THE REV. T. M. MORRIS, IPSWICH.

"Where they crucified Him, and two other with Him, and Jesus in the midst."—ST. JOHN xix. 18.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."—ST. MATT. xviii. 20.

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain."—REV. v. 6.

WE have all noticed, doubtless, in our reading of God's Word, how, every now and then, our attention is arrested—fascinated by a single phrase. A few simple words seem to block the way, and we cannot pass on until we have looked at them as we have never looked at them before, and have brought to bear upon them a closer and more searching scrutiny than any to which they have been before subjected by us. There the two or three words lie before us; they are familiar, well-known words; they have been often read by us, often repeated, without awakening any special feeling of interest or of curiosity; but now a new light falls upon them; they seem instinct with a new and larger meaning, they link themselves on to other words, and open up new lines of thought, and the oftener we repeat them to ourselves, and turn them over and over in our minds, the more wonderful and significant do these old and familiar words seem.

We have an example of what we have referred to in a phrase which occurs in each of the three passages of Scripture placed at the head of this paper. These three Scriptures, which refer to three different periods and incidents in our Divine Redeemer's history, agree in exhibiting one great truth, which awakens our interest, and makes a strong appeal to our imagination, the moment our attention is directed to it. In each passage of Scripture we see our Saviour occupying a different position, shining forth in a different character, sustaining different relations. But these differing representations unite in exhibiting one common feature: in each case alike we see *Jesus in the midst.* That is the position which is ever assigned to Jesus, and which is ever claimed and occupied by Jesus. Wherever we meet with Jesus, He is always in the midst, whether of reviling men, or believing saints,

or adoring angels. He is the one object of attention and contemplation, the central point of attraction or repulsion. If we trace His course from the remote and mysterious depths of that past eternity in which He dwelt with God as God, on to that time when, in more than all His original glory, He shines forth as the Lamb—as the occupant of the Eternal Throne—we everywhere see Him in the midst. Limiting ourselves to the suggestions of the Scriptures quoted, let us look—

1. At Jesus dying IN THE MIDST of sinners as their suffering substitute.

2. At Jesus dwelling IN THE MIDST of His Redeemed Church on earth.

3. At Jesus appearing as a slain Lamb IN THE MIDST of all the splendour of the throne in heaven.

1. Let us look at Jesus dying in the midst of sinners as their suffering substitute. We join the crowd, and we go out to Golgotha, "where they crucify Him, and two others with Him, on either side one, and *Jesus in the midst*." If we exclude from our minds all reference to the spiritual significance of the events which transpired at Calvary, if we take no account of what went before and what followed after, we have here merely the record of the public execution of three men who were declared to be criminals—merely that, and nothing more. But those even who were drawn together by mere curiosity to behold this great sight felt that these men, who were evidently fellow-sufferers, were not to be accounted fellow-criminals. The Roman centurion was so impressed by what he saw that day, that he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man; and all the people who came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned." Most seem to have felt that whether Jesus of Nazareth was or was not all that He claimed to be, all that His disciples declared Him to be, such strange things happened when He died as to show that He was no ordinary person, His death no ordinary event. From that time to this He who was lifted up upon that central cross has been drawing men unto Himself, and by a constantly increasing multitude has been regarded as both Lord and Christ. And at this moment there are millions of the wisest and best of the children of men who are resting all their hopes for time and eternity on the sacrifice which was then offered, the atonement which was then made.

Long prior to our Saviour's advent in the flesh was this great event of Calvary anticipated, prefigured, predicted. The mysterious efficacy of this great sacrifice began to operate at the moment of man's fall, and in the midst of the darkness that then settled down upon the world there glowed forth, as a star of hope, the promise of the woman's seed who should crush the serpent's head. And from that time, in the midst of all prophetic visions and ritual and symbolical prefigurations, you can distinguish more and more clearly, as the ages roll on, the stately and sublime figure of the Lord's Christ, who is to be manifested in the fulness of the times, and put away sin by the one offering of Himself. And now the time for the great offering has come, and we see Jesus on that central cross, lifted up in the sight of sinners, literally in the midst of sinners, on either side one, that He might draw all men unto Himself.

The crucifixion of Christ, which we regard as the great central fact in the plan of salvation, had been arranged for and settled in eternity—all had been predicted and prefigured—so that what seemed merely prompted by human malice was wrought according to the predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge of God. We could not have a more striking illustration of this than we are furnished with in the crucifixion of our Saviour between two thieves. It was the design of the chief priests and rulers of the Jews that the death of Jesus should be associated with circumstances of unexampled degradation. The infamy of the cross was not enough, and so they arranged that two notorious criminals should be crucified with Him, on either side one. So far, however, from accomplishing their purpose, they thus declared Him to be the Messiah, that very Christ of God of Whom their own prophet Isaiah had said, that He "*should be numbered with the transgressors*."

As we look upon Jesus there in the midst, we see that nearness to the cross is not enough without faith in the Crucified One. Two men died very near to the Divine Redeemer, on either side one; that nearness was the means of salvation only to one. On the one side of the cross do we see faith, penitence, and the joy of a newly discovered salvation; on the other side we see impenitence and impiety, and we hear the tongue of the wicked uttering words of blasphemy till it is silenced by the touch of death. To-day is Christ on the cross dividing men—everywhere you see Jesus in the midst, and on either side one. You see men and women forming part of the same congregation, sitting on the same bench, uniting outwardly in the same service, living, perhaps, in the same house, united by some of the closest and tenderest relations of life, and yet, though near to the cross, divided by it, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

2. Let us now look at Jesus dwelling in the midst of His redeemed Church on earth. His own words are, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." We see Jesus not only suffering and dying for us in the midst of sinners, but taking up His abode among, dwelling in the midst of, His people. This is one of the most remarkable and one of the most precious of Christ's promises, and one which comes home to us all. Wherever there are two or three meeting in Christ's name, there—invisibly but really present—is the Lord Jesus in the midst.

If we only saw Jesus on the cross, dying for sinners, and in their midst, we should get little comfort from the vision of the cross. If we could not look beyond the cross, our hopes, so far from gathering round it, would perish on it. But the cross is not a terminus;

it is a starting-point. And we hear the risen Jesus saying, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. I was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore." And not only does He assure us of His continued life, but He says, "Lo, I am with you always"—"Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

This promise, which was made to the first disciples of the Lord, is the common possession and abiding heritage of the entire redeemed Church. This promise, originally made nearly two thousand years ago, has been fulfilled through all the intervening ages, and is in course of fulfilment to-day. In these words we have what we may regard as Christ's great promise to His Church. It is a promise which Christ's disciples must have clung to as their most precious heritage. They were poor, unlettered men, who had given up their little all for Christ's sake—who had become all in all to them instead. He here gives them the assurance that, though they will not much longer enjoy the comfort of His bodily presence, He will not leave them alone. He says, "You shall never meet together, not even two or three of you, without meeting with Me."

Christ is still repeating that old promise, and making it good in the experience of His people. Let us try and grasp it—make it our own—use it as our own. Let us not, in the weakness of our faith, put a limit upon the Holy One of Israel. If we give up this, the Church of Christ is at once shorn of her glory and deprived of her power. The abiding presence of Christ is the secret of her strength, security, felicity. The Lord's people need not be greatly troubled when they meet together in the smallest numbers and the humblest circumstances, for the Master of Assemblies has said, "Wherever two or three meet together in My name, I am in the midst of them."

How wonderful is this promise! And yet how little do we make of it—how little do we think of it! We attend a service, and we notice who is present and who is absent; do we ever think of Him whose presence gives distinction and character to our assembly, and without whom our meeting together is in vain? Do we go up to the Lord's House expecting to meet with Him? Do we go away disappointed if we have not seen His face and heard His voice?

No one but the Divine Saviour, in whom we have been taught to confide, could make good such a promise as this. Think of the innumerable assemblies gathered in His name in this and other lands, meeting sometimes in hundreds and thousands, in other instances in twos or threes. Well, wherever they meet, if they meet in His name, there is Jesus in the midst, equally near to all.

And we should remember that when our Saviour thus promises to be with His people, and in their midst, that promise means that He will be to them, and do for them, all that He has engaged to be and do. He is there to accept their praises, listen to their prayers, to minister to their needs. In that mystical vision which was vouchsafed to St. John in Patmos, we see the risen Redeemer in all His glory, in the midst of His Church—there represented by the seven golden candlesticks. And He is there to rebuke what is wrong, to strengthen what is weak, to supply what is wanting, and revive even what is ready to die; and He keeps the lamps burning with an unfailing supply of the oil of His Divine grace. So Christ still rules over and dwells in His redeemed Church, and is to all who name His name the One Head of authority and influence.

3. And now let us look at Jesus appearing as a Lamb that has been recently slain, in the midst of the throne. We have seen Christ in the midst on the cross, we have seen Christ in the midst in the Church, let us now look at Christ in the midst on the throne. We leave the sufferings and the humiliation behind, and see the glory that follows. We see Him who condescended to the shame and pain of the cross and the darkness of the tomb exalted above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, having a name given unto Him which is above every name, at the sound of which every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. Yes, through this door which is opened in heaven we see the throne, which is high and lifted up; and in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and of the elders, we see the Lamb as if it had been recently slain, with the marks of its passion still upon it.

It is worthy of remark that in the Book of the Apocalypse we meet with more references to Christ as the Lamb, the slain Lamb, than we do in any other part of sacred Scripture. He who, as the Lamb slain, hung upon the central cross of Calvary, still occupies the central place and shines forth as the slain Lamb in the midst of the throne.

Appearing thus, the pleasant thought occurs to us that, with change of place and circumstance, there is no change of name or nature in our Divine Redeemer. He is still the Lamb—the Lamb of God, who taketh away—and taketh away by bearing it—the sin of the world. As the Lamb, He shines forth as the great central figure in the heavenly world. In the midst of the throne itself He appears sharing the honours of God. As such, He receives the worship and praise of the redeemed and unfallen. For while the redeemed are represented as having a song of praise which is peculiarly their own, the angels are represented as worshipping Him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb. Their loftiest conceptions of the manifold wisdom of God have been associated with the redemptive work of Christ, and they bow in adoring admiration before the Great Mystery of Godliness, rejoicing to join, as far as possible, in those songs with which the redeemed greet the Redeemer after they have been gathered home to the heavenly Zion.

In the meantime, let us render our feeble praises to Him whom we see in the midst: on the cross—in the Church—on the throne.

HUMPTY DUMPTY.

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again."

"GET down from that wall, Humpty, or you will have a great fall, like the real Humpty Dumpty. You are just as fat, you know."

The child addressed looked down from her exalted height upon the saucy upturned face of her brother Egbert, and her eyes flashed fire; nevertheless, she answered in a measured unchildlike voice—"Go away, Egbert. I shall not come down for you, so you needn't think it."

"Humpty is cross; what fun!" shouted the boy, with glee. "Girls, come and look at her Royal Highness Humpty Dumpty sitting on her throne."

Two little girls came slowly up the garden, arm in arm; they were pretty, fair-haired children, of about eleven or twelve, and no one would have known the child on the wall to be their sister.

They surveyed poor plain little Humpty with looks of scorn; and indeed, she did look rather an unpleasant sight, for her face was puckered into a frown, and the expression of her mouth was hard and unchildlike.

"You are always on that wall, Lillian. I heard mamma telling Miss Norris yesterday that you were not a bit like other children."

"I don't want to be like other children," retorted

the child, with equal scorn. "I mean to be an uncommon woman, Geraldine, like—like"—the child hesitated a moment, and looked down at the book that lay in her lap—"like Florence Nightingale," she said at last, with a proud ring in her voice. The children shouted at this more than ever, and presently left her alone, all agreeing that Lillian was a great goose.

The child still kept her seat on the wall, and as her brothers and sisters went off and left her alone, a softer expression came to the strong little face.

"I wish I was good," she murmured earnestly, "then perhaps people would forget that I am ugly and bad-tempered. Why am I not pretty, like Geraldine, and Clara, and the rest of them? I would have been such a good girl then."

So this nine-year-old child talked on, asking herself questions which have perplexed wiser and older heads than hers for many a long year. Above her stretched the wide blue heavens, and around her earth's fairest flowers were blooming, scenting the sweet summer air with their perfume; and yet amidst it all sat this little maiden, weary of life's tangled problem before she had well entered upon the way.

Lillian's parents were well-to-do, kind-hearted people, who liked their children to be happy, and to look bright and pretty. Lillian's plainness was a disappointment to them; the other children were all good-looking, and if they were not over-burdened with intellect, what did it matter? They themselves had not had an over-good education, and yet they had got on very well in the world. Why this one child should be so unlike the rest of the family they could not make out at all; nevertheless, she was their child, and they must make the best of her. In the nursery, from her youngest days, Lillian was overlooked in favour of her more attractive sisters and brothers: they were worth dressing up prettily to be sent down to be admired by the visitors, but Lillian was in this respect a decided failure, and at last she was altogether relieved of the ordeal that she hated.

All this had stung her more than usually sensitive little heart, and now, when she was older, it was a constant humiliation and annoyance.

Her nickname, too, which her brothers had given her when a little dot of three or four, on account of her plumpness, had caused her an amount of pain no one would have believed possible; she hated the very sound of the name, and the boys, seeing how she disliked it, would not let it drop; if she could only have laughed at it, they would soon have found no fun in the nickname. Lillian was, I must own, not an easy child to understand: she had a strangely morbid temperament, and was also very highly nervous. She had great faults, and also great virtues. It is often the case that our troublesome, restless, misunderstood little ones possess the noblest, deepest, most generous natures—but love and wisdom must train them, or these "might-be blessings" will prove a failure, all the greater that it might have been otherwise.

One day Geraldine was slightly ailing: she could not eat, and complained of headache and sore throat. Her parents were frightened, and sent at once for the doctor, who proclaimed it a bad kind of scarlet fever. The other children were ordered to the west end of the large rambling house, to be out of danger from infection; and the anxious mother kept entirely to the sick-room. The nurses had strict orders to keep the children confined to the left wing of the house; and as this would cause a great deal of watchfulness and trouble on their part, they hit upon an easy yet effectual way of keeping them within bounds. They told such terrible tales of the suffering and appearance of their sister, and of the awfulness of the illness, that the children were so scared that they hardly dared to venture beyond the nursery unless an older person were with them. Night after night the most nervous of the children, especially Lillian, would lie awake listening to every sound that disturbed the stillness, and magnifying them until their excited, strung-up imagination would fancy that they heard the cries of Geraldine, and all the horrors of the nurses' tales would arise to their minds.

Geraldine was very ill, 'tis true, but her illness partook of none of the hideousness pictured by the maids. Lillian thought of her sister lying in pain and misery on her bed, and pity filled her heart. She wished she were a grown-up woman, and a nurse like Florence Nightingale, who was not afraid to see the soldiers' legs and arms cut off; if she wanted to be brave also, she must not be afraid of anything either.

An idea crept into her mind.

She would nurse Geraldine. They would not let her go to her: she felt sure of that; but one night, when they were all asleep, Lillian made up her mind to go quietly to her sister's room. She quite forgot that the nurse would at any rate be awake to attend the invalid, and she also seemed to forget the disobedience of the act.

That night Lillian lay trembling with nervous excitement in her bed. The thought of the long lonely passages was terrifying to her, and she asked herself if she possibly could do it; she almost decided to give up her intention altogether; and yet she wanted to be a great and brave woman, like her favourite heroine. How nice it would be to make such a good nurse that people would say, "After all, Lillian is some use." Yes, she must go to Geraldine, and help make her well again.

With beating heart she put on her little dressing-gown and slippers, and went quietly from the room. All was hushed and still; the moon shone in through the passage windows with a weird effect that made poor Lillian's heart beat; but on she went, until at last she reached the door of the green room, where she knew Geraldine was lying. She listened breathlessly at the door. No screams of agony, as she expected, rent the air; all was quiet as the grave. Could Geraldine be dead? An awful fear filled her heart almost to bursting, and an almost uncontrollable impulse nearly made her run back the way she had come. But no! with resolution she pushed open the door and looked into the room. On the bed lay Geraldine fast asleep, and looking, to Lillian's inexperienced eyes, as well as ever she had been. The nurse was lying back in an arm-chair, fast asleep also, and the little would-be Florence Nightingale felt a

lump rise in her throat with disappointment. She bent over her sleeping sister for a minute or two, and as she felt her hot breath she decided that Geraldine *was* very hot, but she could not be really ill with such rosy cheeks; all the sick people she had ever seen looked, oh, so pale! No, it was all no use, and she was not wanted. The woman on the chair would scold if she awoke and found her, so with reluctant feet she wended her way back through the passages, and got into her own little bed again. She determined to say nothing about her useless errand; how the nurses would scold, and the other children tease, if they knew!

It was long before she fell asleep, and when she did so, she dreamt that Geraldine, with very red cheeks, was chasing her with a broomstick.

All went on as usual for a few days. The children got more accustomed to being shut off in the left wing of the house, and played together happily as before. Lillian would turn over and over in her busy little brain why Geraldine was kept so long away, and why mother did not come and see them every day as she used to do. The child was feeling languid and unwell, but, with her usual reserve, said nothing. There was no loving mother to notice the child's weary, drooping eyes, and the servants were never disposed to pay much attention to "Miss Lillian," so she was turned out with the rest one hot summer day to play in the garden, though she begged to be allowed to remain in the cool nursery.

The children laughed and shouted in their play, and the aching head of Lillian throbbed painfully at the sound. She walked heavily round to her favourite wall, and clambered up with an effort to the top. She sat there some time, but the sun was very hot, and she felt sick and faint, so moved to get down again. It was a dangerous thing to do under the circumstances: her foot slipped, and, with a cry, she fell to the ground. It was not far to fall—only about six feet—and the children who saw it did not seem frightened, for they had fallen sometimes from there themselves. They came running up with the cry of, "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall; Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;" but they hushed their voices, and stood frightened and surprised, looking down on their sister, who lay with closed eyes upon the grass.

They ran in haste to the nurses, who sat chatting on a seat some distance away; and when they came, Lillian aroused a little from her faint, and they carried her into the house, and sent for the doctor. He found only a few slight bruises on her, but, to their surprise and alarm, told them that Lillian was sickening for the fever, and that the shock of the fall was likely to aggravate the case greatly. No one could account for her having caught it, for she had not been near her sister Geraldine, so they thought; and with wonder and perplexity Lillian was carried into the left wing of the house, to be nursed back to health again by careful mother and nurse. But as one child grew better, the other grew rapidly worse; and before night anxious parents were watching round Lillian's bed, where she tossed in high delirium and fever. In this time of trouble and suspense the parents found that the misunderstood child was very dear to them, and that they could not spare her from their midst. When, in her wanderings, they heard her lamenting that no one loved her, and heard her longings to be pretty like Clara and Geraldine, they understood better the sensitive and loving nature of their child; and when, with flushed face, she would raise herself in the bed, and beg them to let her go and "nurse poor Geraldine, for she must be brave, like Florence Nightingale," they could not restrain their tears.

Once she tried to get over the side of her bed, and when held back, cried in imploring tones—

"Oh, mother! let me go to Geraldine. The servants say she—— Oh, mother! poor pretty Geraldine! She will die. I *will* go—I *will* go to her!"

Then she let them place her back upon the pillows, where her little life seemed beating out in laboured breaths.

"If it were only me," she murmured, "it would not matter; but poor, pretty Geraldine!"

The mother leant in agony over the child.

"Hush, darling!" she said hoarsely; "we cannot lose you. You must get well, and we will love you. Yes, my darling, we will love you."

No smile came to the baby features, only a puzzled look, as if trying to bring back memories of the past; and the mother sank back in sorrow and remorse upon her chair by the cot.

On the fourth day the crisis came, and Lillian awoke to perfect consciousness once more; but, alas! it was only the flicker of life that so often comes before death. The weary little eyes looked imploringly up at her mother, who was bending anxiously over her.

"I wanted to be a good girl, mamma," she whispered, speaking with difficulty from the sore little throat.

"Yes, dear, we know that; and now you must get well, and play with Geraldine. She is longing to have you."

A sweet smile shone on the face of the child, and she shook her head.

"Tell the children I am sorry that I got angry when they called me 'Humpty Dumpty.'"

Her voice grew fainter. She lay back wearily on her pillow; and with one sigh little Lillian had passed away to the land where she would be a greater than Florence Nightingale.

And when, ever after, the children came across the old nursery rhyme of "Humpty Dumpty," tears would come into their eyes, and they thought with remorse of the little girl whom

> "*All the king's horses and all the king's men*
> *Couldn't put together again.*"

O Love, Who formedst me.

Words by C. Winkworth, from "Silesius." *Music by the* Rev. F. Peel, B.Mus., Oxon.

mf

1. O Love, Who form - edst me to wear The i - mage of Thy God - head here; Who sought - est me with ten - der care Through all my wan - d'rings wild and drear; O Love, I give my - self to Thee, Thine ev - er, on - ly Thine to be.

cres. *f*

2. O Love, Who once in time wast slain,
Pierced through and through with bitter woe;
O Love, Who wrestling thus didst gain
That we eternal joy might know;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

3. O Love, of Whom is truth and light,
The Word and Spirit, life and power;
Whose heart was bared to them that smite,
To shield us in our trial hour;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

4. O Love, Who lovest me for aye,
Who for my soul dost ever plead;
O Love, Who didst my ransom pay,
Whose power sufficeth in my stead;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

5. O Love, Who once shalt bid me rise
From out this dying life of ours;
O Love, Who once above yon skies
Shalt set me in the fadeless bowers;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, Thine alone to be.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS.

BY EDITH LISTER, AUTHOR OF "ON STRONGER WINGS," "HIS PERPLEXING SILENCE," ETC. ETC.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

"Seating herself on the edge of a sofa."

CHAPTER I.—ST. WILFRED'S ORGANIST.

"We two are a multitude."

THE last notes of the organ had died away, the shuffle of many feet echoing on the chancel pavement had been rebuked by the curate and choirmaster as the boys filed out into the vestry, and the verger was waiting somewhat impatiently until the organist should gather up her books and release him from his duties, for the choir practice was over. He did not "hold" with lady organists; and though Miss Smith had been at St. Wilfred's for nearly two years, he had never looked on her with favour, so he answered her "Good-night" churlishy enough, muttering to himself, "Ah! but Vicar made a mistake, he did, when he took a slip of a lassie like that!"

But anyone looking at Margie Smith as she hurriedly crossed the churchyard and threaded her way through some of the poorer streets of Nunsmere—that sleepy old north-country town—would have thought her a pretty object for the eye to rest on. "A slip of a lassie," indeed: very slight and tall, with a dainty, oval face, lighted up by dark brown eyes, and a complexion that had caused the good ladies of Nunsmere to speculate whether it was not *too* fair to be natural—"with that dark hair, too!"

Poor Margie! She would have been indignant had she known what they said, but, luckily for her, she was not thrown in their way; Nunsmere having decided that, though it might stretch a point and know the Vicar's governess, it must draw the line *somewhere*, and accordingly the line was drawn at Miss Smith.

The light feet tripped on with a graceful rapidity of movement that was peculiar to Margie, until she turned into a little courtyard, where four houses stood—rather shabby houses, that might once have seen better days. Into one of these she let herself with a latchkey, and, crossing the tiny hall, was greeted with a joyous cry of "Margie! Back so soon, darling?"

"Yes; the boys were wonderfully good to-day, in honour of its being Mr. Savory's last practice, I suppose," seating herself as she spoke on the edge of a sofa, where, propped up with cushions, lay a little girl: such a delicate child, with a face that would have been beautiful if pain had not left its traces on every feature; a face lighted up with wonderful blue

eyes, and half-hidden by the masses of golden hair, that rivalled the famous locks of Dickens's little dolls' dressmaker, and cloaked the twisted back and shoulders, so that, at the first glance, no one would have guessed that Lollie was a cripple.

"It is so lovely to have you back again!"

"Have you been very dull without me?"

"Oh, no—not really dull; only the pain has been pretty bad, and I couldn't read. But I always want you, Margie. I'm afraid I am very selfish."

Something like a lump rising in Margie's throat prevented her from answering. She looked round the room, half-lighted by the sullenly burning fire—for it was March, that cruelly cold month in the north, where the lengthening days bring light without sunshine—and seeing how comfortless it all was, she did not wonder that Lollie had missed her. They were alone in the world, these two; and for years Margie had stood in the place of both father and mother to her crippled sister. Their father, an Essex squire, was killed by a fall from his horse a week before Lollie was born, and their mother only lived long enough to give the baby into Margie's care before she followed her husband on the last long journey. Margie was eleven years old when she and Lollie were taken by their mother's brother, and brought up with his own children. He was a struggling lawyer, and the big, untidy house at Clapham was a cruel contrast to the lovely country home which Margie remembered; and when a careless nurse let Lollie fall, and the doctors said that she must always be a cripple, Margie felt more keenly than ever that they were not wanted, and determined to make the most of the education her uncle was giving her to win a home for Lollie. She had a talent for music, and by the time she was twenty she was making enough, as mistress at a high-school, to pay her uncle for the home he gave to her sister. But this was not enough for Margie—she wanted freedom and independence—and when she had the chance of an opening at Nunsmere she brought Lollie with her, and the two years they had been living together were the happiest in their storm-tossed lives.

"What are you thinking of?" asked Lollie at last; for the lump in her throat had kept Margie silent. "Oh, I know, you needn't tell me. It's Mrs. Watkins' horrid weekly book."

Margie laughed. "Poor Mrs. Watkins! You surely don't grudge her the money?"

"No, of course not; only we want it so badly ourselves, and every week that little black book comes and eats it all away from us."

"You are as bad as all the rest who won't pay the 'rint.'"

"Oh, no; for I don't hate Mrs. Watkins. She is often very good to me, and I wouldn't do anything to hurt her for the world."

"It's a consolation to me to hear this, or I shouldn't feel happy at leaving you so much with the old lady. I shouldn't know what might happen."

"I couldn't do anything *very* dreadful to her, for I can't move without my crutches," laughed Lollie; but Margie's face darkened and her lips were pressed together in a way that Lollie seemed to know, for, slipping her hand in hers, she said, as if anxious to change the subject, "I do wish I could help you."

"You do help me, darling. Why, just think, what could I do without you?" And Margie clasped the small hand closer in her own strong one, as the thought crossed her mind that she held her treasure by such a slender thread.

"But I mean something that would really help. If I were only older—but fourteen isn't very old, is it? And then I sometimes think, Margie, that I shall never be strong enough to do very much good in the world."

"I don't want you to do anything except be my sunshine, as you have always been."

But the answer did not seem to satisfy Lollie. "I believe I could write a book," she burst forth at last. "Oh, don't laugh; but I am sure I could. I lie here and think, and think, and think, until my head quite aches with thinking. Now, if I could put it all into a book!"

"But you want something else besides thinking, to write a book, Lollie—you want experience; and you have led such a dull life, and know so few people."

"I should put you and me in my book, Margie, just us two; and I know it would be more interesting than lots of stories I have read. Why, I often think we are like girls you read about—living alone, and you working so hard and making a home for me."

"I don't think I should make much of a heroine."

"Oh, yes, you would—you would make a perfect heroine. But I should alter things a little, and make us come in for some money; and then we would go and live in London, and you should marry some splendid man, and, I think—in the book, you know—that I should make a clever doctor come and cure me."

Margie did not answer for a moment; she knew that nothing could cure Lollie, and that each year must find her weaker, until—— But she never allowed herself to dwell on the shadowy future.

"Now, Lollie, what do you mean by leaving Jim out of your book? You say I am to marry a 'splendid man'—which means some ideal hero, I suppose—and you know all the time that I am to marry Jim."

"I forgot about Jim—of course you must marry him; but in the book I can make him quite different."

"Poor Jim! I decline to have him made 'quite different;' I am satisfied with him as he is." And Margie turned towards a little table that stood near Lollie's sofa, where the firelight played on a photograph that occupied the place of honour—a strong, determined, bearded face, with keen eyes—rather a handsome face, but with a self-satisfied air about it that perhaps accounted for Lollie's desire to make the original "quite different."

"I never feel as if you were really engaged to Jim."

"And yet we have been engaged nearly two years."

"And when he grows rich you will be married?"

"Yes; but that seems a very long time to look forward to." And Margie went off into a day-dream, from which Lollie would not disturb her, for it was enough to lie still and look at the face that was dearer to her than anything on earth. Margie's dreaming carried her back three years, when she was

still living at her uncle's. Oh, those dreary days! when she came back, tired from her work at the high-school, to begin teaching her small cousins and helping her aunt to mend stockings, happy if she could creep away for a time to Lollie, lying neglected and alone in her attic bedroom. Yet even to Lollie Margie never told quite *all* that she suffered; hers was a nature to bear sorrow in silence, with a kind of proud indifference. But the repressed, loveless life was telling upon her, and spoiling a naturally sweet disposition, when a change came to her, and she had a lover—not, perhaps, *exactly* the lover she would herself have chosen; but, then, the hero of our dreams is given to but few of us, and there is always the possibility that, if he *did* appear upon the scene, we might not properly appreciate him; heroes are trying people to go through life with on a limited income. So when James Lawson—young, handsome, and very much impressed with his own brilliant abilities—began coming to her uncle's and paying her what her aunt was pleased to call "very marked attention," Margie was glad; not with the fresh, unreasoning joy of a girl who has seen the happier side of life only, and to whom love comes as the last and most beautiful gift of all, but with something of the spirit of one who has sailed on stormy seas, and has at last a chance of finding a port. When he asked her to be his wife, she accepted him almost gratefully—a frame of mind which seemed to her lover quite right and proper. He had a great appreciation of his own merits; he was clever, and he knew it, and though only a journalist on a weekly paper, he felt confident that one day he would make a name for himself, so that the world should value him as he deserved. He admired Margie, and, in his way, was in love with her, but not with the unquestioning love that can see no flaw in the beloved one; on the contrary, he saw many, and he never scrupled to tell her of any fault, and she bore it meekly, and honestly tried to form herself on his pattern. She loved him, admired him, and was a little afraid of him, and, perhaps, was not altogether sorry that their poverty necessitated such a long engagement.

But Lollie was tired of the silence, and when the door opened and Mrs. Watkins came in with the supper-tray, it was with an air of relief that she exclaimed—

"Well, has he come?"

"Yes, Miss Lollie; and a very nice-looking gentleman he is, too. I happened to be round at Mrs. Griffiths' when he drove up."

"I am glad he took Mrs. Griffiths' lodgings; she wanted to let them so much!"

"Who are you talking about, Lollie?" asked Margie, in rather bewildered tones.

"Why, about the new curate, of course. Didn't you know that he was coming to-day?"

"Miss Lollie is always interested in what concerns others," said Mrs. Watkins in slightly reproachful accents; but as Margie did not seem inclined to pursue the topic, she left the room, muttering to herself that "there was no getting on with Miss Smith; she minded nothing for who came or went; and all the parish might be dead or dying for all she 'd care."

This was a little hard on Margie, though she certainly lacked the power of sympathy which made Lollie loved by all who knew her. Just now the news that Mrs. Griffiths' lodgings were really let at last, and to the new curate, too, who might reasonably be looked upon as a "permanency"—Lollie felt some little pride in quoting Mrs. Watkins—was a real joy to the child.

"How pleased Mrs. Griffiths will be! and I am glad he seems so nice. He ought to be nice with such a name—Nigel Forrest. Don't you like it, Margie?"

"Yes, it is a pretty name; but, 'What's in a name?'"

"I think there is a great deal. I always wish we had a pretty name. Smith is so—so——"

"So very commonplace and uninteresting. Never mind, Lollie, it is a good, useful name to go through the world with; and as for Mr. Forrest, we need not trouble about him, as we are not likely to see anything of him."

Lollie's face fell. "He may be very nice," she urged; but Margie interrupted her.

"We are poor and uninteresting, except to each other, but as long as we are together I don't care about anything; we don't want anyone else." And then she added, "But Nigel Forrest is such a pretty name, that you had better put him in your book, darling."

CHAPTER II.—THE NEW CURATE.

> "Truth is large; our aspiration
> Scarce embraces all we be."
>
> E. B. BROWNING.

NUNSMERE—as seen from the bow-window of Mrs. Griffiths' drawing-room—was not a very lively place: a long, wide street of dull, respectable-looking houses, degenerating towards the lower end of it into shops, with a glimpse of St. Wilfred's tower in the distance; no signs of traffic or of busy life—for the iron-works which formed Nunsmere's excuse for existence were at the other end of the town. The view that greeted Nigel Forrest's eyes the morning after his arrival was, to say the least, depressing. And he was in a mood in which he was inclined to look on things generally through very neutral-tinted spectacles. At eight-and-twenty he had arrived at the conclusion that he had made a mistake and missed his vocation. After four years' hard work in the East End he began to fear that he had none of the qualities necessary for his particular calling—he had done his best and failed; and yet he did not look like a man who should write himself a failure at twenty-eight. Tall and powerfully built, with keen, kindly eyes, and a clever, well-bred face, there was something very attractive about him; a latent sense of power, that was not, as yet, fully developed, showed itself in the marked lines about the mouth, but these vanished in a pleasant smile as Mrs. Griffiths came in with his breakfast, and began a little mild gossip.

"Yes, Nunsmere was a quiet sort of place, at least at this end of the town; but then that must be a nice change after London, where the noise was so great that you couldn't hear yourself speak. There was not

very much going on, but then she did not hold with people always wanting amusements: hard work, and plenty of it, was best for all. Still, there was the river to boat on in summer, and plenty of nice walks round about, and——" But here Forrest cut her short by opening a letter and beginning to read it. It was from his late vicar, and after some allusions to parish matters, ended with—

"I know you feel that you have made a mistake, and fancy you could have done better work as a layman. But I believe that you will yet see that your choice has been wisely directed, and will do more lasting good through having gone down yourself into the Slough of Despond, than if all had gone smoothly. The change to Nunsmere will be good for you. You will see life under different conditions, and will, perhaps, find peace of mind as well as rest of body in that Sleepy Hollow, where Time himself seems almost at a standstill."

"The Slough of Despond! Yes, he is right. I am there, and I don't know when I am likely to get out of it again, nor yet how my having lost faith in my own powers will help others."

Still the letter cheered him. Nunsmere—to use its own vernacular—"took to" the new curate at once, and decided that he was a person to be made much of. But he declined to see matters in this light: he had come here to work, and the overcrowded cottages were a thousand times more interesting to him than the irreproachable drawing-rooms where he would have been a welcome guest. But, so far, the most interesting feature in Nunsmere society to Nigel Forrest had been his one glimpse of St. Wilfred's organist at the choir-practice.

"Isn't it rather unusual to have a lady organist?" he had asked his Vicar, as they hurried down to St. Wilfred's in the teeth of a keen north-easter.

"Well, yes, I suppose it is; but nowadays women are to the fore in everything—do what you will, you can't stop them—and Miss Smith plays beautifully, and I only give her half the sum I paid Jackson, and he was always at loggerheads with the choir-master; so, if it *is* unusual to have a lady organist, I find it very convenient."

And here the Vicar proceeded to give a rapid sketch of Margie's history—as far as he knew it—her devotion to Lollie, and the curiously isolated life she led; ending with—"I should have liked to have been kind to her, poor girl, and asked her up to the Vicarage, but my wife does not like her—says she is proud, and does not know her place—and so I can do nothing. When you are my age, you will know that, if once a woman takes a prejudice into her head, nothing will drive it out again."

The large church, half in shadow—for only the chancel was lighted up, and the nave looked an interminable vista of blackness—the boys' faces, eager to see the new curate, the deferential choir-master, and, last of all, the slender figure at the organ, gave an air of unreality to the scene; and all through the practice Forrest had a strange impression that it was only a dream from which he must awake; and when it was over, he rose from his place with a sense of regret, and followed the Vicar into the vestry. Here he was introduced to the choir-master and the leading tenor and bass, but Nunsmere had "drawn the line" at Miss Smith so effectually that the necessity for an introduction to the organist did not occur to the Vicar, and Forrest was conscious of a feeling of disappointment when she disappeared in front of them in the gathering darkness, up Nunsmere High Street.

But what was his disappointment compared to Lollie's?

"You didn't speak to him? Oh, Margie!" And the corners of her mouth went down in a pitiful droop, and the big eyes filled with tears.

"Never mind, darling; what does it matter? We never knew Mr. Savory. Why do you want to know this new man?"

Lollie did not answer; perhaps she did not care to explain just then that Nigel Forrest—viewed as a possible hero—was an all-absorbing interest in her narrow life, and that Margie should have seen him, and not even spoken to him, was almost more than she could bear. But fortune was kind to Lollie. The Vicar being away, and the choir-master ill, some slight alteration in the music fell to Forrest's care, and necessitated a visit to Miss Smith. He never forgot his first glimpse of Lollie. It was growing dusk, and save for the dancing firelight, the room was in shadow, but there was light enough for him to see a golden head raised from the sofa, while a pair of big eyes were fixed upon him.

"Please come in. Margie is out, but she will be home directly; and I can't get up, because I am lame, you see, and Mrs. Watkins has put my crutches out of reach."

Forrest came up to her, and drew a chair near the sofa.

"You must be Lollie, I think."

"Yes, I 'm Lollie; but how did you know?"

"I heard that Miss Smith had a little sister, and that her name was Lollie, so you see I wasn't very clever to guess, was I?"

"Fancy anyone telling you my name!" said Lollie, in a flutter of excitement, to think that she was a sufficiently important person to have been "talked about." "I am surprised," she added, with some attempt at dignity, "because I can never get out, so people don't know about me."

"But I dare say people come and see you."

"Oh, no; no one ever comes to see us. Margie says it is quite natural, because we are poor; and no one ever cares for poor people; poverty is worth nothing unless it is picturesque. And when I asked her what that meant, she said, 'A good old woman in a pretty, tumble-down cottage.' I don't quite know what she means, because we couldn't be that. Perhaps she meant it for a joke."

Lollie's eyes were fixed on him with a rather wistful expression, as though she were waiting for his assurance that Margie's speech—the bitterness of which she did not fully understand—*was* a joke; and Forrest's heart went out towards this lonely child, as it had never yet done to any human creature. He felt that their lives were not unlike: he, cut off from sympathy from his fellow-men by some fault in himself, some lack of responsiveness which he was

powerless to give; and she, lonelier still, a cripple amid her "unpicturesque poverty."

"Yes, of course it was a joke, for I never saw an old woman yet with long golden hair; but I expect you two are never lonely. Does not your sister play to you sometimes? I see you have a piano."

"Oh, yes; Margie plays to me for hours. I like to lie quite still while the music floats round me. I think I should like to die when Margie is playing, for I feel so happy."

Forrest looked at her in wonder. She was such a strange mixture of child and woman, that he felt, in a wider sphere, Lollie might have blossomed into something bright and beautiful, to have gladdened many; and a curious fancy held him, which ever after came into his mind when he thought of her. He had once noticed, when passing Hyde Park Terrace in the early spring, an almond-tree, that grew in the area of a corner house; and though it looked fair and dainty with its pale pink blossoms, he pictured how much more beautiful it would be, planted in some open space, where it would be free to grow as it willed; and he pitied the cramped branches that struggled to overtop the area railings. Somehow Lollie reminded him of that almond-tree. But Lollie, unconscious that she was so interesting to him, and only anxious to keep him until Margie should come back, was chattering on, and actually telling him of her grand plan of writing a book.

"I didn't mean to tell anyone but Margie, but I want you for my hero, and you ought not to put people in books without asking their leave, ought you? Nigel Forrest is such a lovely name. Do be my hero!"

"The door opened, and Margie came in."

"I'm afraid I am not good enough for a hero," he began, when Lollie interrupted him with—

"Why, that is just what Margie said when I asked her to be my heroine. How funny that you should say the same! But you must be my hero." And she looked so pleadingly at him that he hastily promised, saying he would try to live up to the part.

He was pleased with Lollie's fancy, and a memory of the graceful figure at the organ made him think that a man might have a worse fate than to play the hero to Margie's heroine. As Lollie was thanking him very earnestly, the door opened, and Margie came in.

"Well, darling, I know I'm late, but those horrid children kept me——" And then she stopped, seeing Nigel Forrest, and there was a moment's pause, broken by Lollie, speaking in her most grown-up manner.

"Margie, this is Mr. Forrest. He has come about the music, because the Vicar is away."

"Lollie and I have been making friends in your absence," said Forrest.

But there was no answering smile on Margie's face. To Lollie she could be sweet and gentle, to James Lawson proudly submissive; but to strangers she was coldly repellent. She could not forget that she was the St. Wilfred's organist, whom the good people of Nunsmere had decided to "keep in her place," and she answered Forrest with *brusquerie* that almost amounted to rudeness. He explained his errand, and Margie tried the chant for him on the piano, her hands touching the keys impatiently, as though, to-night, even music could not soothe her restless spirit; and Forrest felt that he must go: Margie showed him so plainly that his presence was distasteful to her. He said good-bye, but Lollie said, anxiously—

"Say good-night instead; good-bye sounds as if you would not come again."

"I want to come again if I may," speaking to Lollie, but looking at Margie.

She hesitated. Then, seeing Lollie's pleading face, she said rather coldly—

"I shall be very glad if you will come and see my little sister. She is often lonely, I am afraid, when I am out; and I have to leave her a great deal."

"Then I will come again very soon." And he went out into the ill-lighted court, feeling far happier than he had done when he entered it.

"I am getting out of the 'Slough of Despond' already. That child's face is like sunshine; and I have been such a long time in the shadow."

As for Lollie, she was full of delight, and Margie listened to her ravings in dreamy silence; whatever she might be to others, she was always gentle and tender to Lollie.

"He is as nice as his name, Margie, and that is saying a great deal when you think what a very nice name it is. I am glad Mrs. Griffiths has him for a lodger. She was so poor all the winter, and now she will be quite rich."

"I didn't know that you had ever seen Mrs. Griffiths, Lollie. Why do you take such an interest in her?"

"No, I haven't seen her, but I have heard Mrs. Watkins talk about her; they are great friends, you know. And then, Margie, don't you think 'other people' are very interesting?"

"No, I find them very dull and commonplace—they don't interest me at all; but that is my fault. Yours is the true novelist's spirit, Lollie, and your book ought to be a great success."

CHAPTER III.—LOLLIE UNDERSTANDS.

"But yet men are led away from threatening destruction; a hand is put into theirs which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward; and the hand may be a little child's."

THE friendship between Lollie and Forrest grew slowly but surely from the night when he had first met her and had promised to be her hero. He often went to see her, Margie sometimes making a third; but when she was present she seemed to introduce a disturbing element and to mar the harmony. Forrest could not make up his mind about Margie: she impressed him—partly by her beauty, partly by her cold, self-contained manner, which piqued his curiosity by suggesting so much that was kept back—but still he could not quite decide whether she was a woman to be loved or merely pitied. But about Lollie there could be no manner of doubt; there was something in her too sensitive nature that was in touch with his own, and by the time June had come—and even in dreary Nunsmere there was bright sunshine and a taste of summer in the air—she was sufficiently in his confidence for him to pour out his troubles to her, knowing that he was always sure of her sympathy. He was often in what Lollie called "black moods"—times when nothing seemed to go well with him, and when he had not the energy to rise above his troubles and so master them; then the only cure was Lollie.

It was one day, about the middle of June, that Forrest was in an especially "black mood." He had had a difference of opinion with his Vicar on some parish matter, and though in his heart of hearts he knew he was in the right, yet he had spoken hastily, and was now regretting it; so he started off to Summers' Court for what he had grown to think of as "his cure."

Lollie was alone, and greeted him with delight.

"I *am* glad you have come! Margie has gone in the country to give a music-lesson, and she won't be back until it is quite late; and I am too tired to read, for it's so hot!"

"Yes, Lollie, it *is* hot; but it is cooler in your room than in the High Street. I was nearly grilled on my way here."

"I think this is a winter place. Summer comes very sadly, as if she were sulky, and only makes you not and tired. Margie says even by the river it is no better." And certainly, the close, heavy air which came in at the open window justified her words.

"Yes, Nunsmere is quite a winter's place. Grey clouds and cold winds suit it best, for it doesn't know what to do with the sunshine, which only shows the emptiness of its long, dreary streets."

"You're in a 'black mood' to-day," said Lollie, turning to look at him; "tell me all about it." And Forrest seated himself on the sofa and took her hand in his, as if it were his accustomed attitude.

"I'm disappointed with myself, Lollie—with my life, and my work, and everything, in fact; but with myself most of all."

"And that's a dreadful feeling, because one expects so much of one's self."

"Yes, and we cannot escape from ourselves; so that, if we disappoint ourselves, there is no chance of forgetting it."

"But why are you disappointed with yourself?"

Forrest hesitated. She was only a child—how could she understand him? and yet, child as she was, he knew that she would sympathise with him and cheer him as no one else could do.

"Well, it is a little hard to explain it to you, but I seem to have made a wrong choice. I am not fitted to be a clergyman. I want to help people—to enter into their lives and share their troubles—but I cannot. I suppose the fault is in me; I lack the power of

drawing them out. They are civil to me, listen to what I have to say, take anything I may give them; but there it ends; they do not care for me. No one cares for me, or is really pleased to see me, but you, Lollie."

The small hand clasped his closer, and there was a moment's silence, during which the man half regretted his confidence, and the child struggled to put her thoughts into words that should comfort him.

"I think you must be like Margie," she said at last. "Other people don't interest you. It isn't that Margie isn't sorry for them, and wouldn't help them if she could, but she doesn't care for them. And if you don't really care for them—for themselves, I mean, and not just because you think you *ought*—I fancy people must always know; one can pretend a great many things, but it's never any use to pretend to care, for the people find out that it's only pretence."

"Yes, Lollie, you are right. You see there is no pretence about our caring for each other, and that is why we are such friends." And he stooped and kissed the upturned face. She was very dear to him—perhaps because she reminded him of the little sister who had died long ago, and about whose memory the years had woven a halo of romance. Somehow he fancied his life would have been different had Nellie lived to be a woman.

"We shall always be friends now, and when I am older I shall be a better friend for you; I shall understand you."

"You are the best friend I could have, and I am happier for having talked to you, for I am not in a 'black mood' any longer." And then he said good-bye, and walked slowly home. He had much to think of, for her words had sunk deeply into his heart. "If you don't really care for them, I fancy people must always know; one can pretend a great many things, but it's never any use to pretend to care." Yes, that had been his fault; he did not really care, and duty was a poor substitute for love. Lollie loved him, and he her; and thus their friendship had grown to be the perfect thing it now was, and he was happier because Lollie understood. But who would teach him to care? And then there floated vaguely into his mind something he had once read of "eyes opened by sorrow." Would that be God's way of teaching him? Well, better sorrow itself than this sense of failure.

Lollie had no time to indulge in day-dreams when Forrest had left her, for Margie came in, tired and hot, having missed her train and been obliged to walk the three miles into Nunsmere.

"Such a hot, dusty walk," she explained, as she took off her hat and buried her face in Lollie's cushions: "and I am so tired; but I shall soon rest in this cool room."

"Cool? Poor Margie, how dreadfully hot it must have been, if you call this room cool!"

"Well, everything is comparative, you know; we are poor, for instance, but I daresay a beggar would think us rich."

"He would have to be a very beggarly beggar, then"—and they both laughed, so that Mrs. Watkins, bringing in the tea, thought how pretty Miss Smith looked when she was "bright and merry," instead of the "cold, not to say stuck-up, young lady she generally was!"

Someone else shared Mrs. Watkins's opinion—someone who was leaning against the low, old-fashioned window, and was looking into the room with lazy amusement, to think that neither of them guessed he was there. A tall man, with a handsome, bearded face and keenly observant eyes, yet with a certain air of self-sufficiency about him that would have told he was the original of the photograph that stood by Lollie's sofa, even before Margie, vaguely conscious of another presence, looked up and exclaimed, in tones in which pleasure and surprise were blended, "Jim!"

"Yes, 't is his very self!" swinging himself over the low window-sill, and kissing her with a coolly possessive air. "They are running some trips to Leeds for the Festival, so I came on from there to pay you a surprise visit. Are you glad to see me?"

"Yes, very glad."

"I have seen so little of you since you came here that I was pleased to have this opportunity; you hardly ever get to Clapham now."

"I can't very well leave Lollie"—was it Lollie's fancy, or did Jim's face darken at the mention of her name?—"but I have sometimes wondered that you never came down here to see me, Jim."

"Couldn't do it, dear," he answered lightly; "my time is not my own. What a deadly-lively hole this is! I wonder how you manage to exist in such a place!"

"I have my work."

"Ah, that prevents you from being dull!—Well, Lollie, how's the back? and how's the hero? You must let me review this wonderful book of yours when it comes out," he went on, in a bantering style that distressed Lollie, to whom the book and its hero were very precious realities.

"Lollie hasn't been very well," said Margie, answering for her. "I think this hot weather tries her; and then she never gets out."

"Well, she did not do that in Clapham, and I should think Nunsmere is a pleasant change from that overcrowded house, where everything seems always at sixes and sevens. I went to pay my respects to your aunt last Sunday, and I never was more glad of anything than I was to get away. You may be sure that I made my adieux as quickly as possible."

"How was Aunt Nora?"

"Surrounded by the children, as usual, who all talked at once and prevented her from speaking. However, she managed to tell me what a loss you are to her, Margie—indeed, her whole style of conversation is nothing but a chapter of lamentations!"

"Poor Aunt Nora! I think the children are a little too much for her—that, and the 'eternal want of pence.' If you are always trying how to make two ends meet, you haven't the time to be agreeable."

"Especially if the two ends are so very far apart that no amount of stretching will give them even a semblance of joining. Really, the Clapham *ménage* is an illustrative warning against marrying in haste. It is the old story—a young, ambitious man taken with a pretty face and pledging himself to poverty

for her sake—for your aunt must have been a pretty girl; she is a pretty woman still."

"Well, it is a mistake that you and I have agreed to avoid, Jim; we are quite models of discretion!" But as she spoke Margie looked a little anxiously into her lover's face. She was glad that he saw the necessity for waiting, but perhaps she would have been better pleased if he had not taken the delay quite so coolly. She was not without that latent element of romance which is to be found in all women, and would have preferred that Jim should urge an imprudent marriage—protesting that he could not live without her, was willing to face poverty for her sake—and that the common-sense view of the matter should be all on her side. But nothing was further from his thoughts; he was sure of her, and was willing to wait—even a little too willing.

"Yes, we are a wise young couple, but nothing would be more ridiculous than marrying on our present income. I have not sufficiently established myself yet, and I want to give you a home that shall be worthy of you. It is a mistake for a literary man to marry until he has made some sort of a name—unless he is marrying money."

"How are you getting on, Jim?"

"Oh, fairly well. By the way, you read that last thing of mine in the *Trifler*. What did you think of it?"

"It was very smart," said Margie hesitatingly. She could not tell him that it was the very smartness of the article in question that had made it hateful to her—the half-cynical, wholly indifferent way in which he had treated his subject, skimming the surface in a way that would please the fancy of the average magazine reader, but that left the real issue untouched. But Jim Lawson was nothing if not successful, and to succeed he knew that it was only necessary to clothe the commonplace in pretty word-garments; so he was pleased with Margie's criticism.

"Yes, it *was* smart: that is just the word to describe it; you shall be proud of me one of these days, Margie. But let us go out for a turn; I have so much to say to you." And he glanced at Lollie, as though hinting that her presence was a restraint to him, in a way that brought the colour into her cheeks, and made her truly thankful when the lovers had left her alone.

"They don't want me, and I can see that Jim hates me; and I can't bear Jim!" and then she lay still, exhausted with this unusual burst of passion. Why did Margie love Jim? Of course, it was right and proper that she should have a lover—heroines always did; but a man like Nigel Forrest, a man worthy of her—that would have been Lollie's choice. "Margie is much too good for Jim, and he doesn't think so; he takes it all as a right!"—and Lollie knew that fierce resentment which we all feel when our nearest and dearest give their love to some unworthy object. "I would like Margie to have a splendid lover—someone who would love her as much as I do, and care for her, and feel proud that she loved him back again. But does she love Jim? I can't be quite sure; and if she doesn't, it would be a dreadful thing! Oh, what a puzzling world this is!"

(To be concluded.)

OUR FAILING HEART STRENGTHENED.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE 'I WILLS' OF THE PSALMS," ETC.

"My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."—PSALM lxxiii. 2.

THE whole Bible has but one story to tell—the failure of man and the fulness of God. The one keynote runs through all, from Genesis to Revelation. Whatever the theme may be—the history of individuals or nations, Adam in Paradise, the Israelites under judges, kings, and prophets—the cultured nations by wisdom not knowing God—yes, and those who at last are arrayed in white robes: these, too, are human failures, but by means of God's provision they have become great successes—with that which is outside them they have made them white, even with the blood of the Lamb. The word "but" is, as you will see, in italics in your Bibles, thus signifying that it is not in so many actual letters in the Hebrew text. It is, however, quite according to the genius of the Hebrew language that it should not be expressed, though absolutely necessary to the text; but according to the genius of the English tongue we have rightly inserted it here.

Now, this verse is an epitome of the whole story of the Bible, shut up in the experience of one man. Therefore you are to say to yourselves about the preacher, "He is going to tell us about somebody like ourselves, with many troubles, and we must listen and see whether we can catch something that will suit our case."

Here you have darkness and light, sickness and healing, pain and ease, poverty and wealth, weakness and strength, death and life—all possible opposites, in which come forth the misery of man and the mercy of God—the weakness and shame of the one, and the strength and glory of the other.

But I am stopped at once. Some poor soul says, "What good is the glory of God to me? I tremble at it. Like the Israelite before the Mount, when the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke

thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, I exceedingly fear and quake. The glory of God is only misery to me. The devils believe and tremble. So do I; I do no more." Oh! but I will help you to do more. God has told me first to stop you. He says, "Do it with a little word. Say to all the fearful ones, to those who are condemning themselves without hope, say to them 'But.'"

Ah! then there is something coming—"My flesh and my heart faileth:" is not that to be my case in the end? God says, "Arrest their attention with that little word 'But.' They are listening now. They are expecting. Now teach them the words of life, and hope, and strength—tell every man who says, 'My flesh and my heart faileth,' that My New Year's gift to him is this. As He *must* say the *first* part of that verse, so He *may* say the *second*." It needs the prerogative of a king to authorise a man to say that "But": "Tell them that they may say it to-day, that they may say it over and over again all the year through, that they may say it as regards their bodies, and their souls, and their circumstances; the poor weak people entering another year of life, well knowing from the experience of the past years that they cannot tell what a year will bring forth, how much pain they may have to bear, or what difficulties they may have to go through, or what friends to lose, or what death to face—tell them I know that they say and feel that their flesh and their heart faileth, but tell them to-day that they are allowed to take Me for their God, and Father, and Friend, and Provider and Sustainer in the midst of all. They may say, 'God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.'"

Happy indeed are we if we believe this, and have not to be taught it by bitter experience. But, under any circumstances, let us look at it for a moment.

Now, what have we here? We have a double presentation of man, giving him in his completeness, such as it is, but that completeness incomplete; we have him and his resources, and those resources unequal to the strain put upon them.

Whenever you have flesh and blood spoken of in Scripture, it is always connected with corruption, or condemnation, or weakness, or something poor and wretched in some way. Although Christ's flesh had no sin in it, nor was it to see corruption, still it had its weakness and want, as well as ours.

"The flesh" has many meanings, or rather many phases with the same meaning; but it is ever a poor weak thing. It is hard exactly to define it, but in a general way, and for our purpose, we may call it "humanity," "human nature," the man in himself and by himself. All is weak, very weak. The body, with its mental and physical powers, and its strange nervous system in both, all go to make up this flesh.

It is this that is subject to all pain, vicissitude, depression, that can be touched by losses, loneliness, that lies open to the blast of every quarter, that shrinks, that winces, and succumbs, and that has no power of holding out even to the end; and that which should sustain it is weak too—*i.e.*, the heart. The heart is with us the short expression for energy and life and power. We talk of a man's having a brave heart, and a lion heart, and of keeping up a good heart, and we know that it is the spring, the engine, the supplier of human life. Energy, good spirits, all come from the heart; if it fails, all fails. And we have common sayings about the heart which fall in with this. We say, "My heart faileth me," "I felt as though my heart stopped," "He has no heart for it," "His heart is not in his work."

And here it is tried, and found wanting. The flesh is failing—fears and depressions of one kind and another are laying hold of it; and there is no bravery of spirit to enable the weak one to hold up—to hold out—to be cheery, and strong, and perhaps even defiant of evil. Without are fightings and within are fears; there is failure everywhere.

Now it is, if not with actually realised weakness like this, yet with the possibility of it, that every one of you have to face the future. You must meet it in the flesh—in that which is liable to be bruised and hurt by a thousand accidents, and at every point. You are not going into the New Year cased in armour, but rather stripped and bare; and let me give you some counsel about this. I know I might talk to you about what is called "muscular religion"—about the manliness of character which will meet with stoicism whatever may come. I might dress you up like Goliath of Gath, but your skull is not thicker, nor would your helmet be stronger, than his; and he sank down—a heap of helpless flesh and clattering brass under the stroke of a little stone. No; I am your best friend by showing you how to say, with the Apostle, "When I am weak, *then* am I strong," by teaching you how to face the future with that little word "But," as David faced Goliath with that little stone.

If any of you think that you are strong, and wish to continue thinking so, be it so; I have no message to you to-day except to tell you that you are foolish, and that you will find it out. The message to-day is to strengthen the weak knees and to comfort the feeble-hearted. And this is what you are to do. Have a deep belief in your vulnerability—*i.e.*, when you are lying open to the incoming of trouble at every pore—say to yourself, "I go forth into this year in the full consciousness that I may be sorely hurt in it. Oh, my heart winces—shrinks at the thought of how it would be with me if this and that were to happen." "This" and "That" I call it; but you know—each one for yourself—what.

Next: Do not try to be self-sustaining. Goliath was a very self-sustained, and complacent, and comfortable giant; but he came to grief. Repudiate that idea thoroughly. Say, "Lord, I *do* not, I *will* not, go into this year with any idea of holding myself up. My word is, 'Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.'" When you are expecting nothing from self, you will expect the more from God.

Further: Accept the situation in which you find

yourself with humility. Do not want to struggle out of it, or in it. Be quiet. "Be still, then, and know that I am God"; "in quietness and in confidence will be your strength." Say, "I enter the unknown future not trusting in philosophy, but in God. I cannot harden myself for what is coming. I must meet it in my natural weakness, but with God."

Accept the situation with intelligence. Beware of limitation of view—of one-sidedness. Let the coupler between you and the One mightier than you be screwed up tight. There may be a long road to be travelled—a great weight to be drawn; see that the connection will bear the strain, that it is complete.

Accept the situation with hope and faith. Say, "Though the outer man may decay, the inner one may be renewed day by day." Say, "I will be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." Say, "I will wait upon the Lord, and He will strengthen mine heart."

Face each opening day with this "But." It couples you to God. And what will God do for you?—you—the weak ones who look to Him?

He will do nothing for the strong ones, or those who think they are strong. If you elect to go in your own strength, He will let you get along as best you can. But if you have taken up the weak position, and said, as Hezekiah did, "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me," He will do much for you. He will leave the flesh as it is—consciously weak—liable to all that may befall it. In every sense it will still be true, "In me—that is, in my flesh—there dwelleth no good thing;" but He will strengthen your heart, not by making you philosophers, not by making you indifferent to trouble, but by coming Himself into your heart—by saying, "*I* am here"; by making you feel, "I have *God* with me."

And what does that mean? Why, this. *He* will make you brave if you have a sharp trouble to meet, or a long way to go, or a great temptation to overcome, or a great disappointment to endure, or a weary while to wait. Whatever we have to experience, or anticipate and fear, of all the sad things which make up the changes and chances of this mortal life, He will make us feel, "We have God with us, all-wise to direct, all-powerful to perform, all-loving to assure all good." He will show us, standing in the waters which would overwhelm us, an ark which will make us stand upon an heap; walking in the fires which would burn us, One like in form unto the Son of God.

Look, then, for nothing from yourself: from nothing nothing comes; there is nothing there. The heart of man is only "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." All that is to come is from outside. Want God; call to God; take God; then God will work *in* your heart and *through* your heart, and, whatever the year may have brought forth, beginning it with prayer, you will end it with praise. Your strengthened heart will speak and say, "My heart is inditing of a good matter; I will speak of the things which I have made unto the King." Perhaps, like David, you may be able to say, as you look back upon what you have been brought through, "My heart danceth for joy."

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

SILENT MONITORS.

A LESSON for us all is built in the stones of old buildings. Longfellow speaks of the belfry of Bruges as having been "thrice destroyed and thrice rebuilded," and still "watching o'er the town." Unlike in this are the generations of men, who live but once on this earth, and have only one chance of making life here a success. If old buildings like our cathedrals were alive, and could tell the things they witness from age to age, what a history of good and evil they could relate! "Soldiers," said Napoleon when in Egypt, "remember that sixty centuries are looking down upon you." He referred to the Pyramids, which had witnessed the deeds of sixty centuries, and were then looking down upon the bravery or cowardice of the French soldiers. Think of this, ye who do your work and take your pleasure near any building "old and brown."

THE BELFRY OF BRUGES.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRIFLES.

When a person wishes to do good, and works hard to do it in a sensible, thoughtful way, it is sad to see his or her efforts rendered comparatively fruitless by small things that we fancy ought not to affect the result in the least. They do so, however, because men and women are human beings, and not personifications of pure reason. The failure of a minister of the Gospel may be traced to a trifling matter,

such as a quaint mannerism, a coldness of address, or even to ungainly gestures and ill-fitting clothes. Ministerial and philanthropical life cannot be separated from private life. People are sure to think of them together, if not to confuse them, and it is therefore a duty to look to the merest trifles that may affect our work, not only in ourselves, but in our surroundings. The writer used to walk to a ragged school through slums with a fellow-teacher, a most excellent man. Unfortunately for his work, my excellent friend had a long and lugubrious face. To make matters worse, he wore a very long black coat. One day I told him that, if we continued to walk together to the school through those dismal slums, he must occasionally laugh. For the same reason, I appreciate the wisdom of a lady who is in the habit of visiting a hospital, and who said in my hearing not long ago, that when she went there she always put on her best and brightest clothes, because she rightly thought that anything ugly or shabby jars on the nerves of sick people. We may have the best intentions, but we shall do little or no good if we despise the day of small things.

NO COMMON PEOPLE.

Someone remarked in the hearing of Abraham Lincoln, when he was President of the United States, that he was quite a common-looking man. "Friend," he replied gently, "the Lord loves common-looking people best. That is why He has made so many of them." We read that the "common people" heard Jesus gladly. He made His teaching so plain and attractive to them that the uneducated masses fully understood, and appreciated it accordingly. Never, however, did the Saviour speak of His brothers and sisters as common people. He knew not only what was in man generally, but what was in each individual. He does not think of men in masses and crowds, but as individuals, each having a precious soul with joys and sorrows all its own, and a most interesting and quite unique life-history. "What God hath cleansed call not thou common." If there are any "common people," it is the thoughtless ones who use this phrase when speaking of others.

"HE 'S MY BAD LAD."

A friend of ours made some remark to a poor old woman about her son being rather wild. She burst into tears, and said, "Yes, he 's a bad lad," and then added, as explanation and apology for her concern, "But he 's *my* bad lad." So it is, only much more so, that our Heavenly Father thinks of us. Some of us are bad children, but we are *His* bad children.

GOOD LITERATURE SUPPLIED.

We know a parish where the average attendance of youths and men at a Bible-class is two hundred. Each member contributes as much as he can and is willing, and at Christmas the money is expended upon prizes of books for attendance. The books are got very cheaply, because a large order is given; and in this way good literature is circulated and a taste for collecting and reading good work cultivated.

LARGE IS OUR DEBT.

In the graveyard of the parish church (or rather two churches, for there are two under one roof) of Stirling, in Scotland, we lately copied from a tombstone, dated 1809, the following quaint lines:—

"Our life is but a winter day:
Some only breakfast and away;
Others to dinner stay,
And are full fed.
The oldest man but sups
And goes to bed.
Large is his debt
That lingers out the day;
He that goes soonest
Has the least to pay."

This old-fashioned way of looking at life as a gift for which we should be grateful is far more pious than our present fashion of patronising it and taking it up condescendingly. We do not bless God enough "for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life."

FRESHLY TURNED PAGES.

Preachers and other teachers have come to recognise more than ever that some of the most apt illustrations of Divine truth are to be drawn from the book of Nature. Foremost among teachers in this class is our contributor Dr. Hugh Macmillan, whose work in this direction is becoming a household word. Most appropriately, then, has he been called upon to write an introduction to "A Cyclopædia of Nature Teachings," which has just been published by Mr. Elliot Stock. The list of authors from whom quotations are made is very lengthy and very varied, and if it were not for the very complete classification of the work and its careful index, much of its value would have been lost by reason of the very wealth of matter which it contains. We ought, perhaps, to say that the book is made up entirely of quotations from various writers and publications, and the work of its editor has been confined to the proper and most useful arrangement of these quotations.—Many of our readers must remember Dr. Theodor Christlieb when he was German Pastor in London, although that is more than twenty years ago. Since then he filled the Chair of Theology at Bonn, and there he died some three years ago. We have before us a volume, published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, which is made up of a brief memoir of Dr. Christlieb, by his widow, and a selection of some nineteen sermons translated by Canons Kingsbury and Garratt. There was much in the life of the preacher to give special interest to this tasteful volume, though, even apart from this, the sermons are in themselves valuable.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORSE.

There is a story of a good man who, passing through a street in Paris, was deluged with boiling water from a window. Having wiped and dried himself as best he could, he tottered home. At the sad sight of his swollen and half-flayed face, his mother and his housekeeper cried out, "Good gracious! what did you do to the wretches?"—"I thanked them."—"Thanked them! And for what?"—"Because they had not thrown the saucepan; or, instead of scalding my head, they would have broken it." How much happier we should be, and how much more forgiving to others, if we cultivated this sort of disposition! Instead of doing so, however, we are always grumbling because we are not better off. And yet, whatever our condition is, it might be worse.

AS USEFUL AS PRETTY.

Flowers are beautiful, but they are useful also, as we are constantly being reminded. Bees know this, and we who eat their honey know it too. From early childhood we have been invited to observe the diligent habits of bees and their careful economy of time; but we would propose the flowers this time to our readers, especially young lady readers, as models of usefulness as well as prettiness. It is not from your highly cultivated, beautifully clothed, luxurious garden flowers that the bees get most honey, but from humble, hardy flowers growing on bleak moorlands.

"From humble, hardy flowers."

And this should teach us that, however hard and apparently unfavourable to usefulness our circumstances may be, we can, if we will, be serviceable to others. Everyone with sense admires the girl more who can add usefulness to prettiness. She is a flower of a girl.

BUSY IDLERS.

We lately heard a clergyman described as one who was busy everywhere except in his own parish. He used to preach and lecture away from home, attend all kinds of conferences, and generally keep himself before the public, while he left those few sheep that had been entrusted to him untended in the wilderness of a lonely country parish. Work, as well as charity, should begin at home. "Let the children first be fed," said Our Lord of His own nation; and it generally happens that those who work hardest and give most to home missions are the people who give most help to foreign missions.

"QUIVER" HEROES.

The bronze medal of THE QUIVER Heroes Fund was awarded in January last to Police-Constable Northcote, of Swansea, for a gallant act performed while he was on duty on November 28th of last year. Looking at a shop-window, he saw the proprietor of the establishment spill some oil on to his clothes in attempting to take down a hanging lamp. The oil immediately caught fire, and the tradesman would probably have lost his life had not the officer, with great presence of mind, promptly rushed into the shop and wrapped his cape round him. As this was only the latest of a series of gallant acts on the part of Constable Northcote, the case seemed to us to be one deserving of recognition. —On the 16th of January last a fishing-boat was seen approaching the shore at Southwold, Suffolk, at about half-past twelve o'clock on Saturday afternoon. The sea was breaking heavily on the shoal, and as the boat could not possibly have crossed it with safety, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's lifeboat *Quiver No. 2*, which was presented to the Institution by readers of THE QUIVER, put off to her assistance, and was the means of rescuing her crew, consisting of four men.

ALL ARE STRUGGLERS.

Lord Eldon speaks of being touched by the remark of a woman who was brought before him. Asked who she was, she replied, "I 'm an old struggler, yer honour!" That is what we all are, more or less, in the battle of life. May ours be the good fight which is inspired by faith in Jesus Christ, the Captain of our Salvation!

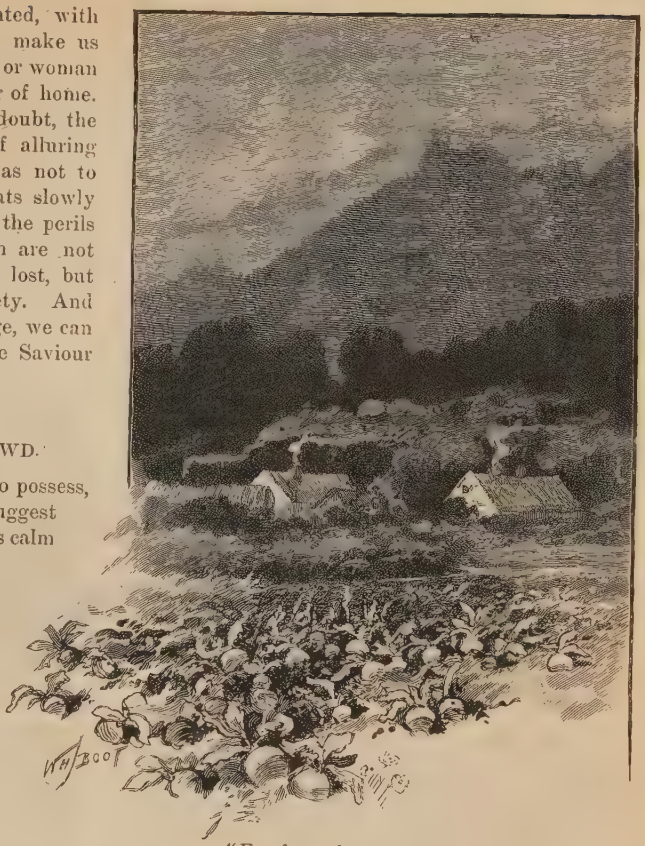
BEGINNING AND ENDING LIFE.

Often has life been compared to a river gliding surely if slowly and calmly past, or rushing along with troubled rapids; but when we see ships going in and out of harbour upon this river, we have an even more realistic picture of human life. The

craft sailing out of harbour, cleanly painted, with new sails, and in perfect trim generally, make us think of the strong, self-reliant young man or woman going out into the world from the harbour of home. They will fall in with the quicksands of doubt, the storms of sorrow, and the false lights of alluring temptation. Are they well equipped, so as not to make shipwreck of their faith? The boats slowly entering the harbour have been through the perils of the deep, and the marks left upon them are not few. Some have only just escaped being lost, but at last they are at the port of rest and safety. And so shall it be with us if, after life's voyage, we can enter the harbour of death feeling that the Saviour Himself is piloting us home.

"FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD."

The pictures we sometimes see, and love to possess, of cottages surrounded by hills and woods, suggest country scenes as sweet as the flowers and as calm and untroubled as the smoke that slowly curls up to heaven. One who visits places like these, "far from the madding crowd," if he himself lives in the bustle of a great city, cannot but be tempted to envy the peace and apparent absence of temptation enjoyed by its inhabitants. Alas! even in such a scene as this the human heart can invent evil, and the only way to escape temptations is, whether in country or town, to remember that we have a High Priest who Himself was tempted, and to go boldly, by Him, to the Throne of Grace.



"Far from the madding crowd."

HOW SOME FACTORY-GIRLS GAMBLE.

A correspondent writes:—"So prevalent is gambling becoming, that it is now practised to a large extent by factory-girls in the 'Black Country,' where I was lately visiting. My informant told me that many of these girls and women cannot read, either because when children they managed to escape the Board-schools, or because they have quite forgotten what they there learned. So they pay someone to read out of the papers the names of horses and other racing news, and bet from the information thus acquired. Working all day in factories, they have no opportunity of learning about domestic life. Hence the misery of their homes when they marry. Those who are trying to occupy their minds with something better than the chances of a race-horse winning are doing much-needed work."

FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS.

A gentleman once tried the experiment of raising a harvest from a single seed. He put a pickle of wheat into the ground; it sprang up and yielded two full ears. The next year he planted the corn of these two ears, and had, as the result, nearly a bushel of shelled corn. This he planted again, and broad acres of large yellow ears at length rewarded his patient toil. One of the commonest kinds of wheat now is what is called "mummy-wheat." It all sprang from a few grains of wheat that were found in the hand of an Egyptian mummy. The reproductive power of sin is not less than this. One lie or act of deceit produces fifty or a hundred. You sow an evil deed, and it is almost impossible to calculate the amount of wickedness and misery that will grow out of it.

USEFUL LESSONS.

History and geography, it is only a truism to say, must always play an important part in our educational systems. When the first two parts of Dr. S. R. Gardiner's "Student's History of England" were published by Messrs. Longmans, we spoke with approval of them in these columns. We have now to chronicle the completion of this work, and the issue, not only of the third volume, but also of a complete and very compact single-volume edition, in a form which makes it stronger and more convenient than the three smaller volumes. A handy history of our country from so competent a hand as Dr. Gardiner's must always be valuable, but this Student's History

is made even more serviceable by the addition of nearly 400 illustrations and a very thorough index. This is a work which ought to lighten the labours of teachers and pupils alike.—Great as have been the improvements in the means for teaching history, we doubt whether even greater advances have not been made in the teaching of geography. Here, for instance, is Mr. Arnold Forster's "This World of Ours" (Cassell and Co.), which is described in its sub-title as "An Introduction to the Study of Geography." Of course the work is for use among scholars much younger than those addressed by Dr. Gardiner's work, and it is equally calculated to arouse an intelligent interest in its subject-matter. Mr. Arnold Forster leads his scholars step by step through a succession of object-lessons which are always effective and sometimes entertaining.

AN IDEAL OF LIFE.

Here is a poetic gem which is as edifying as it is polished in execution and exquisite in sentiment :—

"On parent knees, a naked, new-born child,
Weeping, thou sat'st, whilst all around thee smiled.
So live that, sinking in thy last long sleep,
Calm thou may'st smile, when all around thee weep."

FINDING A CAREER.

To everyone his work, is the rule in God's spiritual house. There was a poor cabman's widow away in a city of the grey north who understood this not as a theory but as an active principle in life. Her means were narrow ; she seemed to have few opportunities of usefulness. But she was bent on finding ways to do good. One day she saw a wee street-waif loitering at a corner, and a simple but noble idea came to her. The lad was lonely, like herself. He, perhaps, had no parents, as she had no son. Could she not give him shelter, and wean him from the perils of the streets, and guide his feet into a path of steady industry ? The effort was worth making. And love had led this generous woman to a career of valuable service. Soon she had half a dozen homeless boys under her wise and motherly protection. They found situations, and their earnings went into a common fund, out of which they were all maintained. The balance was allotted, proportionately, to the young owners week by week, and they were trained and encouraged in practices of thrift. Upright men were shaped out of unpromising materials. The poor widow's kindly thought grew into a ministry rich in blessing, both to herself and to others. Finding a career in the field of benevolence is, after all, more a question of will and purpose than of propitious circumstances.

BE A BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION.

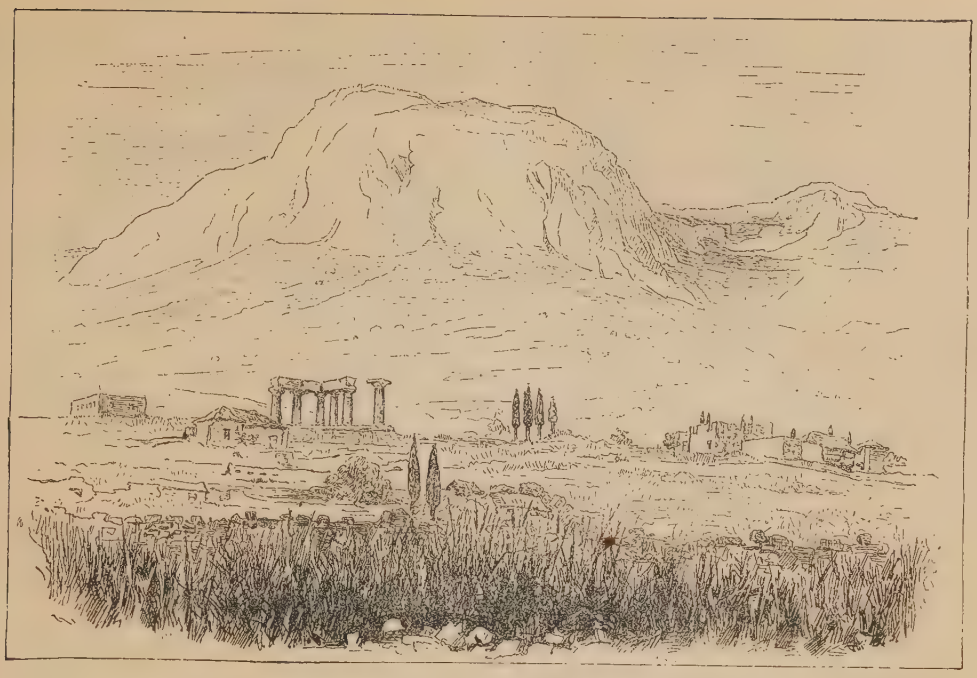
The following is told in the Life of Mrs. Lynam, an American lady. There was much conversation about a certain Mr. Robbins, who had lately died: he had been such a benefactor, such a good man, and so on. A visitor asked, "Did Mr. Robbins found a benevolent institution ?"—"No," was the reply, "he himself was a benevolent institution." We commend this to the attention of those who wish to be useful, but who think that doing good is a luxury that can only be indulged in by the rich. Be yourself a benevolent institution. Let the sunshine of your cheerfulness gladden every room you enter. Be sympathetic, and desire to make all whom you meet a little better and a little happier, and you will soon be surprised how much in the way of benevolence can be done without money.

THE PLEA THAT PREVAILED.

There are bright spots on the dark pages of war. They are found where kindliness overpowers enmity ; and as we see the true glory of a good and generous act in contrast with the glitter of military fame, we learn how to make any life beautiful. Ney was one of Napoleon's greatest marshals, but the stern work of the battlefield did not drive gentleness and pity out of his heart. Young Napier—afterwards General Sir Charles—was a prisoner of war, with his fate in Ney's hands. He was believed by his relatives to be dead, but several months after his capture the Government was induced to send out and ascertain the truth. Under a flag of truce messengers came to Ney's headquarters. "Let him see his friends," said Ney, "and tell them he is well, and well treated." The officer who had charge of the visitors did not stir. On the other hand, discipline did not permit him to say without further invitation what was in his mind. Ney's features began to relax. "Why do you wait ?" he asked. His manner gave the officer courage. "Mr. Napier has an old mother —a widow and blind." The marshal's face lit up with a kindly smile. "Has he ? Let him go, then, and tell her himself that he is alive."

"OLD CORINTH—NOTHING!"

"Rather more than a year ago," writes a frequent contributor to our pages, "I passed Corinth on my way from Patras to Athens. Stopping to see the town, I was much disappointed with it. It is a small, run-up place, built since the last political explosion in the country, with houses all the same size, and nothing picturesque about them. Asking about the ancient city, I was told that nothing remained of it except six pillars, and that the site was some miles away. The inhabitants of the dusty, uninteresting successor of that ancient Corinth which was built of 'gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble,' cannot understand why anyone should care to visit the site of the old city. Those whom I consulted said, speaking a little French, a little English, a little Greek, and a good deal of shoulder-and-hand language, 'Old Corinth nothing ; only six pillars left, and a great hill to climb' (the Acrocorinthus, as represented in the accompanying sketch). Little do the modern



THE SITE OF CORINTH.

Corinthians know of the pillar of the Church, for whose sake I wished to see these six pillars of stone which remain to mark the place to which St. Paul addressed the two Epistles to the Corinthians."

BOOKS TO HAVE AT HAND.

Readers of THE QUIVER cannot have forgotten Miss Agnes Hedenström (as she used to be named before her marriage with Mr. Welin) and her work in connection with the Sailors' Temperance Home at the East End. They will therefore be interested in the sketches from real life which she has issued through the National Temperance Publication Depôt, under the title of "Driftwood."—To Messrs. Nisbet's series of "Men with a Mission" the Rev. J. J. Ellis has added a volume on "Thomas Cromwell." Mr. Ellis has made his pages very bright by means of a varied selection of anecdotes.—In another of their series, "The Scripture Handbooks," Messrs. Nisbet have issued a volume on "The Book of Common Prayer," intended as a manual for the use of candidates who are to be examined upon the book and its contents. The author of this handbook is the Rev. H. McNeile, formerly Inspector of Religious Knowledge in the Diocese of Manchester. To teachers in want of help in this direction we commend this volume, with which we may perhaps fittingly couple a manual for teachers and students on "The Church Catechism, its History and Contents," just published by Messrs. Longmans. Its author is the Rev. J. C. Allen, late principal of the Chester Diocesan Training College. From the writer's point of view the book is admirable.—Mr. Charles Cook, a London evangelist, has devoted considerable time for many years to the study of crime, criminals, and convicts. This gives a special value to the second edition of his book on "The Prisons of the World" (Morgan and Scott), which has just been issued with a brief introductory chapter by Mr. Spurgeon. The second volume of "Cassell's Storehouse of General Information" carries on the work from "Beast" to "Castro" on equally thorough lines as the first volume.—We have also to acknowledge the receipt of "Tim Teddington's Shoes" (*Home Words* Office); "The National Temperance League's Annual, 1892" (National Temperance Publication Depôt); "The Lepers of Our Indian Empire" (John F. Shaw and Co.); "The Church's Seasons, and other Verses" (Longmans and Co.).

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON.

As this number of THE QUIVER was being printed the sad news reached us of the death of Mr. Spurgeon on the last day of January. He was in his fifty-eighth year, and had been residing at Mentone for some weeks at the time of his death. It is, of course, impossible for us to give our readers anything in the nature of a biography of the late pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. And, indeed, it is hardly necessary, for in November, 1888 (page 13 of volume xxiv. of THE QUIVER) we gave a report of an interview which our Special Commissioner

had had with the great preacher. In that interview he spoke very freely of his work and his methods. What his work was then, it continued to be until health failed him, and his last recorded thoughts were of his devoted wife, and the congregation for which he had been enabled to do so much. A touching incident in his last illness was Mr. Spurgeon's sending of a deeply sympathetic telegram to the Prince of Wales on the occasion of his son's death. Though many were anxious for him at that time, few thought that the great preacher would so soon be called to follow the young prince whose loss he mourned. His wonderful fund of sympathy with all classes was one great keynote of his ministry, though undoubtedly its greatest and truest was that which he himself gave as the title for our commissioner's interview with him—"Firmness of Faith." To that his life-work was witness, and of that "he being dead yet speaketh," though thousands will miss his kindly presence.

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from December 23rd, 1891, up to and including January 22nd, 1892. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver*" *Waifs:* A Glasgow Mother (21st donation), 1s.; Mrs. Steele, Shotts, 5s.; Anon, Malvern Link, 2s. 6d.; E. Rogers, Camelford, 6s.; A. A. A., Northallerton, 2s.; S. S. W., Birmingham, 6d.; An Old Subscriber, 10s.

For *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts:* A Well-wisher, 10s.

For *The Aged Christian Society:* An Old Subscriber, 10s.

For *The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children:* A Friend, 5s.

Dr. Barnardo asks us to acknowledge the receipt of the following amounts towards the Funds of his Homes: Falkirk, £10; C. J. H., 5s.; Clytie, 10s.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

49. Quote words of the prophet Isaiah in which he foretells that Christ would be born of the royal house of David.

50. In what way does Isaiah set forth the manner of Christ's death and burial?

51. Our blessed Lord spoke of the impossibility of the failure of His words, saying, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Quote a similar passage from Isaiah.

52. Quote a passage from Isaiah in which he foretells the coming of John the Baptist.

53. Under what similitude does Isaiah speak of Christ as supplying the spiritual needs of the whole human race?

54. The prophet Isaiah speaks of the Gospel as coming to mankind through the Jews. In what way is this referred to in the New Testament?

55. What is the special teaching of the first Psalm?

56. In what words is the progress of sin noted in the first Psalm?

57. What similitude is used to denote the instability of a sinful life, and the liability of the sinner to be driven from one sin to another?

58. Who is mentioned in the New Testament as the author of the second Psalm?

59. What is meant by the expression "Kiss the son, lest he be angry"?

60. What is the general idea of the second Psalm?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 319.

37. He burnt the roll of the prophecy which God instructed Jeremiah to write. (Jer. xxxvi. 23.)

38. That it contained an account of the destruction of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, and of the captivity of the people. (Jer. xxxvi. 29.)

39. He allowed the Princes twice to put Jeremiah into a filthy dungeon. (Jer. xxxvii. 15, 16; and xxxviii. 5, 6.)

40. The king commanded his servants to give Jeremiah daily "a piece of bread out of the bakers' street." (Jer. xxxvii. 21.)

41. He proclaimed liberty to the people, and covenanted that every Hebrew slave should be set free. (Jer. xxxiv. 8, 9.)

42. By Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian slave, to whom God promised a safe deliverance at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. (Jer. xxxviii. 11—13; and xxxix. 15—18.)

43. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." (Ps. xxxiv. 19.)

44. Because he had broken the oath of allegiance which he had most solemnly made to Nebuchadnezzar. (Jer. xxxix. 6, 7; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13.)

45. For eighteen months, during which time the horrors of the siege were most terrible. (Jer. xxxix. 1, 2; Lam. iv. 3—10.)

46. From the words of the prophet Ezekiel: "The prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth; they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with his eyes." (Ezek. xii. 12.)

47. "Ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God." (Ezek. xxxvi. 28.)

48. The vision of "the resurrection of the dry bones." (Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14.)

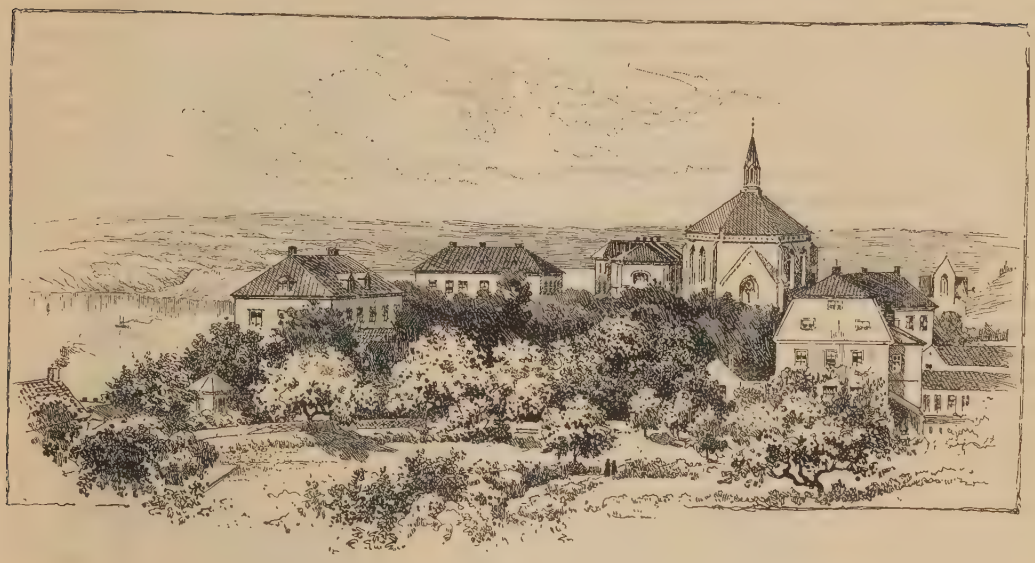
[*Drawn by* PERCY FARRANT.]

OUR SILVER WEDDING.

(*See p.* 462.)

SOME INTERESTING SWEDISH INSTITUTIONS.

BY THE COUNTESS OF MEATH.



DEACONESSES' INSTITUTION.

FOR some months an obstinate cold had taken possession of me. The doctor's recommendation was to try the effect of a sea-voyage—not an unpleasant prescription for summer-time, especially when it could be combined with a visit to Norway and Sweden—lands which I had long wished to see. It was during the time that we were, for the most part, coasting round these countries that we had an opportunity of seeing the Queen of those realms. It came about in such a peculiar way that perhaps readers will forgive me if, previous to writing about institutions in Stockholm, I pause to tell them of an interview which we had with this royal lady, whose Christian benevolence is well known.

Before visiting Norway, we had originally intended to go to Sweden, but a delay, caused by illness, led to our reversing our route. The Princess Wied, sister to the Queen, who had shown us great kindness and hospitality in the previous year, had sent us a message, through a mutual acquaintance, to the effect that on arriving in Stockholm we were to leave our cards on the lady-in-waiting. Owing to the delay in reaching the Swedish capital, we expected it to be almost deserted by the upper classes, and, hearing that the Queen was living near Christiania, on our arrival at the Norwegian capital we determined to seek out her residence.

Accordingly, one fine summer's day we set out on our expedition. In due time the train brought us to the station at which we had been told to alight. The "carriage" which the hotel porter had ordered to meet us was there awaiting our arrival, but a most queer specimen of a vehicle it was—a sort of country cart with two leather-covered benches, and drawn by a strong white pony. The "coachman" was a little urchin in waistcoat and shirt-sleeves; his age was possibly nine or ten. There was but one other conveyance at the wayside station, and this a cariole to hold one, and probably ordered by somebody else; so we had no choice, but humbly took our places on the back seat behind our diminutive driver, after having requested the station-master to tell him where to drive us. Our knowledge of the Norwegian tongue was *nil*, but with the word "slot" (palace) we were familiar; therefore, when we were being taken a route which looked to us most unlike the right one, we used the monosyllable "slot" with emphasis, but apparently with little satisfactory result, as the boy only laughed and drove on. However, we became more hopeful when we got on to a better road, and noticed some farm-buildings, with a little summer-house close by, thinking that probably the royal residence was near at hand. What, however, was our surprise when our driver suddenly turned the pony sharp round and drove us straight up to one of the farm-buildings, in the porch of which two ladies were sitting, one of whom, for all we knew, might have been the Queen herself. It was a very awkward moment, and I am glad that there was no occasion for me to be spokeswoman—shyness might have got the better of me—for Lord Meath explained our errand to the younger lady, who came forward. He

stated that we wished to leave cards on the lady-in-waiting, and to write our names in the royal book.

We then learnt that we were addressing the lady in question—that the Queen was living *incognita*, and had no book for visitors; so we discovered that our surmises had been accurate, and that we, unwittingly, had thrust ourselves into the presence of royalty in a way which might have appeared very offensive. We retired to a more respectful distance, whilst we endeavoured to explain matters more freely, but unfortunately the lady had not heard that we had been expected in Stockholm. We were retreating another way, somewhat crestfallen, with our coatless charioteer prepared to follow us, when she came running to say that the Queen wished to see us. When once we were ushered into the modest abode where this royal lady, who was in delicate health, was resting after the fatigues of a Court life, all cause for awkwardness came to an end. The Queen was as kind and gracious as possible. She said that she had expected us at Stockholm, and regretted that it did not lie in her power to make our stay in that city agreeable to us, the season being quite over. Hearing however, that we wished to see something of its institutions, she kindly gave instructions that the gentleman who acts in the capacity of chamberlain, and who was then living close to Stockholm, should be written to, as he would be likely to be of assistance to us. I need not detain my readers with any further account of the interview, except to tell them that after tea had been served a carriage came round, and the Queen sent us out for a drive. The conveyance was a novel one to us—a kind of oval-shaped wagonette, with seats all round, so that those who drive in it can sit forwards and backwards, as well as sideways. This handsome carriage, with a pair of magnificent horses, and a coachman in cocked hat, and with livery richly trimmed with silver lace, formed a curious contrast to the country cart and its coatless boy driver, but in some ways the latter conveyance was better fitted for the narrow roads and heavy hills of the district. We were accompanied by the lady- and gentleman-in-waiting, who were Norwegians, and it was a great treat to be able to converse with them, as during our previous excursions we found the disadvantage of not being able to get information on account of lack of knowledge of the language generally spoken. We were set down at the station, and soon the train was whirling us back to Christiania. We had a good laugh at our adventures, and were full of gratitude to the gracious lady who had known how to throw a veil over the unintentional rudeness of two benighted foreigners.

A few days later we arrived in Stockholm, to find that the chamberlain had already called at our hotel; and next morning he came again, full of kind plans for our entertainment. We could not possibly have had a better escort. He was a man much interested in philanthropic work, and his position at Court rendered him a well-known personage, and doors could be opened for him which would remain closed to others. First of all, he took us in one of the charming little steamers which ply up and down Lake Mälar, to see Drottningholm, a palace where the royal family reside in summer-time. It is beautifully situated; on one side it faces the lake, on the other a park, with a long avenue of trees down the centre of it. The palace contains very handsome apartments, which we inspected, and then returned to be entertained at luncheon at a restaurant at Mosebacke, a district of Stockholm, which stands on a height commanding a grand view of the town. It can be reached by a lift which goes up perpendicularly from the level below, and is connected by a wooden bridge to the top of the hill. Thus, by paying a very small sum, people are spared a long and toilsome climb. Our

REFUGE HOME.

repast over, we drove off to see the institutions. The first was on a magnificent scale, and it boasted of a very long Norwegian name. I gathered that it meant

THE KING OF SWEDEN.

(*From a photograph by Gösta Florman, Stockholm.*)

"General Refuge and Home for Children." The building was erected by the municipality of Stockholm; it is also supported by the town, and, judging from its size and excellent appointments, the townspeople of Stockholm are anxious that no expense should be spared in order that the destitute and forlorn children of the town should be well cared for. The little ones are received from the very tender age of one fortnight, some even younger. The wing which we first visited was devoted to the care of infants. As there are so many babies and also a large number of delicate children, two resident physicians are employed to take charge of them, besides the nurses. Mothers are often received with their infants. The whole institution seemed to be better adapted for the needs of young and weakly rather than for those of more robust children; indeed, as they grow older they are boarded out: a system which I was told had not always succeeded. My informant seemed to think that sufficient supervision had not invariably been exercised. The laundry-work was carried on by machinery. The kitchen appointments were also on a grand scale, and much to the credit of this town-supported thing. There is, however, but little doubt that children, as a rule, are better provided for in small homes than in gigantic institutions. This one in Stockholm is especially useful, on account of the care which can be given to weakly little ones.

Our next visit was to the Sophiehemmet (Sophia Home), which owes its name and origin to the Queen of Sweden. She and her royal husband built this splendid institution, which stands in grounds of its own, and overlooking the Djürgarten, which is thought to be one of the most beautiful parks belonging to any European city. This home was designed as a training-school for nurses, but practically it is a hospital for paying patients, where, for a reasonable charge, they can receive every care and attention. The sick who are thus provided for are divided into two classes. Persons in good circumstances, and desirous of having a separate room, are required to pay seven kroner a day (a kroner is a little over one shilling in value), or four kroner if they are willing to share a room with another person. This charge is made for lodging, food, and nursing, but not, as a rule, for medical attendance or medicines. The second-class patients pay only three and a half kroner, and some only one and a half kroner, which usually includes the doctor's services and drugs.

The richer patients are generally those who have to undergo operations, and who secure the services of their own surgeon. The operation-room was pointed out to us, but I did not go into a place with such gruesome associations. I was glad to discover that unfortunate patients who have to enter what must needs be to them a chamber of horrors are previously put under the influence of anæsthetics in a room adjoining—a piece of humanity which, I fear, is not often practised in England.

One of the principal features of the Sophiehemmet building lies in the delightful corridors, which are sufficiently wide to permit of convalescents lying in them on their couches. Here they can receive visits from their friends, or sit reading, writing, and admiring the pleasant view of the "Djürgarten." Out of doors the eye can rest in summer-time upon verdure, whilst inside there is beauty too, to be found in the growing plants which adorn these cheerful passages. Noises

THE QUEEN OF SWEDEN.

(*From a photograph by Gösta Florman, Stockholm.*)

which might disturb patients in their rooms are kept away from them by means of double doors.

We looked into one of the apartments for first-class

patients. It was comfortable enough, only there was a bare look about it, owing to a lack of carpet and hangings, which, I fancy, in these days of germ terrors, are disapproved of by medical men. We visited another room, fitted up for the reception of two patients, which looked much cosier. Its furniture was given by Prince Carl, the third son of the king, and his portrait adorned the walls. Second-class patients can have a room to themselves on payment of 3 kr. 50 (about three shillings and tenpence).

The lady-superintendent was most kind in giving us verbal information and also Norwegian literature about the institution, but the latter was comparatively of very little service, though a knowledge of German enabled us to understand a few words. She has an apartment of the cosiest description near the entrance. At the back of the building stands a second and most important one. It is the Nurses' Home. The good women here lodged were, I was led to understand, ladies by birth, and inspired by high motives in undertaking a laborious life likely to become tedious, if not loathsome to them, unless they were animated by a sincere desire of doing good. If the welfare of the patients has been considered, so, too, has the comfort of the nurses. They have cosy little bedrooms and a cheery sitting-room. A lady presides over this establishment, who is known as the House-sister. This building was erected by money given by private individuals, and by the proceeds of a bazaar, in which the Crown Princess of Sweden took a leading part. We learnt that there was a staff of sixty-four nurses and probationers. Of the former, there are fourteen always available for cases outside of the hospital, and sometimes a larger number can be spared. At present they only attend patients who can afford to pay for their services (the institution charges 3 kr. 25 a day—*i.e.*, about three shillings and sixpence), but it is the wish of the Queen—who, as the originator of the hospital, naturally takes the deepest interest in it—that the staff of nurses should be increased, so that poor as well as rich may be provided for outside of the "Sophiehemmet." We noticed this royal lady's portrait hung up against the walls, and it was very evident that she was much appreciated. The Sister said that she thought there were few queens like her own. This institution has already provided several hospitals with nurses. It is under the management of a small committee of ladies and gentlemen. Her Majesty herself presides at the quarterly meetings, and I was told that she performs her task very ably. She chose the mottoes and texts which adorn the walls. There is one which meets the eye on entering—"All to the glory of God." If the workers are inspired by this principle, there will be little wonder if for long, long years the Sophiehemmet proves a blessing to many.

We ended up our afternoon's drive by the inspection of a mechanical gymnastic establishment, owned and conducted by a medical man. It is well that there were no patients to be operated upon, otherwise our gravity might have been sadly upset in witnessing the way in which they allow themselves to be shaken about, and their limbs twisted and twirled in various directions, by means of these mechanical contrivances. It seemed a strange and somewhat lazy way of getting exercise, but doubtless it was valuable in the case of those who, having discovered the weakness of particular muscles, were thus enabled to have them strengthened.

The next day, armed with the visiting-card of our kind friend, we inspected another institution. On the way we experienced something of the courtesy displayed by the Swedes to strangers, as well as to one another. We were in search of the Deaconesses' Homes, and we knew that they were in the neighbourhood of St. Catherina Kyrke. We found the poor church in a most forlorn condition; the seats had been all taken away, and workmen had taken possession of the building. At the door we saw a woman, and asked her the way to the institution. At first she did not seem to understand what we wanted, but afterwards she made a sign for us to follow. On and on she went, and we had serious doubts if we were being taken to the right place, until at last she pointed to a big gate. We could not even thank her properly for giving up so much of her time, but I hope that smiles and isolated words conveyed to her that which our tongues could not express, and that she understood that we appreciated her kindness.

Inside the gates were a number of buildings, standing on one of the highest spots in all Stockholm. The views were consequently splendid. A girl went into one of the houses with our card, and presently a deaconess came who could speak German fairly well, and also a little English. Her pleasant face was encircled by a white cap of spotted muslin, tied under the chin with strings of the same material. Her dress was a dark stuff one. She had been in Germany, at Pastor von Bodelschwingh's institutions at Bielefeld, and, if I remember right, she had also been at Mildmay. The deaconesses live together in the first house we visited, which contains a large room where meetings are held. Next to this building stands the hospital, where both men and women are tended. I noticed some fine oil-colour paintings of sacred subjects hung up against the walls of one of the wards; and here, too, was a pulpit, as service is sometimes held in this apartment. What struck me as being particularly charming were two little rooms with glass on three sides of them. The hospital stands on the very top of what might be almost considered a rocky precipice, commanding a magnificent view of the arm of the Baltic, which for miles and miles stretches up to the place where the most picturesque of cities, Stockholm, is built. The patients are brought to these little rooms during the day, and one poor woman was lying in one of them, whose thin wan face made one think that she would not long be able to gaze on a scene of so much beauty. Perhaps the lovely landscape reminded her of that far-off country which she seemed to be rapidly approaching. Ships came and went down the broad expanse of water which led to the great sea beyond, and she seemed to be drifting very near to a great sea—the Ocean of Infinite Love. She had a foretaste of it in the kindness shown her by the deaconesses, for as we were standing near, our guide stooped

down, took the invalid's hand in friendly fashion, and spoke soothing words.

Twenty patients are received, mostly for a small payment, but some free. Close at hand was a Home for Aged Deaconesses whose infirmities incapacitated them from work. Three other buildings remained to be visited. One was a refuge for children who had been exposed to bad influences. Girls up to the age of seventeen were received. Older persons used to be welcomed here, but the practice was discontinued, as the deaconesses found it impossible to let them associate with the younger ones. One of the girls was engaged in carpet-making when we entered. Seated at a loom, with shuttle in hand, she was weaving bits of comparatively worthless material (after it had been torn or cut into strips) into good serviceable drugget. The work thus accomplished was somewhat emblematic of that done in this Refuge by the deaconesses for their charges in this Home. Some of their faces—poor children!—seemed to tell of past neglect and of low origin, and the good women have enough to do to strive to make out of such rough material that which may become in after-years good and useful.

The next establishment we saw was an abode where young girls are trained to become domestic servants, and they have to work away as busily as bees, learning to clean, sew, cook, etc. We had not much time to spare, but hurried on to take a hasty glance at one more building, another Home for Children. These had far brighter faces than the girls whom we had seen in the Refuge. A charming little garden was attached to this house; it had a leafy bower in it, where the young folks could have their meals on hot days sheltered from the fierce beams of the summer sun. There were swings for the children, which doubtless could tell a tale of much enjoyment. Our inspection was over, and after a little more talk with the kind deaconess we took leave. We learnt that for twenty-seven years she had devoted herself to her mission of mercy. Her life probably had been an uneventful one, going on year after year in its even tenor, but all the while she doubtless had been giving support to the weak, comfort to the sick, solace to the dying. Was she to be envied? Surely; for unselfish labour of whatever kind, be it done in the humblest cottage, in a king's palace, or in a charitable institution, is grand. We may well regard it with admiration. Thinking of a career like this, Carlyle's words seem to be most appropriate: "Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness."

HOME FOR AGED DEACONESSES.

THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS.

BY FAY AXTENS.

CHAPTER XXI.

A WEEK later there was a grand dinner-party at Lawley Manor, to which the Hardys were, as a matter of course, invited. Rosamond looked forward to the day with feverish anxiety, for she had received no word or message from Dick in reply to her letter, and had seen him only once, and then in Anthony's presence, since that evening at Carsthorpe Rectory. She was naturally desirous to know how the news she had communicated to him had affected him, and what course he meant to pursue. Her first idea was that he would take the very earliest opportunity of showing that Anthony's disapproval of his conduct was a matter of very small moment, and that he did not intend to be interfered with. She felt confident, at any rate, that such love as his would not allow itself to be easily set aside, and, though he might refrain from open attentions, he would find some means of conveying to her his plans for the future. His long silence, however, baffled her. Was it possible that he meant quietly to withdraw his claims, to leave Anthony in possession of his rights, and, in short, to have nothing more to do with her? The idea was not by any means pleasing to Rosamond. She herself had no thought of tamely submitting to Anthony's unreasonable demands, and if *he* meant to do so, surely it was a proof that his affection for her was nothing more than empty talk. Reflections such as these easily led up to the searching question, What was to be the end of it all? Rosamond did not know; but an indefinable prompting within her, hardly recognisable as conscience, so encrusted was it with the artificialities of her outward life, told her that the end she desired was one she scarcely liked to look plainly in the face.

In the meantime, she avoided as much as possible any chance of further conversation with Anthony. As far as outward appearance went, their relations remained the same; but Anthony no longer sought her society, or made any effort to arouse her interest or engage her attention. His manner was, as usual, kind and affectionate, but he seemed day by day to grow even graver and more preoccupied—partly, perhaps, on account of business, which now engrossed a good deal of his attention and involved frequent visits to town. He never could make up his mind, however, to make inquiries of Rosamond concerning Claydon, and, as she never asked him any questions, he did not think it necessary to volunteer any information. As for Rosamond, she suddenly conceived a strong affection for Lady Lawley, whose society now became indispensable. She spent long mornings with her in the gardens and conservatories, or wiled away idle hours over chit-chat or fancy-work in that lady's boudoir. She declined all Will's invitations to outdoor recreation, and snubbed him to such an extent that Anthony, remembering what he had said, often felt quite uncomfortable.

When Richard Hardy entered the drawing-room on the evening of the dinner, one glance at Rosamond's face was enough to show him how matters stood. He was well aware that his silence had caused her a good deal of mental perturbation, and his practised eye discovered in a moment—by the haughty pose of her fair head, the studied carelessness and indifference in her manner, and her careful avoidance of anything beyond a mere recognition—the inward tumult and excitement she endeavoured thus to conceal.

He made no effort to speak to her before dinner, as she was surrounded by other guests; but afterwards, when the gentlemen rejoined the ladies in the drawing-room, Richard made his way without any hesitation to a curtained recess, where Rosamond, looking as lovely as ever in a gown of the palest blue, sat gracefully waving her feathered fan, and giving her languid attention to a somewhat lengthy anecdote which Lady Gayworthy was telling of the triumphs of her youth. The faintest tinge of pink dyed her cheek as Dick sauntered up in his easy way, drew up a chair, and made a third in the conversation. She glanced hastily round the room, and caught Anthony's gaze, which she returned with one of steady defiance.

Dick, however, seemed in no way embarrassed. He addressed most of his conversation to the elder lady, who appeared very well pleased with his attentions. Presently he expressed a wish to look at Rosamond's fan, expressing great admiration for the workmanship. When he returned it to her, she noticed that, in furling it, he had left a tiny slip of paper therein. She abstracted it quickly, with a guilty blush, and, as soon as an opportunity occurred, she rose and made her way to the other side of the room, with a fast-beating heart, leaving Dick still deep in conversation with the voluble dowager.

Anthony, noticing the movement, gave a great sigh of relief. Perhaps, after all, in spite of her high-handed protestations, she really did care for him too much to willingly wound his feelings, and, by thus leaving Dick, meant probably to show her readiness to submit to his wishes. Apparently Richard also interpreted the action somewhat in the same way, for he made no further attempt to engage her attention. Rosamond, who, wherever she went, always was—and, indeed, expected to be—the cynosure of all eyes, soon became the centre of attraction at the piano. She possessed a clear, sweet voice of rare compass, and having had the advantage of a thorough musical education, was an accomplished vocalist as well as instrumentalist. Although Anthony did not always admire her choice of songs, the style of music she affected being chiefly operatic, which did not appeal

"Expressing great admiration for the workmanship."—*p.* 408.

to his sympathies, he invariably felt pleased and proud when he saw how she delighted her audience. In his own way he shared her triumphs and partook of her success.

It was a long, long time since Anthony had spent so thoroughly enjoyable an evening as this. He seemed quite light-hearted again, and almost forgot his troubles. Presently, in turning away from the piano to make way for a bevy of ladies, who had been attracted thither from the conservatory at the far end of the apartment, he caught sight of Felicia sitting by herself a little apart from the rest. One by one the group, that had been gathered round, had drifted away, but she had not cared to follow. Her attitude struck him as unusual. She was leaning back against the cushions of her low chair; her head, turned slightly on one side, rested against the wall; her hands were folded listlessly on her lap; her eyes, half-closed, gazed dreamily into vacancy, and her whole expression was one of weariness and abstraction, as if she scarcely knew where she was, or cared what she did. A feeling of new interest came over Anthony as he looked at her. His first impulse was a longing to possess her confidence, an earnest desire to render the help or sympathy she seemed to need, but he hesitated to intrude his society upon her, fearing lest he should disturb or annoy her. Whilst he stood thus irresolute, she turned her head and glanced at him. The look was magnetic. He moved at once to her side.

"I am afraid you are feeling the heat, Miss Hardy?" he said, flinging further open the window behind him.

"No—I don't think so—thank you," she answered slowly, as if wakening from a dream.

"You don't feel faint?"

"Oh, no; not at all. What makes you ask?"

A curious little smile began to flicker about the corners of her lips as she looked at him. She had, in reality, been experiencing that sensation of icy coldness which people of a delicately sensitive organisation often feel amid gay surroundings when their hearts are out of harmony with gaiety, but now it seemed as if the warm congenial sun had risen, and her pulses began to beat again with the quick motions of life.

"It is a sultry night, and the rooms are rather crowded," said Anthony, trying to shake himself free from the strange magnetism in which this new mood of hers seemed to hold him. Never before had he been so conscious that Felicia was beautiful. "I thought you looked tired."

She smiled, and turned her head aside.

"The music set me thinking."

"If your thoughts were pleasant, I am sorry I disturbed you."

"They were not pleasant, and you did not disturb me." she replied gravely.

They were silent for a few moments, for Rosamond had begun to sing, and each thought the other wanted to listen.

"Will *you* sing now, Miss Hardy? I wish you would," said Anthony, when the song was ended.

"Oh, no," she said, "I could not."

"But you can. I know you can, because I have heard you."

"Yes, in private. But I never care to at these large parties. I would always rather hear Rosamond; and there are plenty of other people to relieve her when she gets tired. My accomplishments are of a very homely character, you know."

"No, indeed I don't know, Miss Hardy, and I wonder you can venture on such a statement. You sing quite as well as Rosamond, though I don't think you practise so much; and you paint beautifully as well. Have you ever finished the 'Waterfall'?"

"No," said Felicia; "that will never be finished. It is a thing of the past."

"You mean your interest in it has evaporated."

"Yes; that is just what I mean."

Again there was silence between them.

"I want to have a long talk with you some day, if you will let me," he said presently, speaking in low quiet tones and looking earnestly at her.

"What about?" she asked quickly, with a glance of surprise.

"A great many things in general, and nothing in particular," he answered, smiling. "You are afraid I shall bore you?"

"Oh, no—not at all," she replied, colouring, and looking away.

Just then a bevy of damsels, with their attendant squires, came and settled themselves close by. Their artificial manners and aimless chatter (for there was scarcely a girl for miles round who did not attempt, with very ill-success, to imitate the beautiful Miss Wylde) jarred on Anthony. It seemed in such striking contrast to the perfect repose and grace of manner, the absolute naturalness, of the girl beside him. He sat for a few moments inwardly chafing, and trying not to show it, and then a bright idea occurred to him.

"Should you not like a walk in the garden, Miss Hardy? This atmosphere is stifling—do come."

Felicia looked surprised, and hesitated. Throughout the whole course of their acquaintance she had always been careful to avoid leaving any room for gossip, such as might perhaps give Rosamond cause for jealousy. Had it been anyone but Anthony who made this suggestion, she would, knowing Rosamond's disposition, have declined complying with the request, but she knew that such an idea was so far from Anthony's mind that she was almost ashamed to own to having thought of it herself. His manner was always so simple and natural that she felt it would be impossible, whatever he proposed, to suggest to him, even in the most delicate way, the construction which the ordinary mind invariably puts upon matters of the kind, and the mystery in which it is apt to involve the most simple and easily explained circumstances.

"We need not go all down the room; we can get out quietly by way of the balcony. You have your wrap, have you not?"

That she might have reasons for declining never seemed to occur to him, and Felicia, who rather admired this masterful mood of his, rose without a word, followed him out on the balcony, and allowed him to put on her wrap.

They descended the terrace steps and went down into the garden. The cool, soft air blew refreshingly on Felicia's hot cheeks, and stirred the soft, dark hair that waved about her forehead. It was a fine, clear night, and the deep-vaulted heavens were spangled with stars. The still, calm, passionless majesty of that solemn spectacle shed its peaceful and softening influence over both their hearts. They walked on together amid the shadows cast by stately trees, "branch-charmèd by the earnest stars," in a silence too deep for words. Unconsciously in spirit they drew nearer and nearer to each other, drawn by the indefinable magnetism of affinity. A look or a word might perchance have broken the spell, but neither was desirous that it should be so.

How long they wandered thus they scarcely knew, for they who have found their way into the land of visions take no note of time. At last a little incident occurred which brought them back to the reality of life. They were passing a rose-bush, and Felicia, noticing one fragrant branch bending under the weight of the lovely crimson, dew-laden flowers, stopped, and raising it, plucked one of them, and was placing it in her dress, when suddenly the rose slipped out of her fingers and she gave a low exclamation of pain.

The sound roused Anthony instantly from his reverie. He moved back quickly to her side, and, scarcely knowing what he did or said, took both her little hands in his—how fair and slender they seemed—and asked, in a voice full of concern—

"What is it, Felicia? Are you hurt?"

The touch of his hands, the tone of his voice, sent a strange thrill of rapture through all her being. A wave of sudden emotion shook her from head to foot. She looked up at him, with eyes full of a new meaning. Through the gloom they could only see each other indistinctly, but he seemed to feel the fascination of her gaze. It sent the blood tingling through his veins, and made his pulses bound with newly wakened life. For one long moment they stood looking at each other; then, with a quick movement, she drew her hands away, trembling all over with fear and shame. Now, indeed, she understood what strange thing this was that had entered unbidden into her life; now, indeed, she knew how subtly the charm had worked, and that her heart was no longer her own.

Anthony was the first to recover himself.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Hardy," he said, fearing he had annoyed her, and not in the least knowing what explanation to give of his conduct. "I was afraid you were hurt."

"It is nothing much—only a thorn," taking refuge in her most distant manner to hide her agitation.

"Is it still in?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Let me take it out for you."

"I don't think you can. It is too dark; and it is of no consequence, thanks."

"Pardon me: a thorn may be a little thing, yet it is capable, none the less, of giving a good deal of trouble. But you are right, it *is* too dark here. We will go back to the house."

He spoke with a quiet decision which allowed of no questioning, and they returned together, filling up the dangerous pauses with superficial converse. By the light of the lamps which hung along the verandah, Anthony carefully and gently extracted the thorn, but with subtle instinct they mutually avoided meeting each other's eyes. Anthony dared not hold the little hand a moment longer than was necessary, yet it was with a strange sense of unwillingness that he relinquished it. As for Felicia, she was glad enough not to be obliged to return to the drawing-room, for, meeting her father with their hostess on the way thither, she was able to make her adieux, and the two went home together.

CHAPTER XXII.

As soon as Rosamond had received Dick's missive, and had found an opportunity of perusing its contents, all fear of his altered attachment was instantly dissipated. It was very short and concise; but it appointed a place of meeting for next day, and enjoined urgency and secrecy.

"You have got away, then? That's all right!" said Dick, taking possession of her hand, and looking searchingly into her face. "Cruel girl! you would hardly look at me last night."

"You know the reason, Dick," said she, with a touch of coquetry. "It was not my fault."

"No, I am quite sure it wasn't. You could not have been so hard-hearted."

"Why have you been so long answering my letter? I have been expecting every day to see or hear from you."

"Have you, my love?—I beg your pardon, I mean 'my dear'—that's permissible, I think? Well, the fact is, I thought it best to keep quiet for a bit, though I've been wanting to get a word with you ever since, as there's a certain little bit of business I must settle with you. I expect I shall have to move on, Rosamond."

"Move on? What do you mean?"

"Across the Channel, to be sure—as I'm not over-anxious to accept her Majesty's hospitality."

Rosamond looked more perplexed than ever. "Don't talk in riddles, Dick, please," she said, beseechingly.

Dick laughed, and raised her hand to his lips as they walked together. She offered no resistance to the caress; the time for such things had gone by.

"I'm so afraid of harrowing your feelings, my dear. The plain truth is too coarse and vulgar for such delicate ears as yours. I always do my best to gild a nauseous pill."

"I wish you wouldn't!" she exclaimed petulantly. "I wish you would speak plainly."

"All right, then, I will if you prefer. Anything to oblige. Has Lestrange said anything to you about that fellow Claydon lately?"

"No, nothing. Why?"

"You remember what I told you about him the other day?"

"Yes."

"Well, in the very face of that, he actually had the impudence to come down here after me last week!"

"Oh, Dick! But I thought you had forbidden him?"

"So I did; but he's a long-headed rascal where his own interests are concerned; and he was not quite satisfied with our little arrangement, so he laid an artful plan for getting speech with me."

"You really saw him, then? He surely did not go to the Rectory?"

"No; it was at Greychester. I could have got out of it if I had chosen; but I thought it best to see him, and settle the business by word of mouth. It won't do to thwart him too far, you know, Rosamond, or he might come pouncing down on *you* some fine day."

"If he did I should die of fright. Can't we do anything to keep him quiet? Did you say he was not satisfied?"

"He wants more. Such a highly respectable person couldn't be expected to do with only £200 a year. I suggested perhaps you would make it two-fifty."

"Oh, anything, if only he will keep away from us! But, Dick, I am afraid your seeing him will do a lot of mischief."

"Very likely, my dear; but, after all, my staying here is only a question of a few weeks. As things are going, it would hardly be safe for me to stay much longer in any case. When Claydon is up for examination, as he shortly will be, I suppose, goodness knows what disclosures will be made! I've a mind to take my holiday while I can."

Rosamond's face was filled with dismay. She grew perceptibly paler.

"And what am *I* to do?" she asked breathlessly. "Oh, Dick, you can't mean it! You surely won't leave me?"

Dick gave a long side-look at her, expressive of the utmost satisfaction.

"No!" said he quietly. "I guess you'll have to come along with me."

Rosamond started violently, and then grew strangely still. He spoke in such a cool, unhesitating way, as if the proposal he made was of the most ordinary nature, that for the moment she could scarcely believe her ears.

"Look here, Rosamond!" he cried, with an energy and passion in his voice and look such as she had never before seen. He stopped short as he spoke, and, facing round, took both her hands in his and held them tightly. "What is the use of going on in this ridiculous way? You know I love you—love you so madly and foolishly that I have given up everything, and dared everything, for your sake. Do you think I would ever have risked and done so much if I had not known that sooner or later my love would win its reward? Rosamond, I know you love me. Will you dare to look me in the eyes and tell me you do not?"

He paused a moment, as if waiting for her to reply; but Rosamond, who was completely taken off her guard by this unexpected outburst, stood in trembling silence, half-inclined to resist, but overmastered by the very force of his passion. That moment of irresolution was fatal to the lingering affection for Anthony, which all along she had clung to; for the next instant he had flung aside the barrier that parted them. Unreproved he caught her in his arms, unrestrained he pressed his lips on hers. Rosamond knew in that single moment that all was over. She clung to his neck, and hid her burning face on his shoulder, while her heart beat wildly against his. Satiated with his triumph, he held her trembling form in a tender, close embrace, kissing her on eyes and lips and hair. Never had Anthony's caresses awakened such a tumult of feeling as that which possessed her now. Of what use was it to pretend any longer that she did not love him?—and yet, amid all the tempestuous emotion that swayed her, she could not help feeling a twinge of shame, contrition, and regret, when Dick said suddenly, taking off her engagement-ring and putting it in his pocket, "My darling must not wear this bauble any longer. Ah, Rosamond! you little know what I've suffered all this time."

"Oh, Dick! you must not, indeed you must not take it away! Oh, this is dreadful! how shall I ever tell Anthony?"

"You need not tell him, love—at least, not in so many words. The deception will have to be kept up a little longer, and you shall have your trinket back again presently; but while you are with me I'll have you all to myself, if you please. I never did care for sharing honours. Poor fellow! I'm downright sorry for him, but I always told you how it would be."

"Dick, it can't be—it must not be!" she cried, wildly, trying to free herself from his embrace; "how dare you hold me, how dare you kiss me! I will not give up Anthony."

"Ho!" said he, releasing her suddenly, and turning away with a shrug of his shoulders; "that's it, is it! I suppose you would rather he took the initiative."

"I don't understand you."

"You prefer waiting till *he* gives *you* up."

"Anthony would never do that. He is too good and true!" she cried, with flaming eyes.

Dick, surveying the lovely, tempestuous creature, thought she looked lovelier in this mood than in any other. To his mind, she was well worth the winning at any risk or cost.

"Oh, wouldn't he?" said he, affecting the utmost unconcern. "Now, look you here, Rosamond! Do you seriously suppose that, when the knowledge of all this affair comes to his ears, as it is very likely to do, it won't affect your present relations to each other? Do you think he will go on feeling just the same, and that things will be exactly as they were before?"

He paused, but Rosamond made no reply; only in her eyes an expression of perplexity, not unmixed with fear, began to gather. She had not before looked at matters in this light. It had not occurred to her to put any limit upon Anthony's patience and forbearance.

"Is it reasonable to suppose he will ever forgive this—and this?" He took her in his arms as he spoke, and kissed her again. "Why, he is jealous already. What will it be when he finds out all that has passed between us? No, no, my dear! you may as well make up your mind to it at once: you have gone a great deal too far to retract."

Never before had Rosamond felt so keenly her own powerlessness. She had walked with blind confidence into a trap; it was useless now to beat her wings against the bars and attempt to escape. As the captor closes his hands over the frightened, fluttering bird, so his will enfolded hers, and held her a captive to his wishes. She made no further effort to resist, but stood with flushed cheeks passively submitting to his caress.

"So, my lovely one, I'm afraid you will have to take me. Well, anyhow, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that your love has been fairly earned. I wonder how you could ever put such a love as Anthony's in the same comparison with mine. Love, indeed! you know yourself he does not really love you. Haven't you as good as said so a hundred times?"

"I don't know," said Rosamond, in low, tremulous tones. All the spirit seemed to have gone out of her. "I used to think he did."

"Well, I should think by this time he has pretty well proved the contrary—to any unbiassed mind, at any rate. You didn't happen to overhear what I did last night, when he went off into the garden with Floy?"

"What was that?" she cried, with a reviving flash of energy.

"Oh, never mind—I won't repeat it; but I felt inclined to knock the fellow down for daring to bring my sister's name into it. Insolent young blockhead! There, never mind, darling. I ought not to have told you; but it makes me wild to hear you talking as if he cared more for you than I do."

Thus it happened that Rosamond's engagement

with Anthony was tacitly cancelled, and the masterful wooer became the successful lover.

When Richard saw that he had fairly won the day, and that Rosamond was not likely to make any further resistance, he dropped the authoritative, independent tone he always adopted when he desired to "bring her to reason," as he said, and assumed, with much skill and address, the manner of an ardent lover. He gratified her vanity with the most extravagant flatteries, and fired her ambition with brilliant representations of the life of pleasure and delight which would shortly be theirs. As she listened to his honeyed talk, so soothing to her self-love and pleasing to her taste, the conviction grew upon her that nothing short of such a love as this could ever have satisfied her. Not until lately, and then only at Dick's suggestion, had she ever really questioned Anthony's love for her; but, now she came to reflect upon it, what an ordinary, commonplace, humdrum kind of affection his was in comparison with that now offered her! He who, of all others, should have been foremost to do her homage, had never flattered her or praised her beauty. Conscious of her extraordinary powers of fascination, Rosamond often felt irritated, that, whilst others were carried away by the glamour of her personal charms, Anthony seemed in no way touched by it. She did not understand that his love rested on a different basis; she could not comprehend a nature so utterly dissimilar to her own.

"We must be married as soon as possible, darling," said Dick presently. "My idea is that we get married quietly in Greychester. You 'll be able to manage it one day when Lestrange is away. I daresay he keeps a pretty strict eye upon you now, eh, dear? Then I 'll make all the arrangements for our departure, and we 'll go off just in time to catch the boat, so that we need not stop in England a moment longer than is absolutely necessary. We shall have to be very quiet about it, though, and get it settled up as quickly as we can, as I fancy certain persons are beginning to take an interest in me."

Rosamond was prepared to assent to everything that Dick proposed. She felt that the weight of so many secrets and the worry of so many contrivances would crush her, and heartily wished herself safely out of the country.

"There is one thing, Dick, I wish you would do," said Rosamond, as they parted. "You have always objected when I've asked you before, though I can't imagine why. I am sure you won't refuse me now, will you?"

Dick looked down with a very curious expression into the beautiful eager face he held between both his hands. There was no doubt about it that he loved this girl passionately, but he was not so far gone as to be willing to lay aside, just to please her, his one weapon of defence. How was he to know that he might not want it yet?

"You have got it still, Dick?" she asked, with a change in her voice.

"Oh yes, my love, it 's quite safe; and, having taken care of it so long, I think I am capable of doing so a little longer."

Rosamond's face fell. "Why not destroy it, Dick? Oh, I wish you would. I shall never feel happy or comfortable until you do."

"Well then, my love, I will do so. I will destroy it on the day you and I start on our wedding-trip together."

CHAPTER XXIII.

As Rosamond re-entered the house that afternoon, and was crossing the hall in the direction of the staircase, the library door opened, and Anthony came hurriedly out. She started violently at the click of the lock, and stopped short in her progress; but, at the sight of Anthony, she made a great effort to regain her composure, forcing a laugh and a saucy speech to cover her confusion. Anthony, however, whose face betrayed unusual distress and anxiety, simply stood in the doorway, looking at her with an irresolute expression, and would have let her pass on, but just then Sir John came up behind him, and, seeing Rosamond, called her into the library.

Rosamond's heart sank within her, and an icy coldness seized every limb. She would have been glad to plead an excuse and get away to her own room, but she felt too much ashamed and too anxious to conceal her misgivings to make any attempt to do so. Assuming her most artless manner, she entered the room, followed by Anthony, who closed the door after them. One quick, anxious glance assured her that no other person was present, as her first fears had suggested, and, with an intense feeling of relief, she took the chair Sir John placed for her, and awaited his pleasure.

"I am very glad you came in just now. I—er—I wanted—er—I thought it would be best—er—just to have a little talk with you," he began, fumbling with the great seals dangling at his waistcoat, and trying to appear at his ease. He had evidently undertaken a very uncongenial task, but which, nevertheless, he considered to be his duty. "The fact is, my dear Miss Rosamond, as I've just been telling Anthony, I think you ought to know the—er—the state of affairs at present. Of course, I know that—er—business matters are not much in your line, and that ladies, young ladies especially, don't care to be troubled with such things; but still, as possibly the matter I allude to may vitally affect you, it hardly seems right that you should be in ignorance of what is going on. That, at least, is my way of looking at it, and Anthony fully agrees with me." Here he looked at Anthony, who merely bowed his head in confirmation of the statement. "You know the saying that 'fools step in where angels fear to tread,' and if you find that exemplified in me, I must ask you to pardon me, and believe that I don't mean to be meddlesome. I only desire to relieve Anthony of a responsibility and a duty—a duty, my dear Miss Rosamond, which otherwise he would have to discharge himself."

"Sir John is kind enough, Rosamond, to say that he will explain to you the action the solicitors are taking about the will," said Anthony, in his usual direct way, cutting short Sir John's somewhat roundabout preamble. "You are aware that I have had a

good deal of business with them lately, but I have not told you anything about it, because I know how much you dislike the subject. We were just talking about it when you came in, and Sir John was pointing out to me my duty."

"I don't know why you should make so many apologies," said Rosamond, who had by this time sufficiently recovered her presence of mind to show a little petulance. "I am sure I am very willing to hear anything it is necessary for me to know."

"Nothing but consideration for your feelings, my dear Miss Rosamond, has prevented Anthony from telling you everything; but matters have reached a crisis now, and it becomes necessary for you to know, especially as it is possible you may be called upon to give evidence."

"Evidence!" echoed Rosamond, with a startled look.

"Perhaps you are not aware that your father's valet, Claydon, was suspected of having a hand in the abstraction of the will? Well, he is to be brought up for examination before the magistrates, and, if he has to stand his trial, all the evidence will be required that could possibly throw any light on the subject."

"But he has not been arrested yet, surely?" she asked breathlessly.

"You know about it, then?" said Anthony, a shade of perplexity crossing his face.

"Yes—at least, no; I only heard something about it," replied Rosamond, reddening, and fearing lest she had betrayed herself.

"I don't remember mentioning it to you. By the way, Rosamond, have you ever seen Claydon since he left Wyldeholme?"

The question took Rosamond by surprise, but she was getting so used to deception now, that one lie more or less could not make much difference.

"Where *should* I have seen him, Anthony? You ask such absurd questions!" she said, giving herself a moment's space to collect her thoughts. "I don't suppose I should know the man if I saw him, after all this time."

"I think you would, Rosamond; and I don't know either that my question is very absurd. You are just as likely to see him as anyone else, and he *has* been seen as near here as Greychester, and as lately as last week."

"And where is he now?"

"The solicitors think they have found a clue. He has been arrested, and will be examined by the magistrates to-morrow. I shall have to go to London this evening, dear."

Rosamond's brain seemed all in a whirl. If only she had known this earlier! Dick was quite right when he said something must be done at once. For a few moments she sat looking before her, with a hard, fixed, stony stare, saying not a word; but at last her thoughts found vent in speech, and she exclaimed, with ill-suppressed impatience—

"Why did you not tell me this before?"

"I have but just received the telegram," replied Anthony quietly. "I did not think there was sufficient evidence against him; but Russell and Grimsby are determined to either prove or disprove their suspicions."

"They had much better let it alone. I think it is the most absurd idea, and I can't imagine how it could have originated. I know nothing about the man, and I am sure I am not going to submit to any cross-questioning about him. As far as I am concerned, I may as well tell you at once, I decline to have anything to do with the affair."

Sir John looked perplexed and uncomfortable; but Anthony sat in stolid silence, as if prepared for the worst. Perhaps he derived some slight consolation from the reflection that this exhibition of temper on Rosamond's part would, at any rate, justify his own reticence on the subject.

"Well! well!" said Sir John soothingly, "let us hope you won't be required to do so."

"I don't care whether I am required or not!" she cried passionately; "I tell you I will not. If you and Anthony are so anxious to deprive me of everything, why don't you come and ask me plainly to give it up, instead of trying to accomplish your ends by such unpleasant means? I think you are most unkind and ungenerous to treat me in this way!"

The two men exchanged glances. At any other time they would scarcely have been able to forbear a smile at this unreasonable speech, but now they were both too genuinely distressed at Rosamond's evident inability to see common sense not to be blind to the ridiculous side of it.

Sir John hastened to explain that it was not a personal question at all, and that no one was anxious to deprive her of anything. He tried to point out to her the obligation that rested on Anthony, and the injustice to Bertram which any negligence on his part would involve. He spoke in the highest terms of Anthony, vindicating his conduct in the plainest way; but, though Rosamond listened with a fair amount of patience, he could see she was by no means convinced. Now, indeed, he could understand the undercurrent of gloom which had lately seemed to flow in and embitter the fair river of his friend's life.

When Sir John had said everything that was necessary, and had answered all Rosamond's questions—for, in spite of her repugnance to the subject, she seemed extremely curious to know all the particulars—the interview closed, scarcely more pleasantly than it had begun, and Rosamond went away to her own apartment, to despatch a hasty summary of the news to her newly affianced lover; while Sir John, giving orders for dinner to be served at once in the library, went to inform Lady Lawley of his intention to accompany Anthony to London that evening.

"But, my dear," said Lady Lawley, in surprise, "you surely don't think of going to town just as the hunting-season is beginning? You would never think of missing the first meet on Friday?"

"Well, I hope not. I hope I shall be back in time for that," said Sir John heartily. "But the fact is, my dear, it's a matter of business, and I feel I must go."

"Can't it be put off?" said his wife. "Surely it is not so very important?"

Sir John laughed.

"That's a woman all over," said he. "Any time will do for business, won't it? We men are such frauds. Why, bless me, my dear, I believe you would be as disappointed as I, if I were obliged to miss the meet. After all, it need not make any difference to you. Saunders shall drive you up, and you can *chaperon* Miss Rosamond to the reception at Gayworthy Court just as well without me as not."

"Oh! I wasn't thinking of that, John; but I know what a disappointment it would be to you," said his wife, turning over the piece of fancy-work, on which she was expending her energies with as disconsolate an air as if the greatest calamity were about to happen.

"Oh, well! I daresay I shall be able to get away. To-day is only Tuesday," said Sir John, shrugging his shoulders.

He knew very well that his wife was right on that point, but he was not a selfish man, and was not accustomed to consider his own pleasure where the interests of others were concerned. He was extremely sorry for Anthony, and would not on any account have failed him at a time when he specially needed the kind offices of a friend.

The two men reached London somewhat late that night. On the following morning, however, they were early in attendance at the office of Messrs. Russell and Grimsby, who were able to inform them that a fresh clue had been obtained, which had decided them on taking definite steps. It appeared that Claydon had, by an artifice, eluded the vigilance of which he was evidently aware, but had ultimately been tracked to Greychester, where, it was believed, he had had an interview with some person from whom he had received money. The identity of that person was at present unknown, but inquiries were being made, and, in the meantime, Claydon was summoned to appear before the magistrates, when a strict examination would probably result in further discoveries.

Meanwhile Richard Hardy, whose astute mind had anticipated this danger, had duly provided against it; but the sudden action of the solicitors now rendered it necessary for him to precipitate his own plans. Rosamond's letter, which came privately to his hand that same evening, was not the first intimation of what had happened, and, within an hour of receiving it, he had returned an answer to the effect that he would arrange for the marriage ceremony to take place in Greychester on Thursday, and asking her to meet him in the wood on the following morning, that they might settle all preliminaries for leaving.

Rosamond's hand shook as she read the letter. It was all so sudden, so unpremeditated; as yet she hardly knew whether she had really made up her mind to go to such a length as this—whether she really desired to become the wife of Richard Hardy. She knew that this step, once taken, was irrevocable: was it even now too late to retract? For hours after she had retired to rest that night, she lay awake thinking, till at last she could bear no longer the hideous weight of fear and misgiving that oppressed her, and, springing up from her bed, she lit the lamp and tried to read. But it was of little use. The thoughts kept crowding back upon her brain in a thousand shapes and colours, until she was very nearly distracted. Tossed this way and another by the opposing influences of the day's events, she knew not what to think or do. Had Anthony been at home, she felt she would have been impelled, in this tortured state of mind, to seek relief by confessing everything to him, and throwing herself upon his mercy and compassion.

Towards morning, however, she fell into a dreamless sleep, which lasted some hours. When she was awake and dressed she looked haggard and pale; but all thoughts of capitulation had vanished, and her brain was only busy in devising the means for carrying out her schemes. She took breakfast in her own room, as Lady Lawley was in the habit of doing, and thus avoided seeing Will, and running the chance of being awkwardly questioned. As soon as she thought he had gone out she stole silently out of her room, along the corridor, down the wide staircase, across the hall, and away through the gardens to meet her lover.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SHE was rather late in keeping her appointment, and Dick was already awaiting her arrival with some impatience. He had not been able to shake off a feeling of anxiety since parting with her, lest, in the very moment of triumph, some unforeseen event should occur to mar all his projects. He was almost afraid to trust her out of his sight, as he felt he could never be quite sure of her till that step had been taken which would make their interests one. As it was, at any moment Rosamond might yield to opposite forces, relent, and confess everything. It would, of course, prove her own ruin as far as prospects went, but then, women were such foolish, emotional creatures, it was no use relying on their common sense or expecting any reason from them. As for him, he would have had all the excitement of planning a bold and daring deed without gaining anything for himself, and would simply have to retire from the scene of action with a character rather blacker than before. It was not a comfortable reflection; but, after all, the game that he was playing was quite as much a game of chance as of skill.

He felt relieved when he caught the first glimpse of her grey dress amongst the trees, but as he went forward to meet her he was startled to see how pale and distracted she looked.

"Oh, Dick, it's a dreadful thing to do!" she said presently, in answer to his inquiries as to what was the matter. "I feel so mean and dishonourable, going away like this, without saying anything to Anthony or anyone. Sir John and Lady Lawley have been so kind, I can't imagine what they will think of me; and then there is poor Will! I really believe until last week he was foolish enough to think I cared for him. I assure you, Dick, I have had as much as I could do to prevent him from making himself ridiculous. I don't think any girl was ever more bothered with lovers than I."

"Every girl is not so beautiful as you are, my

love," said Dick, kissing her. "It would be a wonder if you didn't have lovers."

"Well, it isn't my fault, anyhow, if people will fall in love with me," she returned, with something like her old sauciness; "but I do really feel as if I were treating everyone very badly. It makes me miserable to think of it. As to Floy, I feel as if I should never be able to look her in the face again. She always does make me feel small; and yet I can't go away without seeing her, Dick. I must say some sort of good-bye to her."

"Good gracious, Rosamond! don't be so foolish." cried Dick in alarm; for that was about the last thing he desired or intended. He foresaw that Felicia's quick instincts would divine in a moment that something was wrong, and he was anxious above all things to prevent her from seeing Rosamond. "You are not going away for ever. Why, bless you, my dear child, in a few months' time, when it's all blown over, and people have made up their minds to take it quietly, you and I will come back again in style and take the place by storm."

"For a few moments she sat looking before her."—*p.* 414.

"But if it is all found out about the will, Dick?"

"My dear, it won't be. And, when once the thing is destroyed, it won't make much difference what comes out. Nothing can be proved against either of us. But now about our little plan, dear. I would much rather have got it settled up in London, but the

distance puts it out of the question, so we must arrange for it to be at Greychester. You will have a little shopping to do there to-morrow, and you had better take your maid with you. She's safe enough, isn't she?"

"Yes, I suppose so," replied Rosamond dubiously: "but, oh dear! need it be so soon? I have not had time yet to make up my mind to it."

"A lady's mind is never made up, my dear Rosamond," said Richard lightly. "Whilst we are waiting for that we shall lose all our chances. Now is our only time, while Sir John and Lestrange are away. They won't get anything out of Claydon, and the affair will probably be adjourned, whilst all the learned fossils, who think they know so much, turn it over in their minds. Sir John, at any rate, will come pottering back in a day or two. It would break his heart if he were out of the first run with the hounds. I have no mind to miss that either. You will come with Lady Lawley to the meet, of course. How proud I shall feel, darling, as I look at you! I shall want to proclaim to everyone that the queen of the whole assembly is mine—my very own. I don't think you will be ashamed of the figure I shall cut, either, my love. I suppose you know that Sir John has offered me a mount? I believe I am to have 'Flyaway.' She is as good as her name, but a splendid-looking animal."

Rosamond's face wore a gratified smile, and she arched her neck and tossed up her head in anticipation of the day's triumphs. She knew very well that Richard was considered the handsomest man for miles round; and certainly there was no girl in the county who could hold a candle to her.

"How vain you are, Dick!" she said saucily "I don't suppose I shall look at you." At which Dick laughed, as if he thought it an excellent joke.

"There is Lady Gayworthy's 'at home' in the evening, Dick. You will go, of course?"

"Well, I suppose if we stop for the one we may as well for the other; and there would be a fine hubbub if you didn't appear. I was thinking we could not have a better chance of getting away quietly. When we are at the court we shall be half-way to Greychester. I'll have a cab in waiting, and we'll leave in time to catch the night express to London; from thence to Dover, and off by the boat before our friends have recovered their surprise sufficiently to look for us."

"What a commotion it will create! I am afraid I shall be missed, and they will come after us."

"Oh, I'll see to that, my dear—'Nothing venture, nothing win,' you know. When once we are out of Greychester we shall have the start of everyone, and, amongst such a large assembly, we shall find it very easy to slip away unobserved. As to that other little matter—about Wyldeholme, you know—you must write to your solicitors to-day, and tell them to clinch the bargain at once with your friend the millionaire, who is so kindly anxious to take it off your hands just at the right moment."

"Oh, Dick! must I?"

"Of course you must, my dear. It will be a great sacrifice, no doubt; but the man offers you a fair price, which is more than you might have expected, considering you have to get rid of it all in a hurry. As I have pointed out to you before, an estate in England, under present circumstances, would be, to put it mildly, a bit of a nuisance."

"But I don't like to part with it, Dick."

"Can't be helped, my dear; it must be done. I had better just tell you what you've got to say."

Dick then briefly sketched out the letter which Rosamond was to write her solicitors respecting the sale of Wyldeholme; and, after receiving a few other necessary instructions, she went home, fully persuaded that all she had to do was implicitly to obey, and all would be well.

The impending festivities were quite sufficient excuse, had any been needed, for Rosamond to go to Greychester on the following day. Her plans, however, ran a very near chance of being upset, for on the preceding evening, when she casually mentioned her intentions to Lady Lawley as she lingered a few moments over the fire before saying "Good-night," that lady quite unexpectedly offered to accompany her. However, when morning came, as the weather proved damp and chilly, she changed her mind, and tried to persuade her guest to do the same; but Rosamond, who could scarcely refrain from outwardly showing her relief, laughingly declared her intentions unaltered, and offered, instead, to undertake Lady Lawley's commissions.

It was a strange feeling that came over Rosamond as the train moved slowly out of Carsthorpe station. The solitary occupant of a first-class carriage, she had plenty of opportunity for indulging her thoughts, and as she sat staring vacantly out of the window at the broad stretches of brown pasture-land, skirted by the yellowing woods, and overhung by a low, dun-coloured sky, she went over in her mind all the events, which had seemed to grow one out of another, since that bright auspicious morning in June, when first her gaze had rested on that rural landscape. Little had she thought then that four months hence she would be on her way to become the wife of Richard Hardy—that she would be on the eve of leaving friends who had been kind to her, and one who had trusted her implicitly, in silence and stealth, to begin that new, delightful, unfettered life which had always been the goal of her ambition, but which, now that she had reached it, seemed shadowed with a nameless fear. A week ago she would hardly have thought it possible that a climax such as this was so near at hand; but now, looking back upon events, she could see how blind she had been not to perceive what the consummation of her conduct must be. In spite of sundry misgivings, however, she did not altogether regret what she had done, nor would she own that she had acted wrongly or foolishly.

She had never really wished to marry Anthony. In comparison with hers, his nature seemed grave and sombre, and his tastes were too utterly out of harmony with hers not to interfere seriously with her happiness. She was about to marry a man who not only said he loved her, but had proved it, by giving her the one thing on which she had set her

heart. Surely she did wrong in allowing any shadow of distrust to cloud the brightness of her marriage morning.

Having executed the few commissions she had undertaken for Lady Lawley in as unconcerned and leisurely a way as she could assume, she walked quietly out of the shop, followed, as usual, by many admiring glances, and made her way on foot towards a certain ancient church in one of the by-ways of the old Borough. As she pushed open the heavy door, and got inside the dark, dusty edifice, with its high oak pews, dingy walls, and gloomy recesses, she felt quite a chill come over her.

A queer fancy that she could never make her way, through the shadows which brooded over that long aisle, to the dismal, far-away chancel, took possession of her. She stood for a moment holding the door with a frightened look, as if just ready to run away.

"This is the church, ma'am. St. Cyprian's, you said!" remarked her maid, in surprise.

"Oh, yes—yes," said Rosamond, trying to compose herself. "But I think we are too early. Let us walk up and down outside."

But just at that moment the door swung back, and they were confronted by the expectant bridegroom.

"Oh, here you are, dear! That's right!" he said, kissing her hurriedly. "The old parson has just come in. Come along! and let's make haste to get it over."

Thus urged, the bride, in her neat morning gown and dark hat, moved slowly up the aisle, followed by the maid, her sole attendant. Was this the kind of wedding to which she had looked forward? No gay attire, no orange-blossoms, no bridesmaids, no congratulating friends, no admiring crowd!

The stillness, the silence, the gloom, oppressed her like a dead weight. She gasped for breath, and seized Richard's arm for support. Half-leading, half-dragging her, he brought her up to the chancel.

The clergyman, a careworn, anxious-looking man, with a sad preoccupied air, gave a glance of surprise as he emerged from the vestry door, and saw the tall, handsome man, with the commanding air and reckless mien, leading forward the beautiful girl, whose subdued manner, pale face, and frightened eyes were an evident token that something was wrong. He paused with momentary hesitation, and fixed a full, keen look on them before taking his place; but there was no sign of recognition, for Richard had taken the precaution of soliciting the services of a London clergyman, who was taking temporary duty in Greychester, and who would be very unlikely to know him either by sight or by name.

He noticed the hesitation, however, and quailed under the searching gaze bestowed on them.

"For goodness sake, Rosamond, hold up your head, and don't look so terrified," he muttered. "We shall never get through it to-day, if the old man takes to asking questions."

Thus admonished, the bride made a desperate effort at self-control, flung back her head, smiled, and took the Prayer-book offered her, with as composed an air as if she were accustomed to go through the ceremony every day.

But when she came to draw off her glove, she felt the cold sensation again creeping over her, for there on her finger was the ring Anthony had given her on their betrothal. The glitter of the diamonds, as they caught her eye, sent a shiver through her. A thousand recollections and anticipations went through her brain in the flash of a second. She scarcely heard the low, solemn tones of the clergyman. His voice sounded far-away and indistinct, and the words he spoke had no meaning for her ears.

Dick, who was on the alert for whatever might happen, noticed the sudden disconcerted look, and guessed the cause.

"Give it to me," he said in a whisper, and, drawing it hastily off her finger, took possession of it. A very few moments later, and the words were spoken which made them one, and he had substituted, for the diamond ring, the golden circlet which was the sign and symbol of their union.

Now, indeed, all was over, and regret, if either had felt disposed to indulge in it, was useless. They had agreed to take each other "for better—for worse," and must abide by their bargain.

As the last words were spoken, the heavy door at the end of the church swung back with a crash. Rosamond started violently, and Dick turned hastily round; but it was only a woman with a child in her arms, who had found out that something was going on and had come to see. Dick gave a frown of impatience. He could hardly listen with decency to the concluding exhortation, so anxious was he to get it over.

But at last everything was said, and everything done, and Dick and Rosamond Hardy found themselves once more out of the strange darkness and gloom in the busy street, in the broad light of day.

Rosamond now felt able to breathe.

"I am glad it is over!" she said, with a sigh of relief. "What a horrible church! I felt as if I were in a dungeon."

"The darker the better, *I* thought," said Dick, with a laugh. "Well, I think we've been very lucky, darling; but now I mustn't stop talking to you, or we may get caught. I'll just put you in a cab when we get into the main road. Sling that little ring of yours round your neck, my love, till to-morrow night; then I'll put it on your finger again, and we will never say good-bye any more."

He hailed a cab and put her, with her maid, into it.

"Good-bye, darling! and keep up your spirits till to-morrow," were his last words as he shut the door. "I almost wish we were going now, but it can't be helped; and, after all, it's only one day more."

"Good-bye, Dick," said Rosamond, as the cab moved off.

When she came to remove the wedding-ring, as he had told her to do, she suddenly remembered that he had not given her back the one he had taken away. It was very awkward, but it was too late now to recover it. She must trust to chance that the loss of it would not be discovered.

(*To be continued.*)

THE "LARGE ROOM."

BY THE REV. CANON WYNNE, D.D., PROFESSOR OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN.

"Thou hast set my feet in a large room."—PSALM xxxi. 8.

THIS psalm was written by a man who had been a shepherd and became a king, who had been a fugitive, hiding in rocks and caves, and became a conqueror and mighty monarch. His song of thanksgiving describes the Lord's kindness to him, and sets forth in various ways the contrast between his times of difficulty and times of deliverance. We can easily picture to ourselves the change he had experienced from the narrow and homely farmhouse or from the shepherd's hut to a royal palace: the change from a crevice in the rocks, where shelter could be found from the biting blast and the vigilance of cruel foes, to the spacious hall, with ceiling of cedar and gilded pillars, with soft couches and stately throne. We can understand the gratitude with which, thinking of his former perils and his present safety, his narrow sphere and petty interests in days of old contrasted with his wide dominions now, he could say, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room." And servants of God, thinking of His dealings with them, can still say the same words in a very real sense. We who believe in a crucified and risen Saviour, with our sublime creed, our wide interests, our enlarged sympathies and far-reaching hopes, can certainly say, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room."

I. The Christian creed places us in a very extended realm. Let us suppose the case of one who has been puzzled by the mysteries of existence, puzzled by the incomprehensible phenomena of life, puzzled by the relations between his own body and his spirit, puzzled and harassed as to whether he is after all only one of "the beasts that perish." Let us suppose that such an one learns the creed of Christ's Church; he learns to follow in spirit the steps of the Lord Jesus through Galilee and Judea, to listen to His heavenly teaching, to see the noble figure outstretched upon the cross, and then rising from the grave. He learns to say of that holy Jesus what the once doubting Thomas said when he had put his fingers into the print of the nails—"My Lord, and my God!" Such a man contrasts the narrow material ideas that had become familiar to his thoughts, the insoluble riddle that the great universe presented to his mind as he tried to reduce all its wonder and glory to modifications of blind matter; he contrasts all this with the rest he feels as he repeats to himself the articles of Christian belief. And as he thinks of the old unsatisfying guesses and the present blessed and well-attested creed, he has to join in the inspired song—"Thou hast set my feet in a large room."

Or again, we might think of a Jew in the first century, accustomed to the burdensome system of the law, made intolerable by the yoke of human traditions. We might suppose such an one to learn, as Saul of Tarsus learned, that he was justified freely by faith in Jesus Christ: that to trust in his Saviour and love his brethren was the whole duty of man. As he learned the simplicity of this Gospel creed, might he not well say, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room"?

And at the present day may there not be a similar sense of liberty and largeness in resting on the plain Gospel promises? Ever so many man-made ideas are apt to hamper the mind with a kind of traditional religion. We are expected to hold precisely this view or precisely that view on countless controverted propositions. Then, with sweet relief, there ring in our hearts the great calls and promises of Him who was "made flesh and dwelt among us." "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "I am the Light of the world. He that followeth Me shall have the light of life. I am the Bread of life. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." And as we think of the beautiful picture of Jesus presented in the Gospels for our faith, our love, and our imitation, and as we think of the welcome every human being receives who comes to touch the hem of His garment, we feel that those who look into His face for pardon, clasp His hand for help, listen to His word for guidance, can thankfully sing, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room."

Christian is represented in the old "Pilgrim's Progress" as being brought by his kind entertainers in the "House Beautiful," to rest in "a large upper chamber whose windows opened to the sun-rising; and the name of that chamber was Peace." Many a weary pilgrim on the heavenward road finds his feet set in this same large room. Anxious, conscience-smitten, dissatisfied with self—ah! perhaps pressed hard and pursued by remorse and self-reproach—the man who has erred and strayed takes refuge, with personal trust, in Jesus Christ. He opens his heart to Him, lays his burden at His feet, rests on His promises to penitent sinners. Then the haunting fears pass away. He has peace with God through Jesus Christ. The windows are open to where the Sun of Righteousness arises on his soul with healing in His wings; and in peace and rest, as well as deep humility, he understands the Psalmist's song—"Thou hast set my feet in a large room." Perhaps there are weary men and women among my readers, dissatisfied with themselves, uneasy as to their position, trying, but trying in vain, to lull conscience to sleep by self-justifying pleas. That large room is open for you. It is a guest-chamber the Master has ever ready for all who need it. You must stoop to enter it—stoop in lowliness of heart, in confession of sin to Him who

is "the propitiation for our sins," and then His gentle hand will draw you in, and "set your feet," too, "in the large room."

II. And further, contrast the sphere of interest of one who lives for mere natural objects with the widened horizon of one who has received "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father!" Suppose that you are now with selfish heart turning away from God and holiness, and setting your affections on things on earth. You are intensely eager about things which must be in their nature little and short-lived. You want, above all things, to have excitement, variety, amusement; you want to have admiration and applause. You want to have wealth and what you call a good place in society. Perhaps you get what you want. God is good, and He bestows on you health and buoyant spirits. And you have many merry hours and plenty of smiles and laughter. Or you get on well in your business, and are what is called successful, and a little murmur of applause follows, as it generally does, a successful course. Or perhaps you are not successful, and things do not please or amuse you, and you are tired and cross and miserable, and torment your friends with your grumblings. But whether you are successful or unsuccessful, you are only striving for petty things. They seem great to you at the moment, and you say that they are the natural things to care for. Yes; and if you were only an animal, with no conscience and no soul, and no infinite destiny, they might be reasonable objects to set your heart on—important enough for one who is only an advanced kind of beast. But to have a little more or less of amusement, or of money, or of admiration for a few years, is, you must confess, a small matter for one made in the image of God, for one whom the Infinite Lord wishes to have as His own friend, and to whom He has offered a destiny equal to that of the angels; so your worldly life, whether happy or unhappy, is, after all, only a very poor kind of thing.

But suppose that by some means you are rescued out of that condition. Gradually or suddenly you are made ashamed of your self-seeking life. The Spirit's holy strivings with your spirit are felt, and prevail; you are drawn as a penitent to the cross of Christ. The knowledge of His pardon gladdens your heart. Longings for goodness, for purity, for holiness, for usefulness, swell within you. Then what a grand extension takes place in your mental horizon. How dull, petty, and narrow that world-centred life now seems! What a number of new interests, new objects for endeavour, hope and aspiration, rise before you! Little pleasures and innocent amusements and pleasant laughter are still enjoyed—enjoyed with a much fresher kind of enjoyment than before. But they have taken their place now as little things. Life has become to you a much broader, more varied, more intensely interesting drama than it used to be; for you are taken out of self. You are longing to please the Divine Friend. You are a member of a great community, a great company of dear brethren and sisters. Every one with whom you have intercourse is one for whom Christ died, and whom you want to help upwards. The poor, the ignorant, the sinful, the fallen: they have all claims now on your sympathy and your love. Every day there is something to be done for the Master whom your soul delights in, and for the people whom He loves. In contrast, then, with the old self-absorbed life, he who has had sympathies widened, affections deepened, hopes and aspirations led from temporary pleasures to eternal glories, may well say, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room."

III. We cannot close without taking one more mental step, and anticipating the time when there will be a still further enlargement. During its larva life the caterpillar seems to have all its powers busied in creeping from leaf to leaf, and gathering in its monotonous nourishment. But there are growing within it all the while organs foreign to its present environment—strange powers, prophecies of an entirely different sphere of existence for which they prepare. In due time the environment changes. The chrysalis shell is broken; the great coloured wings shake themselves free. The "imago," the ideal being, rises up into the air, glittering and palpitating, a beautiful butterfly, gleaming in the sunshine, and winging its way from flower to flower. This is an old illustration of a fact ere long to be new in the experience of each of us. Here, as we try to do our duty, to bear our cross, to run our race, "looking unto Jesus," spiritual powers are developing within us; heavenly capacities are gradually growing. In God's good time the bodily organisation will be broken up. A new departure in life will be taken. Then, when we come to be with Christ, when we join in the great company whom no man can number, when we serve in the holy temple of which God Himself and the Lamb are the Light, when we follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, then in the freedom of that heavenly life, in the wide domains opened for our energies by that heavenly service, we shall know the full meaning of the song of thanksgiving, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room."

HOUSING THE HOUSELESS.

BY F. M. HOLMES.

SUPPOSE you were houseless in London! The supposition, no doubt, seems so monstrously improbable, that you cannot realise it for a moment. Yet there are numbers of persons who pass through that bitter experience. The tide of life sinks gradually lower in the well-worn streets; the space between the wayfarers grows larger; the white light of electricity gleams ghastly cold, making the more familiar gas look yellow and dim; the lodging-houses turn out those who have no pence to pay, the great city begins to settle down for its short night, and those who are houseless must pass the hours as best they may.

And how do they pass the dreary time? Here is one instance.

On a pouring wet night last summer, a person coming under a railway arch saw a man and his wife crouching under the shelter—such as it was—of the bridge. Questioning them, he found they had walked from Walsall in search of work, attracted by an advertisement; he gave them a few coppers and left them. But the rain still continued, and thinking of those unfortunates under the arch, he sallied forth again and brought them in, and made them as comfortable as he could. The accommodation was not sumptuous, for he was the care-taker of Medland Hall, which had then recently been destroyed by fire, but it was a shelter from the pitiless storm, and much better than being out in the streets. Next day the man found work.

Had he known where to go, he and his wife might not have had to remain out in the pelting rain so long, for there are in London some seven or eight refuges or shelters for the houseless. He might have made his way to the excellent Field Lane Refuges; or if they were full, and the time had been winter, he and his wife might have tramped on to the oldest established of all, "the Leather Hotel," so called because of the leather coverlet to its bunks; it is more officially known, however, as the Asylum for the Houseless Poor, in Banner Street, St. Luke's, and was founded as far back as 1819.

Arriving here, footsore and weary, he and his wife would find themselves in the chill winter twilight among a crowd of gaunt and cheerless figures. They are standing before a neat, plain building; the men—who form by far the larger number—gathering around one door, and the women and children before another entrance.

At the hour of five the welcome doors are thrown open, and the people crowd in. They find themselves in a solidly built hall, from which, opposite the door, runs a passage past a window.

Those who have been here before, and have been

granted tickets admitting them for a certain number of nights, pass down this passage, showing their ticket-numbers at the window; the new-comers wait in the hall to be examined by a doctor. If found suffering from any illness, they are passed on to the hospital or workhouse infirmary. Should they be found acceptable from this point of view, questions are asked as to their antecedents, and subsequent inquiries generally verify the statements that are made. Running his eye over the quiet, pathetic group, the new-comer might notice how orderly and grave they appear for the most part; the criminal class seems not to be represented here. Passing onward, down the corridor, he would arrive at the room where a half-pound of bread is distributed to each; and good sweet bread it seems to be. Some of the inmates manage to obtain a halfpennyworth of fried fish or bit of bacon, and this forms an excellent relish for them with the bread.

There is also a lavatory, provided with hot and cold water, soap and clean towels, and a foot-bath—a very necessary adjunct in a building like this, where so many of the weary-footed are expected.

Then, refreshed with their ablutions, and with at least some food to stave off the cravings of hunger, the inmates may make their way to their sleeping ward. They have not far to go. There are seven wards altogether, those for the women and children being up-stairs. On the ground-floor is the large Chapel ward—so called because a service is held here every Sunday during the winter months, when the Shelter is open. Looking around, they behold a large and lofty hall, lighted not too brilliantly, but very pleasantly warm for the weary wayfarers now enjoying its grateful shelter.

These wooden box-like divisions covering the floor are, of course, the bunks, and to each of them belongs a mattress of strong American cloth, stuffed with coir, *i.e.*, cocoa-nut fibre. The coverlet is of soft pliable leather—dressed sheep-skin, in fact. On Sunday the wooden partitions—which prevent one sleeper encroaching on the space of another—can be raised on their two short ends, thus affording a series of forms on which the congregation can be accommodated.

Conversing with some of the inmates, as they rest here before finally settling down for the night, the new-comer might find they are mostly labourers of various kinds—principally out-door occupations—no fewer than 2,966 returning themselves as general labourers, and 634 as dock-labourers, in the hard winter of 1890–1. Many, of course, are also connected with other trades, such as carpenters, coach-makers, etc.

If he could go up-stairs, he would find the women carefully looked after by Mrs. King, wife of the kindly but vigilant superintendent. Her bright, cheery manner soon brings answering smiles on woe-begone faces. Talking to these also, he would probably learn that they are for the most part charwomen, needle-women, and laundresses. Some are garden-women. What are they? Well, they work in market gardens in spring or summer, picking fruit and hops.

But now is the hour for service. A City missionary appears, with a kindly, gentle, but strong face, and conducts a five minutes' service in each ward. Up to eight o'clock holders of tickets may continue to come in. After that hour they are not admitted, unless they can show good reason for being late; but for others the doors are practically open all night, destitution and sheer need being the claims for admittance; and as for getting out early in the morning to search for work, the kindly and experienced superintendent, Mr. King, is always willing to allow this on sufficient cause being shown, though the rule is that inmates shall leave during the hours of eight and nine, except on Sunday, when the waifs may remain indoors all day, and cheese is added to the rations of bread. It is a strange, pathetic congregation that the clergyman has to address in the large chapel ward—a congregation of the unfortunate and the penniless.

Banner Street Refuge, which belongs to the Church of England, appears to be in very good repute among the class it is intended to benefit. "It's a reg'lar Buckin'ham Palliss compared to some others," said a man to me in a Shelter far away from the Leather Hotel. The "some others" he referred to appeared to be certain lodging-houses, for which a small charge is made.

Certainly he could not be referring to the admirable Field Lane Refuge in Vine Street, Clerkenwell. This is a branch of a larger institution, now about half a century old, and which embraces a great variety of work among the poor; but we are only concerned now with the refuge department.

Presenting ourselves at the doors, we find the arrangements are much the same as at Banner Street, except that the dormitories are open all the year round. Here the poor man and woman from Walsall might have found a shelter on that pouring wet summer night—had there been room—though the Banner

Street doors would have been closed. The hall-porter would take the name of the applicants, and the superintendent would examine them and ask for references. After receiving food, and when retiring for the night, each to their own ward, they would find their rooms lofty, airy, and clean. Each person has a bedstead of iron, with a flock mattress and Austrian blankets. But Mr. Mayne, the experienced superintendent, has the mattresses frequently in the sulphur-cleanser, and the clothes of the occupants are all well baked in the insect exterminator before they are admitted to the dormitory. Cast your eye all around, and you will observe the great cleanliness that prevails.

Knock at the door of this large room, and enter. It is the women's refuge dormitory. The beds are doubled neatly up round the wall, leaving ample space in the centre of the apartment. There the women may sit during the day. If you scrutinise the inmates, both men and women, intelligently, you will probably conclude that they belong, for the most part, to the decent poor.

The total accommodation is limited, however, being for forty men and twenty women only, and experience shows that many more men than women apply. In the morning the inmates find they are expected to do a certain amount of work, one notable feature being the collection of broken food from certain City warehouses, which is afterwards distributed to necessitous families. As much as half a ton of food is thus collected sometimes, and helps to keep alive about 150 families. But the institution helps the inmates to obtain work, and out of 902 admitted in one year, 331 gained employment by means of the direct aid of the institution.

One day a man applied, fairly shaking with excitement. The superintendent thought him rather above the ordinary position of the inmates, and told him so.

With startling frankness, the man replied—

"I am a drunkard, and I want to go to some place where I can be prevented from drinking. It is of no use for you to give me money, for I should spend it in drink."

By profession he was a schoolmaster, and the superintendent decided to admit him. He fought desperately against the drink craving.

"I have seen that man," said the superintendent, "with his head on the table, shaking in every limb, and with perspiration pouring off him, fighting against his enemy; and he conquered, so far as I know. We entrusted him at length with small duties about the institution, for which he received a little wage, and he did not spend that in drink. The last I heard of him was that he was a schoolmaster in the country."

This, no doubt, is a somewhat unique case for this refuge. Among others claiming its shelter are those who through scarcity of work, or ill-health, or evil influences, are unemployed, or through following that will-o'-the-wisp, the hope of getting work in London, find themselves without a home.

Similar arrangements to those at Field Lane prevail at the Newport Market Refuge, and not far from Soho we find the small, snug little Ham Yard Hospice, off Great Windmill Street. If we might

hazard the statement that there are class distinctions even in refuges, we should say that this is one of the most "aristocratic." The broken-down gentleman—not, perhaps, sunk to the lowest depths—might find a refuge here. For, look! in the dim light of the kitchen this December evening, there is one to be seen—according to outward appearance—rejoicing in tall hat and little black bag.

Poor fellow! his is indeed a sad story, if you can get him to tell it you. For twenty years he held a position as clerk on one of the great railways; but a terrible disagreement with his wife so preyed on his mind that he attempted to commit suicide. Of course, the case got into the police-courts, and thence to the newspapers. He was ashamed to return to his previous employment, where he was so well known, and since then he has been taking such engagements as he could get. These have proved to be temporary only, and here he is at last, a broken-down man; and when such as he are once down, it is hard to get back again.

For the most part we find that the cases are admitted here through subscribers' letters, or are sent by the Charity Organisation Society; though, if Mr. Stevens, the kindly and shrewd superintendent, met with a really deserving or destitute case, he would at once admit it if he had room. That is a very necessary proviso, for the small iron bedsteads with straw palliasses and actually white sheets which we see up-stairs are for twenty persons only. There they may obtain shelter and food usually for a fortnight.

Sometimes children are received. One cold day, near to Christmas, a little girl, about nine or ten years of age only, found her way up the yard, and presented a subscriber's letter for herself and her sister. They

were orphans, and without a friend in the world. Their last parent had but recently died. The child said she thought she had an aunt somewhere. Her sister earned six shillings a week by making cards. Mr. Stevens took the children in, and we doubt not they enjoyed as merry a Christmas-time as they could under the circumstances, for there would be plenty of pleasant bustle and agreeable things to occupy their minds at this Hospice. Five hundred plum puddings had to be made, and distributed with joints of beef at Christmas-time; and then every day there are the sandwich-men's dinners, and the making of great quantities of soup by steam in the six large cauldrons in the kitchen; and here in the evening the children might see the other occupants of the refuge, sitting in the snug warmth, chatting, perhaps comparing notes of misfortune, and playing draughts before retiring to bed at half-past nine o'clock.

An Australian found his way here once, after being lured to England by a delusive "next-of-kin" advertisement. The description in the advertisement answered his case exactly, and said that £10,000 had been left him. Friends believed so strongly that he was the rightful owner that they lent him £150 to journey to England and prosecute his claim. Had £10,000 been left, perhaps he might have secured it; but in truth the whole thing was a swindle, and he drifted here to the kindly Hospice.

His story is linked with another. In his peregrinations he met a young American who was travelling in Europe for the benefit of his health. Unhappily, he was subject to fits of vacancy of mind, and possibly owing to these states of mental aberration, he had spent all his money at a big hotel, except a letter of credit on a Hamburg house for twenty pounds. But he had no means of crossing to that port, and, in a state bordering on lunacy, he was drifting about London when the Australian met him, and brought him to the Hospice.

Mr. Stevens took up his case vigorously, found it was genuine, discovered, indeed, that he was well connected in New York, and that the firm with whom he had been engaged for some years would be glad to take him back if his health were re-established. Money was forthcoming on the strength of the letter of credit and from his brother abroad, and at length he was sent back to the States. Yet, but for the timely intervention of the Hospice, he might have sunk to the pauper mad-house.

To those who, through no fault of their own, have lapsed into sheer want without sinking into vagrancy, who are possessed of both ability and character to obtain their living, but require a little help to tide them over a troublous time, this institution appears a true friend in need. During the twenty years that Mr. Stevens has been superintendent, he has had many interesting cases—true romances of real life. Some have done well afterwards, and one man he knows has been ten years in his present situation. These statements go to prove that it is not only wrong-doing which brings a man down; with some it is sheer misfortune—perhaps weakness or want of foresight—and a helping hand may enable them to climb back again to their wonted position.

That drink and crime play their part—and a very large part—in sinking people down in the gloomy waves of destitution, is so well known as to need no emphasis here. It is almost wearisome to hear again, and again and again, that drink, drink, drink has brought them down; but there are others. In the stress and strain of the fierce battle of life they fall, and are in sore danger of being trampled under foot.

Passing by two or three other Refuges, more or less of a similar character, we will now drive right away to the East, to an institution the youngest of all, and in some respects absolutely unique. We mean the Free Shelter belonging to the London Congregational Union.

This may be spoken of as an outcome of the early morning breakfasts given by the Union a few years ago at the Collier's Rents Hall to the "sleepers out," and which followed the publication of the celebrated pamphlet, "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London." It forms part of the philanthropic work of the Union now under the superintendence of Mr. E. Wilson Gates at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street. In January, 1891, it was decided to open a hall belonging to the Union in Medland Street, Ratcliff, every night as a Free Shelter. It was not intended to provide anything which should compete with legitimate lodging-house trade, or which should pauperise the applicants, unless it might be the substantial tea with the service on Sunday evenings. But if the applicants preferred to pass the night in warmth under a roof sheltered from the bitter blast or the pouring rain, even if only sitting on a chair or lying on the bare boards, they should have the opportunity. The result was astonishing—astonishing, that is, to those unfamiliar with London streets by night. On Census night, April 5th, nearly seven hundred men had obtained shelter under the hospitable roof of the old chapel.

But the number fluctuates greatly. On the 19th of June there were only four hundred and thirty-two sheltered there. Perhaps it was a good thing there were comparatively so few, for on that eventful night the building was burnt out. It caught fire from an adjacent store, and one of the inmates, seeing the glare through the window, quietly acquainted the care-taker, who speedily opened the door. So admirably was the exit managed, that without injury to anyone the whole of the motley assemblage escaped. Without injury, we say, but not, it is to be feared, without loss.

"Can you find my eye?" plaintively asked one, afterwards.

Poor fellow! he had a false eye, and, in order to sleep better, we suppose, had taken it out of its socket, and put it in his coat, which he had taken off. We fear he never had coat or eye again. He may have been rigged out with a new coat from the "old clothes stores" of the Congregational Union, but we have not heard that they keep stores of artificial eyes!

After the fire, and until the hall should be rebuilt, premises were taken in Burdett Road, Limehouse, where, however, magisterial decisions limited the number of inmates to two hundred. Imagine a large bare warehouse of a basement and three floors, with numerous windows back and front. On the ground-floor are chairs and forms, on the next floor are fewer

chairs, and here, for some occult reason, the inmates most do congregate. Many take off their boots, and, covering them with a cap or other garment, use them as a pillow, tying up their feet in a handkerchief or piece of old sacking, for warmth. There are pillars in this room to support the floor above, and some sleepers lie with their heads round the pillar, as though it were the axle and they the spokes of a wheel. No doubt this is to prevent their heads being kicked in some disturbed dream. Others, again, lie by the wall; others in the room below stretch themselves on chairs. Sometimes one of these sleepers will suddenly roll from his narrow couch, and be rudely awakened by sharp contact with the boards. And then some fellow from whom misfortune has not driven all sense of humour will exclaim, "Hullo! here's another chap a-tumblin' out o' bed!"

But the scene on the second floor, beheld in the dim half-light of but a jet or two of gas, is weird and Dantesque in the extreme. To the mystery of slumber is added the mystery of unknown tragedies and tears, the sad histories of these waifs and strays; the silence is broken by disturbed breathings or murmured conversations; and one's heart becomes overcharged with feeling at being thus face to face with such a mass of human sadness and misery. But there are gleams of blessed humour. Here in this weird scene is the dosser's barber plying his trade. He, a dosser—*i.e.*, a sleeper like the others—shaves for a halfpenny and cuts hair for a penny. He tells us he has but a halfpenny in his pocket, and was thinking he should have to do "O'Leary"—*i.e.*, walk about—in the streets. But he got in here with the fortunate two hundred, and he endeavours to turn an honest halfpenny by the razor.

There is a doss-house barber—*i.e.*, a sleeping-house barber—generally here. One is called "Old Snowball," because of his white head. He is an old army man, and wears a soldier's tunic. When the inmates are admitted, a little time elapses before they settle down; so one night Snowball went about crying aloud, "Who'll hev a shave for a halfpenny? who'll hev their hair cut for a penny?"

Presently someone said, "I will." Then another barber, fiercely competitive, cried out, "I'll cut yer hair for a halfpenny!"

Whereupon Snowball, not to be outdone, exclaimed, "I'll cut it for nothing!"

The doors of this shelter are, as a rule, opened at eleven; though if the weather be very bad, this law is relaxed. A man may find a chance of earning lodging-money between five or eight o'clock and eleven. Then the inmates may get out after four in

the morning to seek work at the docks or markets; and the rule is, they must all be out by six o'clock.

Some men are helped, and do well afterwards. Here is an instance. A carpenter had been twenty-five weeks out of work through a strike, and he had pawned his tools for food. He asked the superintendent a few questions, and was helped with money and food, and obtained his tools again. Then he was able to get work at two pounds per week, and faithfully he repaid what had been lent him.

A labourer drifted in who proved to be in a very poor state. He had scarcely eaten anything for a fortnight; in this case food was given him directly, and eventually work was found for him on the Great Eastern Railway Extension. He returned the money lent him, and was most profuse in his gratitude.

It may be asked, Why do not the houseless seek the shelter of the casual ward? There are two or three cogent reasons. By the Poor Law Act of 1882, no person may sleep in the same ward more than two nights out of thirty! Where, then, are the houseless waifs of the metropolis to go for the remaining nights? Also they have to perform certain tasks in the morning, and cannot get out to seek for the odd jobs of the casual labourer and the unemployed at docks or markets. These are, no doubt, very real reasons, for there is the chance of work in the early morn. Does that pale, chill dawn that rises over the dark river, the sure presage of a new day—does that pale light bring a promise of hope to the weary and the sick at heart? Perhaps so; at all events, there may be a shilling to be earned, and within a few minutes after the hour the nondescript inmates of the Shelter have dispersed, and a new day has begun.

THE WHITE HYACINTH.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

ONE Thursday morning in early April, Mrs. Keith, having for some time missed the merry voice of her little daughter, went in search of her into the conservatory opening off the drawing-room. Here, as she expected, Mona was found, but standing with unwonted gravity before a beautiful white hyacinth just bursting into flower. The bulb had been given her as a Christmas gift—a white one by her own choice—and not a day of the intervening three months had passed without Mona visiting the conservatory to see with her own eyes the progress her precious bulb was making. Every phase was a fresh excitement. It was deeply interesting when the dark glossy green leaves first pushed through the surface of the soil, as also was their gradual unfolding, and the revelation of the flower-bud that had been packed away so safely between them. But as the bud slowly reared itself into a spike covered with greenish bells, her excitement knew no bounds; and now that each bell was developing into a snowy waxen blossom, the climax was reached. And the scent! Never had hyacinth so fragrant been known before.

To all these rhapsodies Mrs. Keith had been daily treated, for Mona was never weary of the theme. Its last variation was the brilliant idea of presenting her flower as a birthday present to her father, whose birthday this year happened to fall on Easter Monday, now four days off. This was why the buds were counted, and the opening of each fresh blossom was an affair of breathless interest. All seemed to have prospered according to her dearest wish, and the treasured flower would be in perfection by the appointed day. That the stages in the greenhouse, and stands in the drawing-room, and now even the flower-beds bordering the lawn, were all full of hyacinths, was nothing. Her father would know that this was her one own flower, a gift from his little daughter who loved him, and would value it accordingly.

All this, and every other change that could possibly be rung upon the theme, Mrs. Keith was in the daily habit of hearing, so that she was at a loss to understand Mona's present gravity and silence. She placed her hands on the child's shoulders as she stood silently behind her, and laid her cheek caressingly upon the fair curly head.

The touch unlocked Mona's lips. Without turning round, she said, hesitatingly, "Mother, do you think father would mind very much if I did not give him the hyacinth?"

"No, my child; if you do not like to part with it, you can keep it," said her mother.

"No, mother, it is not *that*," replied Mona, facing round in her eagerness; "you know I should love to give it him; but you remember, last Sunday, at the children's service, Mr. Elliot talked of the poor widow, who gave her two mites for the Temple, and of the woman who brought the alabaster box to Jesus, and he asked what we had ever given, and I have been thinking I should like, if I may, to give my hyacinth for the Easter decorations; for I never gave Him anything."

Mrs. Keith understood how much the sacrifice was costing her child, and knew from her flushed cheeks and tear-brimmed eyes how much she was feeling. Her own eyes were not dry, as, putting her arms round the child, she whispered, "But you know it is your *heart* He wishes you to give Him, darling." Then they began to discuss whereabouts in the church it was likely that this precious hyacinth should be

placed—whether the pulpit, or lectern, or choir-seats, would probably be adorned with it. And as this was a point it was impossible to guess, its discussion formed an endless ground for conversation during the next two days; the hyacinth, meanwhile, seeming to grow hourly in beauty and fragrance.

As soon as breakfast and household claims were over on Saturday morning, Mrs. Keith went to the conservatory, and there, as she expected, she found Mona, with wistful gaze fixed upon her flower. The child could not repress a little cry as with a sharp knife her mother cut through the thick juicy stem, the beautiful snowy head falling heavily forward, and leaving the green leaves all desolate and drear. Some sprays of fern were gathered and carefully tied up with the flower, which was then laid tenderly on a sheet of white paper in a brown wicker netting basket, the upper part of the paper being pinched together at the corners to protect the flower.

As soon as they were dressed, Mrs. Keith and Mona set off to walk to St. Bride's church, Mona of course carrying the basket. It was a pleasant walk of little more than half a mile, and led across Thorley Heath, which, with its heathery banks, and gorse-crowned heights, and groups of Scotch firs, was always a favourite haunt of Mona's. Her spirits had risen since the deed was accomplished, and she had no longer to look forward with dread to seeing her flower cut down, so she raced hither and thither, basket in hand. There were banks that she always ran up and jumped down, and little mounds that she always jumped over, and she did so to-day as usual. A turn as they left the heath brought them in sight of the little church with its graceful spire; and Mona, sobered, slipped her hand into her mother's as they walked up the churchyard path.

Others were there on the same errand as they were, for two ladies passed them, each carrying an open basket of daffodils, and a boy was there with large pots of arum-lilies in a wheelbarrow. They followed the ladies into the church, which looked very different, so Mona thought, from what it usually did The three Miss Elliots and other young ladies were hard at work upon the decorations of the pulpit and lectern, while their father and brother, looking rather dusty and dishevelled, were arranging, in the corners of the chancel, plants of palm and arum-lilies. Daffodils were on the window-ledges, but on the alabaster pulpit were only white flowers, relieved upon a background of ferns; and it was here Mona felt that her hyacinth might appropriately be placed, and here that she longed to see it.

Mrs. Keith advanced with her towards the group of workers, saying, "My little girl has brought a white hyacinth which she hopes may be used in the decorations," and signed to Mona to offer her flower. She raised the paper—the basket was empty!

A cry of dismay burst forth at this lamentable discovery. Kind Mr. Elliot came hastily forward, saying, "What is it? can I be of any help?" But Mrs. Keith, replying quietly, "Nothing; only a little private trouble of our own," led the sobbing child as quickly as possible out of the church, and sat down on the bench in the porch, drawing Mona upon her lap. The poor child wept uncontrollably for some time against her mother's shoulder, brokenly expressing her grief that she had given away the flower. If she had given it to her father she would still have seen it for a long time, and in the church she would have seen it again; but now it was lost; she should never see it again; it would do no good to anyone; her offering was not accepted, and she would never, never make another.

"The offering my little girl must now make is that of submission," said Mrs. Keith, at last, in a tone whose firmness checked the sobs and murmurs. Then, as the child grew calmer, her mother spoke to her of David; how his great desire was to build a Temple to the honour of God, but he was not permitted to do so, and yet "it was well that it was in his heart;" and so, though she might not have the happiness of seeing her hyacinth in the church, still her intention in offering it might be equally acceptable. And then she rose, and gravely and quietly they walked home.

Poor Mona had no skip left in her, and no wish whatever now to jump over hillocks and ditches. It must have been one of these light-hearted performances that had jolted the hyacinth out of the basket. She followed as well as she could the path by which she had gone, in the hope of catching a gleam of the snowy blossom among the gorse and bracken, but the heath was crossed in all directions by foot-tracks, and the quest was hopeless.

It was a doleful little maiden who returned to the house, and went straight to the conservatory, where many quiet tears were shed before the desolated plant. Tears are not known to be good for appetite, and it was a *very* poor dinner that Mona managed to eat, and at last her favourite pudding lay untouched upon her plate. Her mother, whose watchful care over her was unceasing, suggested that they should take the pudding and some oranges to Charlie King, a little boy in her district who was recovering from rheumatic fever, and about whom she had been talking during dinner in the hope of withdrawing the child's mind from her own trouble, by the thought of the greater troubles of others.

Mona languidly consented, put the pudding and the oranges into the little covered basket that was well accustomed to these friendly errands, and carrying it far more steadily than she had done the unlucky brown wicker basket that morning, walked quietly by her mother's side to Prospect Place. It was by no means her first visit there, and she was familiar with the creaking wooden stairs, steep and narrow though clean, which led to Mrs. King's rooms on the second floor.

"What a sweet smell!" said Mrs. Keith, as she knocked at the door, which stood ajar.

"Mother!" echoed Mona, "it is like my——" And here the door was opened from within, laying bare the little room, and showing, besides the worn, sickly looking woman with a baby in her arms, two or three children standing round a table, beside which was an old arm-chair, containing, wrapped in a blanket, a thin pale boy of eight or nine. They had all evidently been absorbed in contemplation of something on the table—a snow-white hyacinth, with ferns drooping around it, standing erect in a bottle of water,

"My hyacinth! my hyacinth!" exclaimed Mona, regardless for the moment of the sick boy, or of anything but her recovered treasure.

"No, sure! is it the little lady's?" said Mrs. King. "Nellie Price, who lives on the top floor, found it on the heath this morning, and brought it to Charlie. He do think a lot of it; it seems to have done him a power of good. It has made him forget the pain for a bit to have it to look at, for it's main pretty. But if it's the little lady's, she must have it, mustn't she, Charlie?" And Mrs. King stretched out her hand towards the flower. The tears flowed down Charlie's poor white cheeks at the prospect of losing his treasure, and the other children burst into a roar. Under cover of the noise, Mrs. Keith whispered to Mona, "Do as you like, dear; there is still time to take it to church if you wish."

"No, mother," said Mona, "let us go home quick." And drawing the flower towards her, she took one long gaze at its waxen blossoms, once more slowly inhaled its fragrance, and ran out of the room and down the stairs. Her mother followed her more slowly, as she did not leave without a few kind words to Mrs. King and to Charlie, whom she left happy in the contemplation of his hyacinth.

"She raised the paper—the basket was empty."—*p.* 427.

Of course this wonderful incident supplied a new and exciting topic for the rest of the day, and Mrs. Keith was pleased to find Mona making a collection

of picture-books and cards for the sick boy, and working at a scrap-book for the younger children.

The next day, at Mona's special request, they started unusually early for church, as she said she wanted to see the decorations. Mrs. Keith was relieved at this, as she had feared the sight would revive the feelings of the previous day. However, it was with a grave though untroubled face that she gazed at the groups of exquisite flowers with which loving hands had adorned the church. When the survey was completed, she drew down her mother to her own level, whispering earnestly, "Mother, it is beautiful; but I think I am glad now that the poor little boy has my flower. He had nothing else nice to look at or smell." Her mother whispered back in reply, "Then now, my child, I think your offering is accepted," adding to herself, "And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

JETTY VOGEL.

ALONE WITH JESUS.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BURNET, M.A.

IT is both interesting and instructive to compare the inspired photographs of the Apostles as they are seen in the Gospels with the same men as they afterwards appear in the Acts and in their Epistles. They retain the same peculiarities of disposition and character, and yet how wonderfully are they enlightened, transformed, and elevated above their former selves! The change can only be accounted for by the special grace of God, and it is a signal proof of the truth and power of the Gospel.

We have a remarkable instance of this kind in the trial of Peter and John before the Sanhedrim shortly after the Day of Pentecost. Before that great tribunal, composed of rulers, elders, scribes, the most powerful and learned men of the Jewish nation, under the presidency of the high priests, they are accused of having healed the cripple in the Temple, and then of having preached, through Jesus, the resurrection from the dead. Their position was peculiarly trying and alarming; and men of such humble origin, and destitute of any special gifts of learning or eloquence, might well have shrunk from the ordeal. Nevertheless, without the slightest fear or hesitation, they boldly ascribe the miracle to the power of their crucified and risen Lord, declare Him to be the Stone set at nought by the appointed builders of Zion, but become the head of the corner, and proclaim His as the only Name whereby they or any other sinners could be saved. So forcible and startling were these words, that the Council, perceiving by their provincial speech, their homely garb and rustic manners, that they were what the world would call unlearned and ignorant men, listened with astonishment. They found themselves confronted with a mental and moral phenomenon quite as surprising as the physical marvel of the previous day. After inquiry, they could only account for it by the fact that they had been with Jesus, and that in His company, under His teaching, influence, and example, they must have imbibed His wisdom and His courage.

To a certain extent, no doubt, the rulers were right: indeed, they were nearer the true solution of the difficulty than they supposed. They did not know, as we know, that these two Apostles had been admitted into closer intimacy with their Divine Master than any of their brethren, excepting James. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned on His breast at the Last Supper, and, more than any other, had grown in likeness to Him. He, too, with Peter and James, had been alone with Jesus on three very special occasions. They had been the chosen witnesses of one of His greatest miracles, in raising the ruler's daughter from the dead. They alone had been with Him on the holy mount when His divine glory gleamed forth with momentary brightness, His countenance did shine as the sun, and His raiment became white as the light. They, too, alone of mortal men, were permitted to draw near the scene of His mysterious agony in Gethsemane, and behold the signs of that awful conflict with the powers of darkness. But was even this a full and complete account of the matter? Had they always been the same brave, intrepid, faithful witnesses for Him that they now were? On the contrary, Peter had thrice basely denied that he knew Him. Something else had evidently occurred in the meantime which did fully explain the change, and of that the rulers took no account. At Pentecost Christ's promise had been fulfilled. "When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning."

A new and heavenly light had thus been thrown over their past experience. The wonderful scenes through which they had been led now reappeared before their mind's eye with increased clearness and reality. The focus from which they regarded the events had been readjusted, and all stood out in true proportions and distinct relief. Before, they had seen their Lord raising the dead to life; now, they knew Him as the Resurrection and the Life. Before, they had gazed with awe and delight at His manifested glory on the mount, and felt it good to be there; now, they saw in it a sure pledge and precursor of His power and coming, and had begun to reflect something of the Divine character of which Jesus was the perfect embodiment. Then, they had watched with deep but unenlightened interest His mysterious conflict in the garden, as the penumbra of the world's guilt first

came in contact with His sinless spirit; now, they understood something of the meaning of His sufferings, having learned in a measure the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the value of His finished work. In fact, they had begun to experience a transforming process, and from timid, vacillating, prejudiced disciples, had become bold, faithful, enlightened witnesses for the truth. They had been with Jesus, not in person only, but in heart and spirit, and intimacy with Him, through the power of the Holy Spirit, had made them what they were.

So it was with the Apostles then; we would next inquire how far it may be so with ourselves now. We have not, it is true, Christ's bodily presence manifested amongst us, nor can we follow Him from place to place, beholding His works and listening to His words. Still, we may by faith see Him mirrored forth upon the pages of the Gospels; and spiritual communion with Him is now as truly the secret of Christian courage and consistency. Character is ever in great measure the result of influence, human or Divine, or both.

It is a law of our nature that we become like those whom we habitually admire and love. This is the principle according to which religions, whether true or false, react on men's minds and hearts for good or evil. By worshipping, men are assimilated to the moral character of the objects which they adore. In China, Buddhist priests have been heard to say, "Think of Buddha, and you will be transformed into Buddha. If you pray to Buddha and do not become Buddha, it is because the mouth prays, and not the mind."

The same is true in the highest degree of Christianity: communion with God in Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, must have an assimilating effect, very gradual, indeed, but sure. "There are," it has been well said, "some men and women in whose company we are always at our best. While with them, we cannot think mean thoughts or speak ungenerous words. Their mere presence is elevation, purification, sanctity. All the best stops in our nature are drawn out by their intercourse, and we find a music in our souls that was never there before. Suppose even *that* influence prolonged through a month, a year, a lifetime, and what would not life become? To have lived with Christ must have made us like Christ: that is to say, a Christian."

This is indeed true, on the one essential condition that the Spirit of truth and holiness, which Christ has purchased for us and lives to bestow, be received into our hearts and abide there. Thus, we may say with St. John, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ." Union by faith with a living Saviour admits us into communion with the Father, whilst it brings us under the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. "You are now alone," wrote Rutherford to a friend, "but you may have for the seeking Three always in your company: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Such spiritual intercourse, therefore, cannot fail to have an elevating and transforming effect on the character and conduct. Men will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. When Lord Peterborough had spent some time under the roof of Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai, he was so impressed by his piety and virtues that he said at parting, "If I stay here any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself."

Courage, too, will be, as in the case of Peter and John, another result of being much with Jesus.

Chrysostom was a noble example of this. The Emperor threatened him with banishment if he should still remain a Christian. He boldly replied, "The world is my Father's house; thou canst not banish me."—"Then I will slay thee," continued the tyrant.—"Nay, thou canst not," was the retort, "for my life is hid with Christ in God."—"I will take away thy treasure," was the next threat. That had no effect, for the brave man rejoined, "My treasure is in heaven, and my heart there also."—"Then," added the Emperor, "I will drive thee away from men, and thou shalt have no friend left." "Nay," once more protested the faithful witness, "thou canst not do that, for I have a Friend in heaven from whom thou canst not separate me. In fact, there is nothing thou canst do to hurt me." Happily, trials like those are hardly possible in these days but if we would be faithful under the lighter tests of principles, which come to all at times, we too must be much with Jesus: holding close communion with Him in prayer, His Word, and the appointed means of grace. Some may be called to be solitary witnesses for God in an ungodly household, or in an office or workshop where religion is despised, or even opposed. The lot of others may be cast in a foreign land, where the pure Gospel is little known. The absence of Christian sympathy and society in such cases is no doubt very trying; but if we only keep close to Jesus and are much with Him, our strength shall be equal to our day; and He hath said, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." "They looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed."

Jesus Lives!

Words by Christian F. Gellert.
(*Trans. by* F. E. Cox.)

Music by E. J. Hopkins, Mus.D.
(*Organist to the Hon. Societies of the Temple.*)

Quick.

1. Je - sus lives! no long - er now Can thy ter - rors, death, ap - pal us; Je - sus lives! by this we know, Thou, O grave, canst not en - thral us. Al - - - le - - - lu - - ia! A - - - men.

* Small notes for Organ.

2.
Jesus lives! henceforth is death
But the gate of life immortal;
This shall calm our trembling breath
When we pass its gloomy portal.

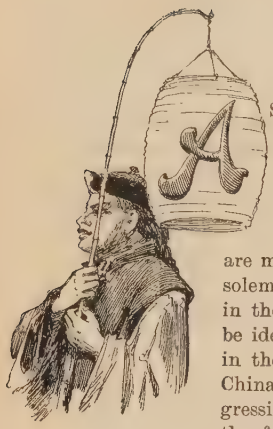
3.
Jesus lives! for us He died;
Then, alone to Jesus living,
Pure in heart may we abide,
Glory to our Saviour giving.

4.
Jesus lives! our hearts know well
Naught from us His love shall sever;
Life, nor death, nor powers of hell
Tear us from His keeping ever.

5.
Jesus lives! to Him the throne
Over all the world is given;
May we go where He is gone—
Rest and reign with Him in heaven.

A CHINESE SEEKER AFTER TRUTH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CHILD LIFE IN CHINESE HOMES," ETC. ETC.



A STRANGE land is China, and her inhabitants are a curious people, difficult to understand. Speaking generally, it is constantly remarked that the people of the Middle Kingdom are materialists; even in their most solemn services the needs of the soul in the future world are supposed to be identical with those of the body in the present life. Sin to ordinary Chinamen means merely the transgression of some rule, whether it be the failure to observe some ancient custom, neglect of ordinary etiquette, or a breaking of the moral law.

And yet, at the same time, there are not a few people in China who are seeking rest in the many forms of religion professed in their land, and wearily and sadly discovering that "earth has no balm to heal a sin-sick soul." In Northern China especially, the Tsai-Li, or Abstemious religion, numbers many votaries. Their rules strictly forbid the use of opium, tobacco, or alcoholic drinks, and they are practically vegetarians. They eschew idolatry, and worship one unseen Deity. Among them are frequently found earnest souls, truly desiring salvation from sin, and peace of heart. Of this character was a man named Chao, from the town of Shu-ming-hsien.

From his early youth this man had been the subject of deep religious feeling, and when the day came for his marriage to the maiden chosen for him by his parents according to Chinese custom, he discovered that she also was a seeker after truth. Together the young husband and wife decided to live a life of self-denial and abstemiousness, in the hope of accumulating merit for themselves in a future world.

After twelve years of married life, the wife died, leaving Mr. Chao alone in the world; for they were childless. The neighbours soon commenced to urge the bereaved man to seek another wife, and upbraided him for being content to live without children, whose duty it would be to provide for the wants of his ancestors in the unknown world.

Wearied out with the strictures of Mrs. Grundy, whose opinions are equally as powerful in China as in Western lands, poor Mr. Chao consented to take to himself a second wife. In process of time, two daughters were born to them, and a few years afterwards disease carried off in rapid succession his wife and children, leaving his home once more desolate.

Fearing that he was suffering the vengeance of the gods because he had allowed his thoughts to become filled too much with the things of this world, Chao determined to leave his home and business, and retire from the world altogether. He decided to take up his abode in a cave among the Western Hills, in the neighbourhood of Peking.

In this lonely spot he chanted no litanies, repeated no prayers, and studied no sacred books. He spent his time in meditation, listening to the murmuring of the brook and the songs of the birds. By this communion with Nature he hoped to purify his soul, and by finding a way in which his sins might be forgiven, obtain eternal life and happiness after death. All his friends believed him to be mad, and his only brother followed him for some days, earnestly pleading with him to give up his strange ideas and return home again.

But Chao steadfastly refused to be persuaded, explaining that they were quite mistaken in imagining him to be mad; he was only in earnest pursuit of a new life which would have nothing in common with the old.

For the first three years of his solitary life he provided without difficulty for his own simple wants; a cave served him as a dwelling, and he subsisted upon roots which he found among the hills, while his drink was the water of a brook.

As time passed on, people who became acquainted with his manner of life looked upon Chao as a holy man. He became a leader of the Tsai-Li sect, having many followers who paid him court and brought him gifts.

In April, 1877, it was arranged that the young Emperor should visit the Western Tombs, where his ancestors lay buried, and Chao, hearing the proposed journey discussed by the people, had a strong desire to see what he could of the procession.

This was the motive which induced him to leave his solitary retreat.

Wandering along the streets of Peking one day, with three grave elderly men who looked up to him as their master and teacher, they passed by the chapel of the London Mission, once the Temple of the God of Fire.

A Chinese helper was preaching at the time, and Chao and his followers, attracted by curiosity, entered, and sitting down upon the wooden benches, listened for the first time to the proclamation of the Gospel. This earnest seeker after truth was deeply interested. "In the Tsai-Li sect we have no such doctrine as this of forgiveness of sins which you teach!" he said to the preacher.

It was after some such truth as this that Chao had been seeking all these weary years, and yet, though looked upon by many as a holy man, he had no rest of heart.

His three followers returned to their homes, but Chao remained in Peking to learn more of this new doctrine, which had promised to be the answer to all his weary questionings and unsatisfied longings.

He made frequent visits to the chapel, and had long conversations in the "inquiry-room" at the back of the preaching-hall, where those persons interested in learning more of the Christian faith can have their questions answered.

Before long, Chao was rejoicing in having accepted Jesus as his Saviour. "I have found," he said, "the ONE true object of worship in the Creator of the world, who sent His Son to save mankind!"

After some months' earnest study of the new faith, Chao asked and received baptism, and became a member of the little Christian Church in the great Chinese capital.

He purchased several copies of the Old and New Testaments, and, with some tracts given to him by the missionary, set out for the place where he had earned so great a reputation as a holy man, determined to preach Jesus to those who had, with him, been walking in darkness, groping after the Light.

As in former days, large numbers of people sought him out, desiring to become members of the Tsai-Li sect, asking to be instructed by him, and bringing with them the usual presents and entrance-fees.

He told them all that previously he had, though unconsciously, been leading them astray—that now he had found out a better way, and desired that they also might walk in it with him.

At first they complimented Chao upon his superior wisdom, and begged still to be allowed to follow him, and embrace the higher and better faith which he had learned. But when they heard that he had become a disciple of Jesus and embraced the foreign faith, they changed their minds, and submission and complimentary phrases gave place to angry maligning. They would never become dupes of the foreigners. He must have allowed himself to be bewitched by them: he was mad. So they reviled their former honoured teacher. and Chao found himself, as his Lord predicted long centuries ago, "hated of all men for My Name's sake."

He had strength given him to bear meekly the persecution and reviling which met him on all sides, and at last his heart was cheered by seeing one of his old associates embrace the faith of Jesus.

This man was Mr. Yeu, who had been the means in years gone by of gaining Chao an entrance into the Tsai-Li sect. Together the old friends studied the Scriptures, with the result that the whole family became believers in Jesus.

Not only the children of the household, but the woman-servant also, had received careful instruction from Chao, and all came together into Peking, desiring to be received into the Church by baptism.

"Listened for the first time to the proclamation of the Gospel."—*p.* 432.

The wife, when examined, was found to be well-acquainted with Scripture truth, with a good knowledge of the leading parts of the Old and New Testaments. The daughter, of fourteen years of age, had an equally intelligent knowledge of the new faith.

None of these people had ever seen a foreign missionary, or had any instruction from a native preacher; all their knowledge of Christianity was obtained from the new convert, the man who for so many years had diligently sought after the truth, and now, having found it, could only be happy while imparting to others the glad news of salvation through a crucified and risen Lord.

And so, though rarely visible to our eyes, we believe the leaven is working, slowly yet surely, and weary hearts among the secret sects of this great empire are learning one by one to find in Jesus the answer to the world's great needs—the satisfaction for all the longings of their hearts.

MARY I. BRYSON.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS.

BY EDITH LISTER, AUTHOR OF "ON STRONGER WINGS," "HIS PERPLEXING SILENCE," ETC. ETC.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

CHAPTER IV.—A HOPELESS LOVE.

"Our life is one with our sorrow."

WHETHER she loved James Lawson as lovers should be loved, or whether he stood to her in the place of a friend, counsellor, and guide, one thing was certain: that he cheered Margie, and made her—in Mrs. Watkins' opinion, at least—"quite a different being." He broke the monotony of her life, and seemed to bring a breath from the outer world into their little room; and she felt that she could rise above the pettiness of Nunsmere prejudice, and even laugh at what had vexed her most, when Jim was by her side. It is true that the breath from the outer world was strongly flavoured with James Lawson himself—his sayings, opinions, and doings—but Margie hardly noticed this, or, if she did, felt some pride in thinking that her lover was a person of such importance in that world of literature for which she had an almost superstitious reverence.

She looked so pretty listening to Jim, and showed him such flattering attention, that he became more lover-like, and began talking of their marriage with more eagerness than she had ever known him show.

"I don't like long engagements, but I don't see how I can help it."

"Why, Jim, only last night you were preaching prudence, and holding up poor Aunt Nora as an example against 'marrying in haste.' What has changed you?"

"The truth is that I haven't seen you for a long time, and I have been trying to persuade myself that I was quite happy; but now we have met—well, Margie, you are such a fascinating little girl, that I don't know how I am to do without you any longer."

Margie blushed with pleasure. Praise from Jim was such an unusual event that she hardly grasped all he had said; but one thing she knew—he loved her very much, and she was conscious of a vague sense of gratitude, that such a very superior person should have fallen in love with St. Wilfred's organist.

"I want to hear you play; I expect you have improved since the Clapham days. Put on your hat, and we'll go to the church.—Margie works too hard," he added, when he and Lollie were alone; "it's quite absurd, this idea of hers of making a home for you both—it's simply killing her."

"I know I am a great trouble, Jim," began Lollie, in a voice that was half-broken with sobs; and, seeing her pitiful face, he felt some compunction for his hasty words.

"Of course, I didn't mean that, Lollie—what a silly little thing you are! Do you suppose Margie ever thinks you a trouble?"

And then, hearing her step on the stairs, he went out to join her; perhaps the idea occurred to him that an explanation of Lollie's tear-stained face might, just then, be a trifle awkward. Lollie's tears flowed silently for a little time, and then she made an effort at self-control; it was childish to cry—Jim had not meant to be cruel. But his words had stung deeply—she was a burden, a trouble; it was for her sake that Margie worked early and late, and often had that tired look that spoilt her beauty; no wonder, seeing this, that Jim disliked her. How long Lollie might have indulged in these morbid fancies, there is no knowing, but a ring at the bell roused her, and the next minute her face lighted up with smiles as Nigel Forrest came in.

"I have brought you Andersen's 'Fairy Tales,' Lollie. It is quite sad to think that your education has been so much neglected that you don't know Andersen;" placing the book in her hands as he spoke.

"How lovely! and what pictures too! It *is* good of you." But as she turned up her face for him to kiss, he saw that it was stained with tears.

"Crying! I can't have this. Now you must tell me all about it: you know we have agreed always to tell each other our troubles."

"You'll think it silly."

"No I shan't—I know you too well to think that you would cry about nothing."

"Well, then—it is Jim! He came down here yesterday, and is out now with Margie, and——" But Forrest interrupted her.

"Stop one minute, Lollie, and let me have time to take it all in. Who is this mysterious Jim, whom I dislike already because he has made you cry? I thought you had no brother, but were just you two?"

"Yes, but there is Jim. He is Margie's lover," she added, not without a touch of pride.

Lovers were the natural right of every girl, and the prettier she was, the better the lover should be; and so, though Margie had made the fatal mistake of choosing Jim, still he *was* a lover, and, as such, a person to be proud of.

"Her lover! Do you mean that she is engaged to be married?"

"Yes, of course I do. They have been engaged for two years, and as soon as Jim is rich enough, they will marry; he has been talking about it this morning."

"Talking about what?"

"Why, about getting married. He writes for the papers, and is very clever; but he hasn't made his name yet."

"And when he has 'made his name' he will marry your sister. Well, that should be an incentive to spur him on. But why do you object to 'Jim'? surely you are not jealous because your sister loves him?"

"No, oh no! But Jim is not good enough for Margie. I haven't seen many lovers, but I have read about them; and I know that the man should be very

much in love, and not take it all as a right. Jim orders Margie about, and tells her what to do, and finds fault with her—more like a brother than a lover. I'm not jealous; but I should like Margie's lover to be somebody quite different: more like—like you, for instance."

If Lollie was woman enough to be his friend, she was still child enough to be cruel.

She had thought of pouring out all her troubles, and telling him that Jim thought her a burden, even repeating his last hard speech, but some sense of loyalty to Margie held her back. Young as she was, she knew that there are troubles in every life that must be borne in silence.

"Well, I must be going. Read your 'Fairy Tales,' and try to forget Jim; or, if you must think of him, take him like this: he is a problem that you don't understand yet, but when you have puzzled over him a little bit it will all come clear, and you will be so fond of him that I shall be jealous." And without waiting for her answer he was gone.

Had the High Street ever looked so empty and dreary before, he wondered? one side in sun and one in shade—like life, all sunshine for some, and for him the shadows? But, after all, might it not be for the best? Might not the very hopelessness of his love teach him sympathy, and, with "eyes opened by sorrow," would he not see more clearly into the hearts of those around him? Life had not gone all smoothly with him, and he had had his trials; but they had not been of a nature to put him in touch with others. Now he had had a vision of what life might be that was crowned with love; he had seen it: but it had passed him by, and this bitter-sweet knowledge that he had gained taught him what he would never have learned, even from Lollie's dearly loved books—that care for others' sorrows that is born of experience.

But the sound of voices stole in on his reveries—merry voices, broken now and again by a girl's light laugh—and, almost before he knew it, he was face to face with Margie and her lover. She blushed, and then said shyly, but without any of her usual coldness, "I am glad we have met: I wanted to introduce Mr. Lawson to you."

"I have been hearing all about him from Lollie," explained Forrest, while he took in every turn of his successful, though wholly unconscious, rival's appearance.

"A handsome fellow," so his mental comment ran, "and looks clever, too; but yet I can quite understand Lollie saying that she hated him. There is something untrustworthy about him: he doesn't ring true."

"Then Lollie explained the situation, I expect?" said Lawson.

"Yes.—You must let me congratulate you, Miss Smith. Of course, I had no idea of this before."

Something in his tone made Lawson look at him curiously. Perhaps the pain he was suffering was so keen that it gave an accent of reproach to his words. Anyhow, from that moment there was a silent antagonism between the two men.

"I didn't care to discuss my affairs with Nunsmere," began Margie with dignity, and then she laughed.

"How absurd of me! Whom should I have to tell but Mrs. Watkins? and you would not have liked me to rave about you to my landlady, Jim?"

"Well, not exactly.—What a terrible place this is!"—turning to Forrest.—"I wonder how you manage to support existence in such a hole."

"Like Miss Smith, I have my work to do; and then I have only been here three months; but I find it a change after London."

"After London—I should think so! Don't you long to leave this Sleepy Hollow, and be back again in the thick of it all?"

"Yes, I do sometimes; but I came here for rest. And then I find the people interesting; there is something about the sturdy independence of your true Northerner that charms me; and again, they are clever. We have amongst our local politicians men who would put everything right to-morrow—if they had the chance."

Lawson laughed. "You have a fine church, too. Margie has been playing to me, as I wanted to hear whether she had improved."

"Yes, we have a good organ; but I don't think Nunsmere had any idea how good the organ was until Miss Smith played upon it."

Forrest felt angry with Lawson—the possessive way in which he looked at Margie, and the flagrant bad taste he had shown in speaking of her to a comparative stranger by a name that should have been kept for home, disgusted him, and after a few more desultory remarks he said good-bye.

"What do you think of Lollie's hero?" was Margie's first question.

"Am I to answer you frankly, or treat him as if he were *your* hero too?"

"What can you mean, Jim?—*you* are my hero; but why don't you like Mr. Forrest—frankly, now?"

"For the time-honoured reason that made Dr. Fell unpopular for all future generations—'the reason why I cannot tell'—but I don't like him; and if I were you, Margie, I shouldn't let him be for ever coming to the house. It's all very well for him to say that he comes to see Lollie: so he may—but he comes to see you too."

Margie was surprised. Jim jealous was something that she had not foreseen; yet she could not help a rather selfish but wholly feminine thrill of delight that it was so. If he were jealous of her he must be very much in love indeed.

"You are quite wrong, Jim. Mr. Forrest is Lollie's friend, and not mine, and I am glad that she should have someone to take an interest in her. Her life is dull enough, poor child!" She spoke rather reproachfully, for this was the one point on which she and Jim disagreed: she thinking that he did not properly appreciate the little sister who was all in all to her, and he being equally certain that Lollie was very much spoilt, and that his own claims were sometimes set on one side for her.

"I cannot see that her life is very much duller than your own. I cannot bear you to work as you do, Margie, and I shall never rest until I can make a home for you, darling."

And this prospect of Jim working to make her a

home was so sweet that she forgot to remonstrate with him on his want of feeling for Lollie.

"But about this fellow, Margie; you will be careful, dear? You are too young and pretty to have men hanging round, and only Lollie to play propriety. I don't love Aunt Nora, but I should be happier if she were here to look after you."

"And *I* shouldn't—I like my freedom. But, Jim dear, quite understand me: I can't stop Mr. Forrest's visits, because they give Lollie pleasure—but I am hardly ever at home when he comes. Does that satisfy you?"

They were in the little court, and, no one being in sight, Jim stooped and kissed her, saying, "At any rate, *that* satisfied him." And blushing and laughing, Margie ran into the house.

CHAPTER V.—JIM'S LETTER.

"Take my half of a broken faith."—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

JIM had gone, and life flowed on once more in the old routine at the little house in Summers Court; and yet not quite the same, for his visit had made a change, and altered the relations of at least two of the little group of friends. Margie had not forgotten her lover's warning, even though she had laughed at him at the time, and teased him for his jealousy; yet his words had sunk into her mind—as even lightly spoken words will do—and spoilt the pleasure she used to find in Forrest's society. As for Forrest himself, he was battling with his disappointment bravely enough, and he was grateful enough to Margie for the pains she took to avoid him. It was better so, he thought, until he had quite accustomed himself to the idea of her as the future Mrs. James Lawson. But, for all this, he did not discontinue his visits to Lollie; indeed, he came oftener than before, for the hot days tried her terribly, and he could not help fancying that she was weaker every time he saw her. Whether Margie noticed it or not, he could not tell; if she did, she gave no sign, but spoke cheerfully of the winter, when Lollie would be stronger—"the summer was too much for her, as she needed bracing." He could not make up his mind to speak to her about Lollie; but, one specially sultry evening in July, after the practice, he was surprised by Margie joining him, and still more, when she began abruptly—

"Don't you think Lollie looks very ill?"

"Not *very* ill, but she certainly seems worse than when I first saw her. Perhaps it is the heat."

"No, it is not the heat. I tried to persuade myself it was that, and hoped against hope, but I can't blind my eyes any longer; she is getting weaker and weaker every day. You *must* see it," she added, turning almost fiercely upon him—"anyone must see it: you only pretend that you don't, to comfort me."

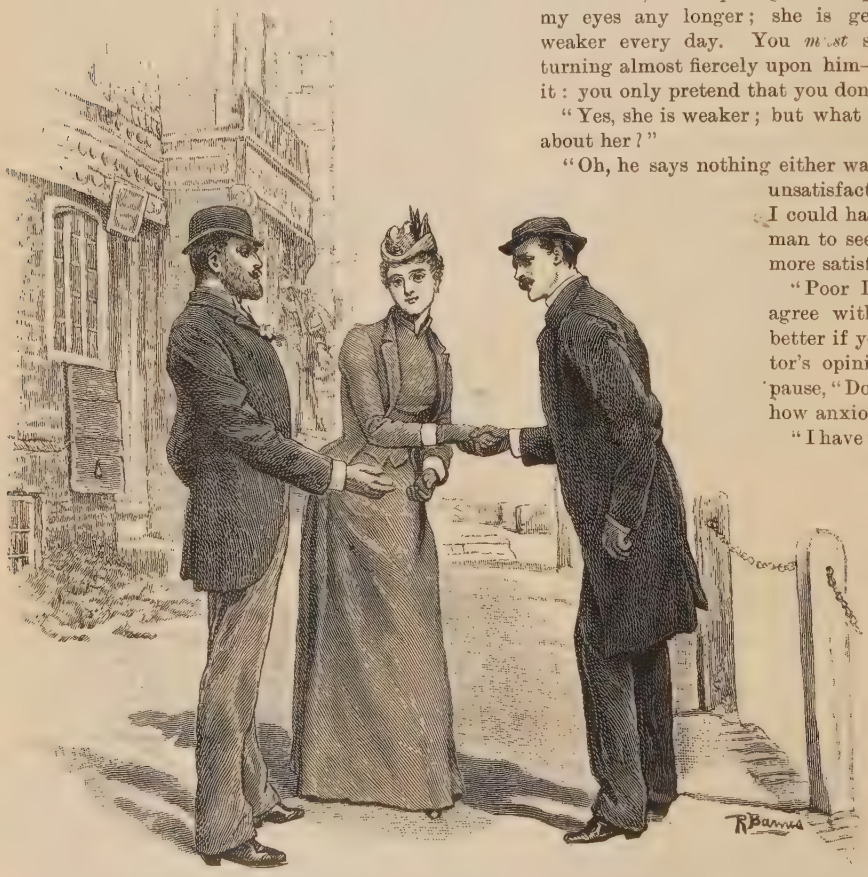
"Yes, she is weaker; but what does the doctor say about her?"

"Oh, he says nothing either way—doctors are such unsatisfactory people. I wish I could have some really good man to see her; I should feel more satisfied."

"Poor Dr. Watson! But I agree with you it would be better if you had another doctor's opinion." Then, after a pause, "Does Mr. Lawson know how anxious you are?"

"I have told him she is worse, but I have not written as strongly as I might. He says that I worry about Lollie, and am over-anxious, and that he does not believe it is really serious. But I shall write to him to-night, and tell him what I think: perhaps it would be well to take her to London?"

Some memory of Lollie's words when she had first



"'I have been hearing all about him from Lollie,' explained Forrest."—*p.* 435.

talked of writing a book, must have lingered in Margie's mind; for after parting with Forrest, she was full of this plan of having another doctor to see her—that "clever doctor," of whom Lollie had said that, in the book, he should "come and cure her." Coming into the room, she found Lollie lying very still, as if asleep, but, as she moved softly, not to wake her, she turned restlessly on her pillows.

"Oh, Margie, I am glad you have come in: play to me a little. I'm so tired, and the music rests me."

"Tired, darling? I wish I could bear all the pain for you."

"I'm glad you can't. Why, if you were a cripple, and I were well, I couldn't do anything to keep you, as you keep me, and then we should have to live at that dreadful house in Clapham."

"Are you happier here, darling?"

"Oh yes. Why, I have never been so happy in all my life as I am now." A lump rose in Margie's throat, and she turned to the piano, and played some soft, sweet melodies—dreamy minor cadences, that harmonised with the dusky twilight and with her own sad heart; and Lollie lay and listened, wrapped in peaceful content.

"Never so happy in all my life as I am now!" What a world of pathos lay in that simple little speech! Margie's memory carried her back to the old country home, with its spacious rooms and lovely garden; and, best of all, her mother, with hair golden as Lollie's own; her mother, who had seemed to her childish fancy almost like an angel. If she had lived, what a different life Lollie's would have been! Even if they had had to bear poverty, there would have been someone to look up to, and to advise them; and in a dim way she was conscious that she herself had suffered almost more than Lollie. If she had not always felt that she stood in antagonism to the world, would she not have been sweet and gentle, and as much beloved as Lollie; and, too, would she have promised to marry Jim? would she not have felt that something more was needed than gratitude and respect, and have waited for the love to come to *her*, that every woman dreams of as the crowning-point of her life?

The music floated on, the minor chords wailing through the melody like some lost spirit telling out its own despair, when Lollie's voice broke in upon her dreams.

"That music is so sad. Have you made it up, Margie? and what is it called?"

"It is a little bit out of our lives, Lollie, yours and mine, dear."

"Our lives are not sad, for I feel so happy now I have you all to myself, darling; but I am very tired, and I think I'll go to bed."

Lollie was often "very tired" now, and went to bed early; but, whether it was her recent conversation with Forrest, or not, Margie felt more anxious about her to-night than she usually did.

Mrs. Watkins had not brought in the lamp, and the little room seemed very empty without Lollie, when she came down-stairs again; she sat down on the sofa, and began to think out her plans. Yes, she would write to Jim. Surely of all people her lover was the one to turn to in a trouble like this. Even Forrest had suggested it as the most likely thing for her to do. She would write the letter now—when a ring and rap startled her, and the next minute Mrs. Watkins came in with the lamp and a letter, and, taking it up, she saw that it was from Jim.

"Now I shall have to answer his, and it will make it easier for me," she thought; as how to put her fears about Lollie into words that he would approve of she did not know, being always more or less afraid of him, though she would not have owned as much, even to herself. She opened the letter impatiently, and saw, to her surprise, that it was a long one, and Jim rarely wrote long letters—excusing himself on the plea that he had so much writing to do, that a long letter would be the "last straw." Decidedly this letter was one that needed much reading!

Over and over again did Margie go through the closely written pages, with a puzzled expression on her face; until at last she laid it down, and, clasping her hands, buried her face in them, and sat, for a few minutes, almost motionless. She understood it all now, saw the meaning running through Jim's carefully chosen phrases, and, seeing it, felt as though her heart must break. He had kept his word about making the home for her that had charmed her fancy, and had written to tell her that her work-a-day life was over—he had been offered the sub-editorship of an Australian paper, and had accepted it. The appointment was a good one, for the paper was capable of being "worked up" under fresh management; and Jim's facile pen gave a very flowery description of Australia, so that she seemed to see the feathery tree-ferns—the deep gorges, with the streams winding through them, and the wide prairies, where her horse's hoofs should sink deep in maidenhair fern and flowers. He thought they would have to sail in October: could she be ready so soon? And then—and here even Jim seemed to have found some little difficulty in saying what he meant—there was Lollie to think about; for she could not go with them. On that point he was quite decided. A third person would spoil the perfect harmony that should exist between husband and wife, and Lollie would take up too much of her sister's time. He would make arrangements that she should be placed in some family where she would be looked after; perhaps such a home might be found in Nunsmere itself; but she must be left behind. It took her a little time to grasp the full purpose of Jim's letter. If she secured her own happiness, it must be at the cost of Lollie's—of Lollie's, whose hold on life was at all times insecure, but who, even to Margie's love-blinded eyes, seemed now bound for a longer voyage than this Australian one. Never did the idea for one moment occur to her that she might tell Jim how ill Lollie was, and offer to go to him when she had left her. No she would give him up, and with him all dreams of a home, and stay with Lollie; and, her mind made up, she felt that she could not sleep until she had written the letter that should tell him all was at an end between them. It was a short one, for her heart was too full for words—

"I can never leave Lollie, who is dearer to me than anything in all the world. If you had really loved me, you would have understood this, and would

"As she had a great deal to tell, Margie sat by her side on the bed, and held her hand."—*p.* 439.

not have asked it of me. We have made a mistake —that is all. You tell me to choose between you and Lollie. I choose Lollie. I hope you may be successful in your new life, and find someone to love you as *I* could never have done. Good-bye. "MARGIE."

And now to post it; for it was not really late, and she would be happier when her good-bye was on its way to Jim; and, putting on her hat, she went into the deserted High Street.

She was not the only person in Nunsmere to whom that night's post had brought an important letter. Nigel Forrest had had the offer of a living—a living with little work, a lovely rectory, and a large income. It meant ease and enjoyment for the rest of his life, and leisure to pursue those intellectual dreams that he had now to put on one side to attend to the sick and the poor of his large parish. And, like Margie, he had said "No" to the offer. Once it would have tempted him, but now his mind was made up: he would work for others, and die in harness; ease and pleasure should be to him words only—he had cast in his lot with the poor, the helpless, the "submerged tenth" of society. He had come out to post his letter, as he felt he should sleep more soundly when his answer was past recall; and he had slipped it in the box, and was turning away, when he saw a slight, tall figure hurry up, and, the gaslight falling on her upturned face, he recognised Margie.

"You here, Miss Smith! Is Lollie worse?"

"No, it is not Lollie, but I had a letter that must be posted."

He could tell by her voice that there was something wrong. He knew her tones so well.

"Not bad news, I hope?"

"Oh, no! it is nothing: only—only I have finished a chapter in my life—the one called Happiness; that is all!" And she turned and left him.

He stood watching her retreating form, lost in amazement. Something must have gone very wrong with her, before she could have spoken to him as she had done to-night—she, so cold and self-contained. And what could she mean by having "finished a chapter in her life—the one called Happiness"? Was it possible that she meant she was free? If so—— But he stopped himself. It was not likely, and he would not wish it; no, it was perhaps some lovers' quarrel only, and all would come smooth. He prayed that it might, and that the "chapter called Happiness" might last her life through; and then he went home, to dream that his prayer had been answered.

Lollie greeted Margie with, "I am not asleep, Margie dear; but you are tired?"

"No, not tired."

"Yes, you are. I can tell as you walk up the stairs; you don't trip up like you always do. Are you unhappy, darling?"

"Yes, because I want you to try and get well and strong, Lollie. It hurts me to see you so weak."

"I do try, Margie—I do, indeed; but I don't seem able to get well. Sometimes I think I never shall be better."

"Yes, you will, for my sake, darling. I can't live without you."

"But you have Jim."

Margie started.

"Jim is not you, Lollie; no one could ever take your place"—and she kissed her passionately. Jim had gone out of her life, but, oh, if Lollie should go too!

"I will try to stay with you, Margie; but if I can't, it makes me happier to know that you have Jim." And then Lollie fell asleep, while Margie lay awake far into the night, feeling that the "chapter called Happiness" was indeed ended.

CHAPTER VI.—THE VALLEY OF SHADOWS.

"And O, we grudged her sair
To the Land o' the Leal."—Scotch Song.

"And Jim sails to-day?"

"Yes, to-day; I hope he will have a good voyage."

"And you are not sorry—are you *sure* that you are not sorry, Margie?" And Lollie's weak voice sounded very anxious.

"Yes, I am *quite* sure, darling. Even if I had loved Jim ever so dearly, I could never have cared for him again after he tried to part you and me. But I don't think I ever did love him; I thought I did, but sometimes one makes a mistake."

"I always said Jim never could be your hero, unless he were quite different, and then, of course, he wouldn't have been Jim!" And Lollie spoke in the satisfied tones of one whose prophecy has been verified, while Margie blushed as she remembered who it was that Lollie had chosen for her hero.

"I don't think you ought to talk, darling; it will make you cough."

"Yes, I must talk. It won't do me any harm, and I have a great deal to tell you."

It was a bright, clear day in October, with a touch of frost in the air—just the sort of day that Margie had declared would make Lollie "well and strong again." But her eyes had been opened, and she knew that Lollie would never again be well and strong; that it was only a question of time, and that then she must be left alone. The end she had dreaded was very near now. A London doctor had been down—a friend, so Nigel Forrest said, of his, who had looked him up; but Margie had an idea that he had really sent for him to see Lollie, and that the fact of the old friendship was brought forward to set her mind at ease. He had been gravely kind to Lollie, and asked so many questions—questions that never seemed to have occurred to old Dr. Watson—that Margie felt her spirits rise, and ran down-stairs hopefully to hear his true opinion. He told her as gently as he could, but there is no real "breaking" of bad news: Lollie was dying; she might live through November, but he thought it very doubtful. There was nothing to be done now but make these last few weeks of her life as happy as possible.

"Shall I tell her?" had been her first question to Forrest, when they were left alone.

"No, I think not. Lollie has lived so near heaven that she needs no help from us on her journey."

And Margie felt that he was right. Still, she could not help fancying that Lollie guessed the truth, and that if she did not talk about it, it was only for fear of distressing her; for latterly the relations between them had seemed changed, and Lollie protected and cared for Margie with a gravely solicitous air that contrasted oddly enough with her childish face. She had been very much distressed at first when she heard that the engagement was broken off, but after a long talk she had had one day with Forrest she seemed satisfied; and when a letter came from Jim, asking Margie to reconsider matters, Lollie made no objection to its being answered with a decided negative. Since the doctor's visit she had not come down-stairs, and the empty sofa, and the crutches standing in the corner, brought home to Margie more vividly than even his words had done that the end was very near. But on the day Jim sailed, Lollie seemed a little better, and more inclined to talk; and as she had "a great deal to tell," Margie sat by her side on the bed, and held her hand. She might as well talk if she could; nothing would hurt her now.

"I want to say something to you, Margie dear. It is a secret, and if I had lived, I would never have told you, but you must hear it: I can't die happy if you don't know."

"Oh, Lollie, why do you talk of dying? I can't bear it." And Margie sobbed aloud, feeling that her sorrow must not be put into words.

"Poor Margie, did you think I didn't guess? I'm sorry—sorry to leave you, darling, and sorry to think I shall never write my book; but I'm always tired now, and no use to anybody, and it is better I should go." Margie's only answer was a sob, so Lollie went on: "But my secret—it is about Nigel Forrest." Margie raised her grief-bowed head, and looked at her, astonished.

"About Nigel Forrest?" she repeated in amazement. "What has he to do with your secret?"

Lollie laughed—a happy, contented little laugh. "Do you remember what a long talk we had together just after you told me about Jim? Well, I was very unhappy after that day, because I knew that I must leave you, and I was afraid you would be lonely. He saw that there was something the matter, and once he made me tell him; and then he said that he had been very unhappy too, because he loved you, and he thought you were going to marry Jim, so that he might not ever think of you. He loves you, Margie, just as you should be loved, darling; not like Jim did, because you are pretty and clever, and he was proud of you; but like I do, because—because I can't help it," Lollie ended, feeling no words could express the love that had been the ruling interest of her life. As Margie

did not speak—being, indeed, too utterly astonished by Lollie's secret to say anything, she went on, "Of course, he didn't mean me to tell you, and perhaps I oughtn't to have done, but I never have kept anything from you yet, and I couldn't do it now, darling. Oh, Margie, you do like him, don't you? He loves you so much, and is good and kind, and quite different from Jim.'

"Yes, I like Mr. Forrest very much—how could I help it when he is your especial friend?—but I don't love him. I don't think I shall ever really love anyone; I have given my heart to you, Lollie, and hearts can't be divided, you know."

"But when I am gone, you will feel that you want a friend. You will be very unhappy at first, because you will miss me—we have always been together—and he will miss me, too, for we are great friends. And then, Margie, you will begin to understand each other; and he loves you so much that you will grow to love him back again; and, if I know, it will make me happy. Oh, Margie! say you will try!" Lollie looked anxious, and Margie kissed her, and said she would try—she would do anything that would make her happy. She thought that nothing mattered very much if Lollie were to die; she had staked her all on this fragile child—hope, love, ambition; and in parting with her, she seemed to be parting with all that made her life worth living. And yet the idea that someone would share her sorrow was not intolerable to her, as she had fancied it would be; it seemed rather to make her less lonely, as Lollie had thought it would. Wise little Lollie! the light from a brighter sky than ours must have made things clear to her, or she would never have thought of this means of comforting Margie.

"Do you remember in my book you were my heroine and he was my hero? I shall never write that book now, Margie; but I always meant the hero and heroine to marry; and, though it won't be written, still I think that part will come true."

"But you were to get well in the book, Lollie." And Margie's voice was very unsteady.

"In the book; but, you see, though I have had the 'clever doctor,' he could do nothing, really. In books it is so easy to make things go right."

After this long talk, Lollie was tired, and the days that followed brought no fresh rally. It seemed as though, now she had told her secret, she had nothing more to keep her, and day by day the flame of life flickered more feebly. It was about a week after Jim had sailed that she seemed sinking, and Margie would not leave her for a moment; but towards evening she slept, and, hearing that Forrest was down-stairs, Margie went to speak to him.

"I should like to see her."

"Well, I must wake her now for her medicine, so you can come with me." And she led him up-stairs.

The lamp was still burning as she bent over Lollie to wake her; but was she asleep? One glance at Forrest's face told her the truth, and she knew that, in her sleep, Lollie had passed through the Valley of Shadows, and that the end had come; and, with a wild cry, she flung herself down by the bed, and sobbed as if her heart must break.

"Lollie, Lollie, come back to me!"

But Lollie had passed beyond the sound of the voice she had loved the best, and Margie heard, through her sobbing, only Forrest's tones in reply—

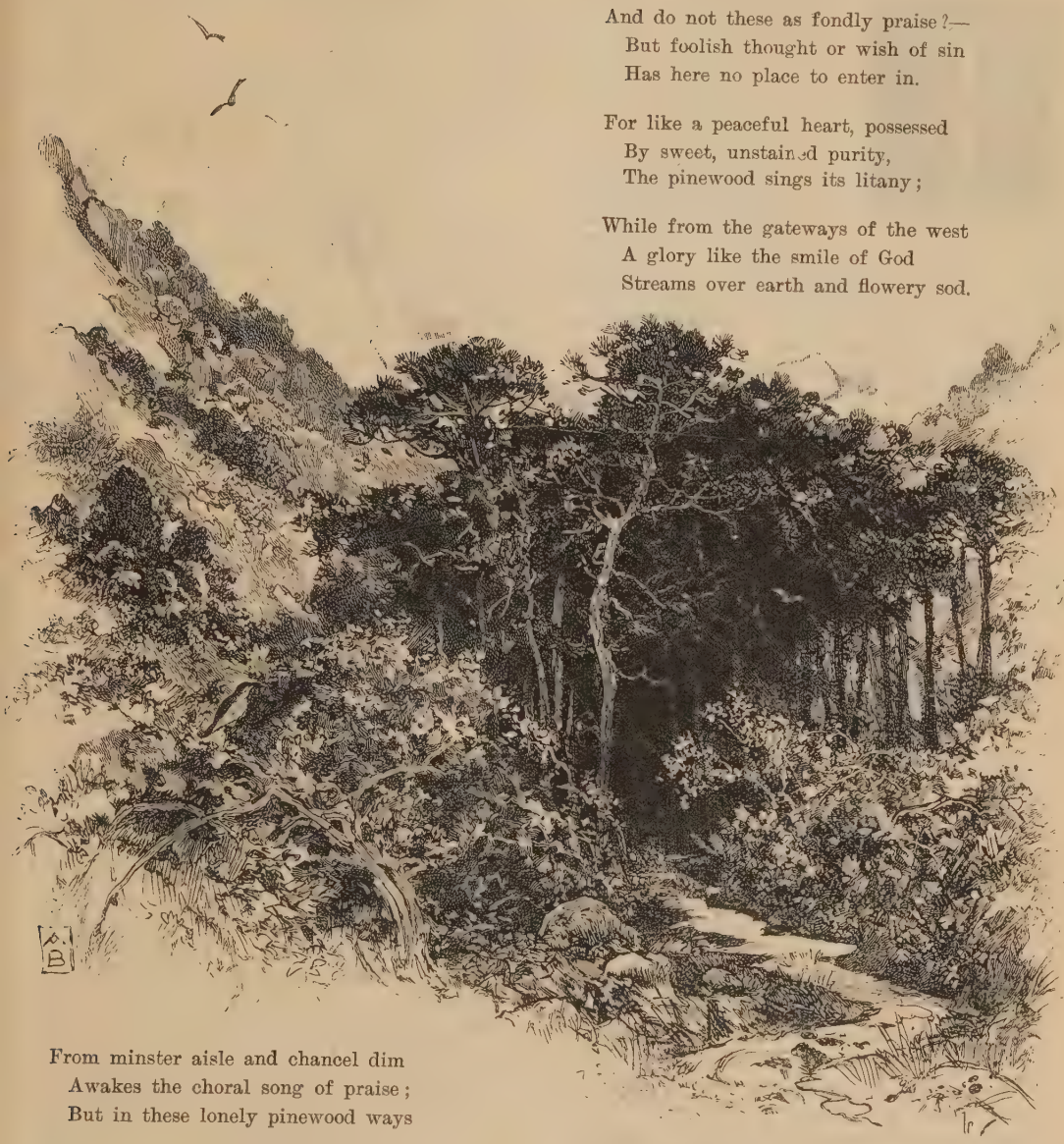
"She is with God; you must not grudge her to Him."

* * * * * *

A year has passed since Lollie's death—a year that has brought changes to Nunsmere, of which not the least is that St. Wilfred's has had to find a new organist; and a burly German now sits at the organ, where Margie's slender figure was such a familiar sight; and, strangely enough, Nunsmere resents the change, and complains that they "preferred Miss Smith's playing," even though they had never carried their admiration to the extent of knowing Miss Smith. The new organist has Mrs. Watkins's rooms—Nunsmere being nothing if not conservative—and though that good lady used always to declare that she "preferred a gentleman lodger," still she is never tired of telling all who care to listen about "Miss Lollie, who was nearly an angel, and now is one altogether, poor darling!" A simple stone marks where the grass waves over Lollie, and Margie comes there every day—sometimes to bring flowers, but oftener to look at it, and walk away again, the happier for that moment spent by her darling's side. But she does not come alone. Lollie's dream has come true—the romance that she never lived to finish—and six months after her death Margie married Nigel Forrest, and, the Vicar leaving, the vacant living of St. Wilfred's was offered to him. So the despised Miss Smith became—in Mrs. Watkins's words—the "leading lady in Nunsmere," which is the reason why St. Wilfred's lost its organist. She bore her honours meekly, and was especially sweet to those who had, in the old days, been anxious to "keep her in her place." For Lollie's death and Forrest's love had helped to soften Margie, and make her as sweet and gentle as it had always been her nature to be. But, as Nunsmere could not be happy without something to talk about, it is thought by half the good people in that gossiping little town that "Mrs. Nigel Forrest is not very happy, and that the first offer her husband gets of a London living, they will go away." The latter part of the story is true; Forrest's heart is in London, and their next move will be to the great city, but—in spite of public opinion—Margie is happy. She loves her husband very dearly; her heart is in his work, and she helps him, as a true wife should, to realise the highest ideal of life. Her love for Forrest is very real and deep, but it grew out of the shadows of Lollie's death, and so it is a graver, calmer love than most young wives would know. She looks preoccupied at times, as though her thoughts were far away; and the little cares of daily life hardly seem of such importance to her as they do to those with whom the world has always gone smoothly; but this is not strange. She gave her heart to Lollie; and so, for her, the better part of life is to come; for "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"; and Margie's treasure is in heaven.

A FOREST EVENSONG.

IT is the hour of evening prayer,
And all the woodland sounds express
A perfect peace and quietness.



From minster aisle and chancel dim
Awakes the choral song of praise;
But in these lonely pinewood ways

Ascends as true a thankful hymn—
The blended voice of breeze and bird,
Of running brook and brambles stirred;

The whisper of the gentle air
Adown the fragrant forest aisle,
Where hidden blossoms breathe and smile.

And do not these as truly raise
The word of thanks, the vesper prayer,
As though the organ's peal were there?

And do not these as fondly praise?—
But foolish thought or wish of sin
Has here no place to enter in.

For like a peaceful heart, possessed
By sweet, unstained purity,
The pinewood sings its litany;

While from the gateways of the west
A glory like the smile of God
Streams over earth and flowery sod.

Oh, if our hearts could worship thus—
With sinless thought, on bended knee,
And fragrance as of flower and tree—

I think the God who cares for us
Would deem the worship we should bring
A not unworthy offering.

ARTHUR L. SALMON.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

April 17th. God's Works and Words.

To read—Ps. xix. Golden Text—verse 7.

INTRODUCTION. A Psalm of David, perhaps composed while herding flocks in fields of Bethlehem. Would sometimes watch by night. (St. Luke ii. 8.) Had sung of the stars as showing God's glory. (Ps. viii. 3.) In this Psalm the dawn and rising sun call forth his praises. The sun declares to the world the greatness of the Creator, but God has given to His people a clearer witness of Himself in His revealed will. The former appeals to man's outward senses, the latter to his inner being—his conscience and heart.

I. God's Voice in Nature. (1—6.) *Glorious*, as proclaiming God's almighty power.

The sun to rule the day. (Ps. cxxxvi. 8.)

The moon and stars to govern the night.

Unceasing. Each day takes up the tale.

Each night repeats the story to the world.

Silent. The tale of God's power and glory as seen in nature is heard, not by the outward, but the inward ear.

Universal. The "line" (or harp-string) pervades the world and reaches all places.

All nations able to hear its sound. (Rom. i. 20.)

Joyful. As a bridegroom going to meet bride.

As a strong man entering on a race.

Sun fills whole world with light and heat.

Typical. Of Christ, the Sun of righteousness. (Malachi iv. 2.)

He is the glory of the Father. (St. John i. 14).

He is the light of all nations. (St. Luke ii. 32.)

He gives warmth of love to men. (1 John iii. 24.)

Lesson. Walk in the light as He is in the light.

II. God's Voice in the Heart. (7—11.)

The law, doctrine (*margin*), or teaching of God.

The testimony (or commandments—Ex. xxv. 16), the witness of God against man's tendency to sin.

The statutes or positive precepts of the law.

The fear of God, or His revealed religion.

The judgments or decisions as to right and wrong.

Notice their effect upon men.

Converting or turning men to God.

As God's word by Nathan to David. (2 Sam. xii. 7.)

Making wise. As Solomon. (1 Kings iii. 12.)

Rejoicing the heart. As David. (Ps. cxix. 97.)

Enlightening. As Daniel, who interpreted the king's dream. (Dan. ii. 36.)

Lesson. Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes.

III. A Prayer Against Sin. (12—14.)

Sins divided into three classes—

Secret, i.e., of ignorance, or involuntary.

Such as Saul persecuting Christians. (1 Tim. i. 13.)

Presumptuous, i.e., wilful. Such as Korah. (Num. xvi. 3.)

Habitual—tyrants of the soul. Such as Judas.

Three means of deliverance from sin.

Prayer, meditation, trust in God.

Lesson. Lord, save me.

April 24th. The Lord my Shepherd.

To read—Ps. xxiii. Golden Text—verse 1.

Introduction. Another Psalm of David, either written when as a shepherd-boy he tended his father Jesse's flocks at Bethlehem (1 Sam. xvi. 2), or else written in later years, recounting his lifelong experience of God's goodness to him. The image of sheep and their shepherd would be familiar to the Jews, who were a nation of shepherds (Gen. xlvii. 3). The Psalm is a song of a Christian pilgrim looking up to God in confidence notwithstanding the perils and weariness of the way. He is not only perfectly safe, but happy and joyful in the hands of the Good Shepherd.

I. The Careful Shepherd. (1—3.) Four marks of his care.

Supplies all needs—food, drink, care, shelter.

Examples. Rachel at the well. (Gen. xxix. 10.)

David delivering flock from lion. (1 Sam. xvii. 34.)

Rests the flock in green pastures.

Example. Moses leading Jethro's sheep to shade of Sinai. (Ex. iii. 1.)

Restores wanderers. Parable of lost sheep. (St. Luke xv. 3.)

Leads in good paths. Flocks settled in Goshen. (Gen. xlvii. 6.)

All this typical of the Good Shepherd. (St. John x. 11.)

He supplies His people's wants.

Food to Elijah when on journey. (1 Kings xix. 8.)

Water to Israelites at Horeb. (Ex. xvii. 6.)

Protection to Elisha at Dothan. (2 Kings vi. 17.)

He gives rest to the weary.

Israelites in Canaan after wanderings.

Early Christians after persecution. (Acts ix. 31.)

So, too, with deeper needs of the soul.

Christ provides spiritual food. (St. John vi. 51.)

He gives the water of life. (St. John iv. 10.)

He keeps His people safe. (St. John x. 28.)

He guides to everlasting life. (St. John xiv. 6.)

He restores wanderers. St. Peter after his fall.

David after his sin.

He leads gently. Lydia's heart opened. (Acts xvii. 14.)

The gaoler led to believe in God. (Acts xvii. 34.)

II. THE TRUSTING SHEEP. (4—6.) *Safe* in danger.

Daniel preserved in den of lions. (Dan. vi. 22.)

Joseph kept safe when tempted to sin.

Fed amidst enemies.

David fleeing from Absalom supplied by Barzillai. (2 Sam. xvii. 27.)

The Lord's supper at Troas. (Acts xx. 7.)

Mercy continually. David's whole life.

Heaven at last. Rest for the weary.

III. LESSONS. 1. My sheep hear My voice.

2. Lead *me* in Thy paths and teach me.

3. The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.

MAY 1ST. THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT.

To read—Ps. li. 1—13. *Golden Text—ver.* 10.

INTRODUCTION. The occasion of this Psalm is well known. David the king had taken as his wife Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and had caused her husband to be slain. (2 Sam. x. 15.) For a whole year he lived in sin, his conscience ill at ease, but giving no sign of penitence. But God did not leave His servant alone. He sent Nathan the prophet to him. His parable of the ewe-lamb brought his sin home to him, and David, humbled and broken-hearted, poured out his confession.

I. CONFESSION OF SIN. (1—6.) A prayer for mercy.

Why does he ask for mercy? Because of God's *character.*

God is abundant in loving-kindness. (Ex. xxxiv. 6.)

Will He then pardon his great sin?

God's mercy is infinitely tender.

Will He wipe out and forget his transgression?

What is the nature of his sin?

Deep and ingrained, needing thorough cleansing.

Transgression of God's righteous law.

Sin against a holy God. (Isaiah vi. 3.)

Lifelong, as inherited from his parents. (Ver. 5.)

Inward in heart as well as outward act.

Deserving God's heaviest judgments. (Ver. 4.)

See this in the elements of true repentance.

His confession is *thorough*, keeping nothing back.

His contrition is *sincere*, making no excuses.

His changed life will show it to be *genuine.*

II. PRAYER FOR CLEANSING. (7—13.) What does he ask God to do?

Purge with hyssop as a leper or one in contact with a dead body. (Lev. xiv. 4.)

Result will be removing of foulness. (Is. i. 16.)

Cleanse as Naaman. (2 Kings v. 14.)

Result—his heart will be clean once more.

Speak glad news of full forgiveness.

Result—his heart would rejoice more than a sufferer taken off the rack.

Hide His face from his sins.

Create a new (*i.e.*, restored) heart.

Renew a firm, steadfast spirit in him.

Restore the joy of His salvation.

Notice the two things David dreads—

God's presence removed, as from Egyptians. (Ex. xiv. 20.)

God's spirit withdrawn, as from Saul. (1 Sam. xxviii. 15.)

The result will be twofold—

He would make known God's ways to others.

Sinners would be reclaimed.

III. LESSONS. 1. The awfulness of sin.

2. The need of true repentance.

3. The pardoning love of God.

4. The joy following forgiveness.

MAY 8TH. DELIGHT IN GOD'S HOUSE.

To read—Ps. lxxxiv. Golden Text—verse 4.

INTRODUCTION. This is the first of a set of Psalms by the sons of Korah, who were "keepers of the gates of the tabernacle." (1 Chron. ix. 19.) Hence the allusion to the "doorkeepers." (Ver. 11.) Psalms show great devotion to the House of God.

I. GOD'S HOUSE DESCRIBED. (1—7.) *Its nature.*

Amiable, *i.e.*, loved and lovely.

Its Description. Tabernacles or dwelling-places.

Contained the mercy-seat in Most Holy Place. (Ex. xxvi. 34.)

Holy fire always burning in Holy Place, symbol of God's perpetual presence. (Ex. xxvii. 20.)

Courts in which daily sacrifices offered.

Its worshippers. Some dwell always there.

They worship continually day by day. (Ps. lxv. 4.)

Some praise watching at night. (Ps. cxxxiv. 1.)

Others go up from time to time. (St. Luke ii. 41.)

The "ways" to Jerusalem are their delight.

Their sorrows are turned to a well of joy.

Showers of blessings descend upon them.

Their companies increase as they near the city.

All at length appear before God for prayer.

II. GOD'S BLESSING SOUGHT. (8—12.) 1. *The Address*—

To the Lord of Hosts, whose servant he is.

To the God of Jacob, his father's God.

To God, the Shield of the anointed king.

2. *The Prayer.* To bless the king set on his throne.

Especially to bless him in God's House.

For one day there, is better than all elsewhere.

The lowest place in God's House better than the highest without God.

3. *The Result.* God's blessing like the sun.

Gives light and understanding to the simple.

Gives warmth of love to those it reaches.

God's blessing like a shield.

Protects from harm all His people.

God's favour gives grace now and glory hereafter.

All good things here given to the righteous. (Rom. viii. 32.)

All future blessings theirs hereafter.

III. LESSONS. The privileges of true believers.

1. Love for the House of God.

2. The joy of prayer and praise and worship.

3. The blessedness of those who trust in Him.

MRS. PAGE'S APOSTLE SPOONS.

THERE were twelve of them—solid silver, the only real silver in the family; and seeing that Mrs. Page was the latest and youngest addition, naturally the elder branches felt that it would have been more becoming if she had contented herself with electroplate; and, as naturally, Mrs. Page failed to see the matter in the same light.

"My dear aunt bought and paid for them, Martin," she said, rather resentfully, when the first rumours of disapproval reached her ears; "and I am sure she could not have chosen a more suitable wedding present. It is infinitely better to have some little thing really good, than the heaps of rubbish some people inflict upon their friends."

It is possible that Mrs. Page's remarks may have had indirect reference to the huge Britannia-metal covers that had been Mr. and Mrs. William Page's contribution to the new establishment; but that did not appear to occur to Mr. Page.

"Perhaps. But a house needs big things, as well as little things; and Mrs. William seems to think the money might have been laid out to more advantage."

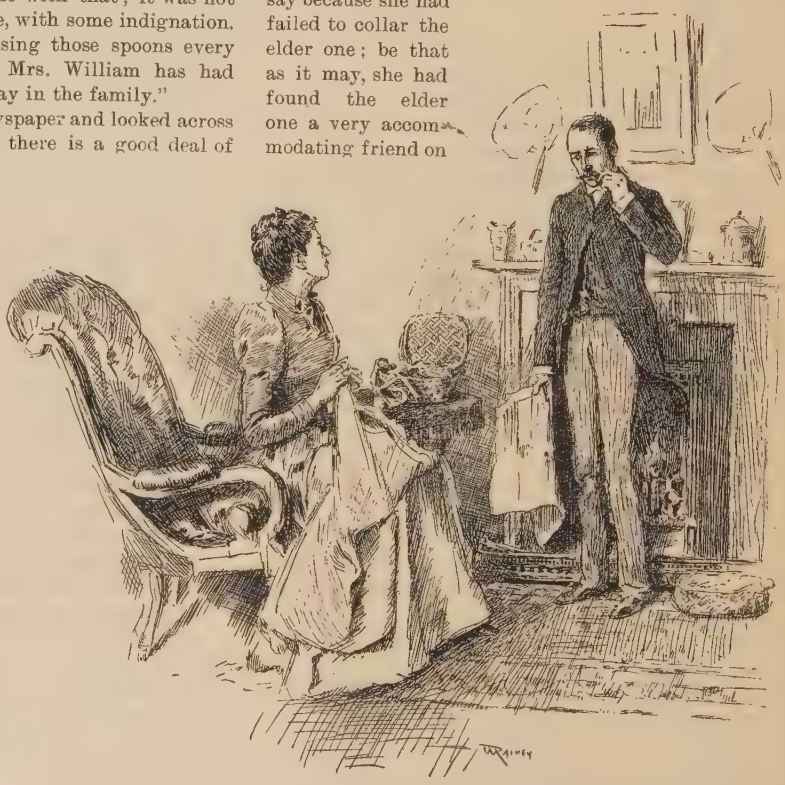
"But she has nothing to do with that; it was not her money," retorted the bride, with some indignation. "I shall make a point of using those spoons every time she comes to see us. Mrs. William has had quite too much of her own way in the family."

Mr. Page laid down his newspaper and looked across at his wife. "For all that, there is a good deal of common sense about her, Madge, and you might do worse than consult her in small matters. I have no objection whatever to a display of silver, when it is in keeping with its surroundings; but as things are, I must say that your aunt would have shown more discretion if she had given you something practical. It will be many years before we are in a position to use real silver."

Poor Mrs. Page! She looked almost scared at this exposition of her husband's views. Was it possible that Mrs. William was to be the dictator in their household as well as her own? Martin had lived near his brother's house before his marriage, and spent most of his spare time there, so she could make allowance for him, if he could not cast off the yoke all at once; but for herself——

"I don't think age or experience necessarily implies wisdom," she said presently. "I hope I shall be able to manage my house without any consultation with other people."

Mr. Page made no answer. For himself, he was profoundly indifferent whether he stirred his tea with silver or pewter, but he had great faith in his energetic, bustling sister-in-law, and, as yet, but little acquaintance with his wife's capabilities; moreover, it was scarcely natural that she should be as wise in some minor details, as the more experienced matron. Mrs. William had an unwavering confidence in herself that carried weight with most people, and she was not backward in asserting her opinions. It was unfortunate for the new household that she disapproved not only of the spoons, but of Mrs. Page likewise. She had come upon the scene rather unexpectedly, and come from a distance, and was altogether a superfluous addition. With an ample supply of nephews and nieces, and her own and her husband's society, Mrs. William could not understand what Martin needed with a wife at all. Mrs. William was the wife of the younger brother—some people were ill-natured enough to say because she had failed to collar the elder one; be that as it may, she had found the elder one a very accommodating friend on



"Mr. Page laid down his newspaper and looked across at his wife."

occasions when her exchequer was at a low ebb; and there had been seasons when a low ebb seemed to be the chronic condition.

The two brothers composed an entire firm, and traded under the title of "Page and Page, coal merchants"; but it was by no means the only firm of coal merchants in the district, and after the rent of the office, the clerk, and the boy, and sundry other items, had been taken off the profits, anything but an ample margin was left for division between the partners. And now Martin, whose clear duty it was to have remained single, and make up deficiencies when required, had taken to himself a wife—a mere girl, too, who would think of nothing but show and extravagance.

"Martin has made a serious mistake—a very serious mistake," Mrs. William said to her husband the first time she interviewed her new sister-in-law. "He has been carried away by a pretty face. What kind of a wife is that for a man with his way to make, when even I, with all my experience, can hardly keep things going? I hope he may not have cause to regret it before he is much older."

"She looks pleasant enough, at any rate," remarked Mr. William. He could not but acknowledge that his brother had a right to choose for himself, though he was not enthusiastic about the marriage, any more than his wife.

"Mrs. Page glanced from one to the other as she sat down on the office stool."—*p.* 447.

"Pleasant! oh yes. But there is something more than pleasantness needed, if people are to do any good in the world."

Mr. William coughed. Perhaps he was thinking that he could do with a little more of that feature in his own lot.

"There is one point I am clear of," went on the lady, in no uncertain tones: "I told him very plainly what I thought of those ridiculous spoons. I don't think she will be allowed to flourish them too often before the public."

It was July when Mr. Page brought his wife to Saltoun. The summer and autumn went by without any event that specially called for reprobation. Mrs. Page went her way quietly and unobtrusively enough; Mrs. William went hers. It almost seemed as if her prognostications of evil had been without foundation, when suddenly one morning's post brought an unexpected and unwelcome invitation from Mrs. Page "to meet a few friends at tea." The date mentioned was four or five days distant, and from the general style of the note, it was evident that something more than an informal family affair was on foot. Mrs. William passed it across the table to her husband, with a look that said more than words.

"Well, I suppose we shall go, my dear," was his comment. "It seems to be intended for a kind of party."

"Yes; and Martin ought to know better than countenance such nonsensical ideas. He is about the last person I should have thought capable of encouraging such folly."

"It was for the sake of pleasing her, I daresay. She is but young yet, you must remember."

That was the exact state of the case: Mr. Page had vetoed the whole proceeding at its first mention; it was only on the third hearing, and when he saw his wife's unmistakable disappointment, that he gave way and allowed the invitations to be issued.

"Mind, it must be a perfectly plain affair, Madge," he stipulated. "We can't pretend to give regular parties; and, to tell the truth, I don't particularly care about them if we could."

"I'm afraid it will be a very long way from a regular party," returned Mrs. Page, rather ruefully. "I don't know enough people to mount up to more than a dozen, and that includes ourselves."

"A dozen!" echoed Mr. Page, in some consternation. "How many does it take to make a crowd, Madge?"

"However, perhaps it is as well," continued his wife, declining to notice the interruption, "for the sake of the spoons; there are only a dozen of them."

"Madge"—Mr. Page quitted his chair and went over to the hearthrug—"would it disappoint you very much if I asked you not to exhibit those spoons that night? I know the ground here better than you, and it would save a good deal of comment."

Mrs. Page looked back at him, almost dumb with

dismay; then her face flushed scarlet. "Indeed I should mind it, Martin. I don't think I am called upon to give in to such narrow-minded prejudices. The spoons were honestly come by, and it is no business of anybody's whether they are silver or lead."

"I understand all that perfectly, Madge. I am not insisting upon it, only telling you what I should greatly prefer. I leave the matter to you."

Mr. Page went out into the lobby and put on his hat, and departed to the office, without waiting for any rejoinder. Mrs. Page sat very still where he left her, a rather set expression creeping over her face. She had a decided dash of self-will in her composition, and then and there she made up her mind to stand up for her rights. The spoons should not be kept in the background. What was the use of being married and owning any property at all, if it was to be hidden out of sight and knowledge, to oblige people who had no manner of right to criticise? If it were Martin's own idea, she might think about it; but it had originated with Mrs. William, and give way she would not. Mrs. Page straightway set about organising her party, with all the pomp and circumstance her limited surroundings would permit.

The evening came in due course. The table was set out with sundry adornments of ferns and grasses that Saltoun was not accustomed to; generally speaking, their floral decorations began and ended with a solid nosegay, packed into a pink or blue jar in the centre of the table. Anything further was an innovation, and to be regarded with caution, if not with positive suspicion. However, the decorations were a secondary matter. First and foremost shone the apostle spoons—the whole twelve—in the highest possible condition of sheen and burnish. Their peculiar form caught every eye at once. No one made any remark at the time—that would not have been in accordance with Saltoun manners—but Madge observed more than one of her guests furtively examining the hall-mark on the back.

About the effect upon her husband she was not so sure. Beyond that one request, he had made no further reference to them, but there was a tightening of the lines about his mouth when he first perceived them on the table, and Madge fancied that he purposely avoided addressing her in any way, during the progress of the feast. Mrs. William Page ostentatiously laid her spoon aside, and drank her tea unstirred.

"I beg your pardon," said Madge, with great politeness. "Have I neglected to give you a spoon? Allow me," handing her own.

"Not at all," returned the lady frigidly. "I do not require one."

Madge did not press the point. She had expected little from that lady, but somehow this tacit snub, coming before her husband and on the head of his advice, rankled. It was a little difficult to keep a shade of tartness out of her tone, when next she had occasion to address her sister-in-law.

The evening wore slowly on. There was conversation—chiefly about business—among the gentlemen, who drifted apart at one side of the room. Mrs. William led the van at the other side, and discoursed learnedly upon domestic management. Madge, feeling a little out of both factions, sat down on the sofa by an elderly lady, Mrs. Bailey, a complete stranger, who had arrived in the train of a certain Mrs. Gale. The Gales were important people in the coal trade, Madge discovered later, but not particularly interesting apart from that fact. Mrs. Bailey was, for she turned to her hostess, and congratulated her in no measured terms upon being the possessor of those apostle spoons.

"They are the prettiest I have seen for years, Mrs. Page; and if I should ever come upon any at all like them, I should be greatly tempted to make myself a handsome present."

"I am very glad you like them," said Madge, quite gratefully. "This is the first time we have used them. They were a wedding present."

"A very charming one," returned the visitor cordially; "and a pleasant reminder of the giver. I think people should always bear that in mind in choosing presents. It is good to be commemorated by something pretty, if in no other way."

That Mrs. Bailey was the nicest and most sensible person present, was a conclusion Madge came to on the spot. The little tribute of admiration revived her spirits, and carried her contentedly through the rest of the evening. Early hours were the rule at Saltoun. By eleven, Mr. and Mrs. Page were left to the undisturbed enjoyment of their own fireside, surrounded by empty chairs, stranded forlornly in all parts of the room.

"Well?" began Mrs. Page interrogatively.

"Well, you carried your point, Madge, and I suppose you are satisfied," was his chilly response.

Madge had drawn up one of the stray chairs to the hearth for a friendly chat. She suddenly rose up and chased it back to its lawful corner, with a good deal of unnecessary energy.

"I am satisfied so far, that it will be a very considerable time before I suggest anything of the kind again," she said, with some temper. "You and Mrs. William together, have taken care that there should be as many obstacles thrown in the way as possible. I did not know that this was to be the order of things when I was married."

"You must remember I clearly explained the state of affairs to you beforehand," said Mr. Page curtly. "I told you that I was not a rich man, and had little prospect of being one, as far as I could see. You came here with your eyes open."

"It isn't the richness, or poorness, that I mind," declared Mrs. Page, with more force than elegance. "It's the narrowness and contrariness, without any necessity for it."

"That is exactly what you will not try to understand," was the retort. "For instance, there are those very Gales you were treating so coolly to-night; we are deep in their books. They know pretty well the trouble we have to meet our regular bills, and yet we were flaunting those expensive spoons before them—better than any they have in their own house; it made my face hot to see them on the table. I thought my wife might have shown a little more consideration for my wishes, Madge."

Mrs. Page stood still by the hearth, with a face that had grown suddenly sober.

"Why was I not told about this before, Martin? I knew nothing. You have never explained anything to me."

"I would rather you knew nothing now," he returned. "I make it a rule to bring no business cares home. Money troubles are not exactly cheerful subjects for conversation."

There was no more to be extracted from him. He was annoyed with himself for having said so much. Madge went away into the kitchen and gathered together her precious spoons. All the beauty and brightness seemed to have gone out of them. She locked them away at the bottom of an unused drawer without one lingering glance. Their first public appearance had not been a success.

There were no immediate ill effects from the display; by common consent the matter was allowed to drop; but Mrs. Page, watching the course of events with newly enlightened eyes, noted a good many items she would have passed by at an earlier stage. The bright sunshine and the lengthening spring days were not to be regarded solely from an æsthetic standpoint. Sympathy with nature did not alter the fact that it meant a falling off in the demand for coal, fewer orders, and less money coming in. There were predictions abroad of a long hot summer, but little rejoicing was heard over that prospect in the office on Bell's Wharf. More and more did Mrs. William bemoan her brother-in-law's shortsightedness in embarking in his matrimonial venture at such a crisis; possibly her brother-in-law may have had misgivings about it himself, when he looked at his young wife's face: it was gradually taking on a graver, more subdued air; and yet she did not look unhappy, and he could not bring himself to wish the deed undone. It was for better, for worse, they had taken each other, and if the worse had come sooner than it had been looked for—well, they were together, and by-and-bye the crisis would be tided over, as others had been before.

"I 'm not so sure about this one, though," said the junior partner rather despondently one afternoon when Mr. Page expressed this sentiment. "It 's a stiff pull this time, and no mistake; there 's a matter of six pounds short in that account of Gale's; if we can't meet it by Wednesday, they intimated pretty plainly that the account would be closed, and you know what that means to us just now."

"There 's Macpherson's to set against it," remarked Mr. Page, after a minute or two's consideration of the columns before him.

"Macpherson's: it 's not due for a month, and catch him paying up one cent before its lawful time. You can't get blood out of a stone."

"I suppose we couldn't borrow it till then," rather hesitatingly. "I can't raise another pound, or I 'd not suggest it, William. Prices are going up, if we could but weather it out."

"I can't do it, Martin. I 'm up to my last shilling at home. And that 's not all. Maria 's ill."

"Maria!" ejaculated Mr. Page; "it 's not often she breaks down. What is wrong?"

"Worry," returned her husband briefly. "She will hear all that is to be heard, and she 's not one to take things easily."

"What possesses you to tell her? I take care my wife hears nothing but what I choose to tell her," said Mr. Page, with some impatience.

"I don't know but it 's the best plan," admitted the other; "but your wife is made of different stuff. It 's too late for us to take up new ways, and it 's not easy to drive a woman with a mind of her own."

"Isn't it?" There was a little laugh behind him, and Mrs. Page came forward from the doorway, with a rather mischievous face.

"Ah! I didn't know you were within hearing; but it 's true, all the same."

Mrs. Page glanced from one to the other as she sat down on the office stool, hastily cleared for her accommodation. That something not quite satisfactory was under discussion she could see, but whether she would be taken into confidence was another question.

"You don't often patronise the office, Madge," remarked her husband; "we were hardly expecting you to come down upon us this way."

"It was politely hinted to me once that the office was intended for more profitable visitors," she returned. "I am sorry I could not bring an extensive order with me."

"So am I," broke in William grimly; "we could do with one very well indeed."

"I had to come very near Bell's Wharf," continued Mrs. Page, "and it was close upon six, so I thought you might be nearly ready for leaving, Martin."

"I shall be ready in less than five minutes, if you will wait that time." He went on with a note he was writing.

Mrs. Page sat and looked out of the grimy window at the grimier wharf. It was not a cheerful outlook. As a general rule, the coal trade is not favourable for the cultivation of sentiment; all the conditions of its existence are against it. Madge felt that a good deal of allowance ought to be made for all concerned in coal on that account; possibly even the William Pages might have been more likeable people in any other line of business; possibly she herself might develop into a second Mrs. William, in course of years.

There came a second interruption before that note was ended. A stout red-headed man bustled in, and, as far as Madge could make out from her place by the window, proceeded to book a rather considerable order. There was a fair amount of talk about freights, trucks, dues, that was so much Greek to her ears, but some expression at the end arrested her attention.

"The usual terms: net cash every three months, I suppose?"

Neither of the partners answered for a moment, then it was the junior who came to the fore. "You would not care to make it cash and five discount for the first consignment, I suppose?"

"Certainly not," was the prompt response. "I can get it done, any house in the trade, on the regular terms. If you don't care to work on those lines, there 's an end of the matter."

"The three months will suit us quite well,"

interposed Martin Page; "the order shall be carried out to the best of our ability."

The stout man bustled off without loss of time to catch some particular car. Page and Page sat looking at each other with anxious faces.

"Well, I hope you see your way to undertake it, Martin," said the junior, wiping his damp brow.

"By hook or by crook we must undertake it," was the answer, with a warning glance at Madge's corner. "We cannot afford to let it slip past us. Gale's account must be met somehow."

Madge left her seat suddenly, and came up to the table. "Is Gale's account very serious, Martin?" she asked. "I could not help hearing a little."

"No, it's not serious at all, in one sense; only, as it happens, we have not the wherewithal to meet it just now."

"And if that gets abroad, our credit 's gone," added his brother gloomily.

Madge turned to him quickly. "How much do you need?"

He laughed unmirthfully. "We need a good deal, but five or six pounds would tide us over the worst."

"Come, it's no use going into details at this time of night," interrupted Mr. Page. "I'm ready now, Madge, if you are; we can do no more till to-morrow."

It was a rather silent walk home. Mr. Page was probably pondering over the Gale's account. Madge was thinking something out to herself so intently, that she never even noticed his silence. She gave herself a little shake, as she went up the steps to their own door. "That will just do," she said, half-aloud, with a sigh of relief.

"What will do?" asked her husband, glancing round as he put in his latchkey.

"Nothing you would understand," she laughed. "We are out of the office now—there is no need to be deferential."

"Then the office is the only place where I am to have any deference?"

"The chief place. You know, one can't very well beard a lion in his own den."

Madge tied on her bonnet after breakfast the next morning—a close, sultry morning, not encouraging for the coal industry—and opened the drawer, where for months, in solitude and darkness, had lain her apostle spoons. They would never grace her table any more. She stood looking down at them with misty eyes, thinking of all the housewifely pride and pleasure she had taken in them once—was it less than a year ago? It might have been in some remote past, so far away she seemed to have wandered from that happy, careless time. And yet—and yet, though she could not reason about it, there was some deeper, stronger feeling in her heart now, something she had had no understanding of in those earlier days. Life might be more serious, but Madge was not at all sure that she would be willing to go back to that smoother level, even if she could. She wrapped her spoons up in their soft coverings, and took them with her on her expedition.

It was to quite the other side of Saltoun—Mrs. Bailey's house. Mrs. Bailey had admired the spoons greatly the night of that luckless party, it might be that she would be willing to buy them; if not, some other quarter must be tried. It was Madge's first essay at barter, and her face grew hot and her steps slow and heavy as she neared the end of her journey. She would have been almost glad to hear the lady was out, when she finally opened the garden gate, and rang the front bell.

Mrs. Bailey was at home, and somehow Madge got through her tale. "It's not that I'm tired of them or ungrateful for them: don't think that; only I do want some money very badly just now, and I couldn't think of any other way, or anyone else to ask."

"It is very kind of you to give me the first chance, Mrs. Page," declared Mrs. Bailey, with a womanly tact for which Madge blessed her memory for long afterwards. "We all want a little ready money sometimes, and it will save me the trouble of going to town to look for a set. Would you think six pounds sufficient for them? That was the sum I was prepared to spend upon them."

"They cost exactly that," stammered Madge. "Ought you to pay as much for them now that they are second-hand?"

"You cannot have taken very much wear out of them yet," returned Mrs. Bailey. "You told me that was their first appearance. I shall be quite pleased with my share in the bargain, if you are."

And so Madge's spoons passed out of her keeping; she went back with a lighter step and six bright sovereigns in the depths of her purse—not straight home; she took in Bell's Wharf on the way, and paid a second visit to Messrs. Page and Page's office.

"Why, Madge, back again?" said her husband, looking up in some surprise over the top of his ledger. "Is anything wrong?"

"No," she answered, going close up to the desk, and grasping the rail to keep up her courage. "I—I wanted to ask you if you had got Gale's account settled yet?"

"Madge, my dear, this is my department; I will attend to these things," he said, with a little contraction of his brows. "You cannot help, and I am very sorry you should have heard anything to disturb you."

"It's not that at all, Martin," she said earnestly. "I got six pounds from someone this morning; let me help the department this once."

Mr. Page flushed a dusky red. "What have you been doing, Madge? Where did it come from?"

"It was for those unlucky spoons," she said lightly. "When I came to think it over, I found Mrs. William was quite right: electroplate *is* good enough to use, so I just disposed of them."

There was a minute's silence in the office. "Thank you, Madge," said Mr. Page, in a rather husky voice.

Madge slipped her little pile into his hand. The spoons themselves had never given her the real happiness the price of them was giving. Mr. Page counted the coins over thoughtfully. "It's not professional to say much in business hours, Madge," he said, dropping them into a roomy cash-box, "but I'll not forget this, or your apostle spoons either, dear."

Madge took her departure then; as she was crossing the wharf, the window by the desk was suddenly

thrown up, and Mr. Page put out his head. "William is not coming back to the office to-day, Madge; you might look round and tell him it's all right, and tell Mrs. William how," he added as he shut it down.

Madge's visits to her sister-in-law had been few and far between; she was shown into the uncompromising sitting-room, where the mistress of the house, looking far from well, sat in the midst of her juvenile brood.

"'Martin wished me to call,' she explained."

The open sewing-machine was banked up by a pyramid of "plain" sewing. Madge was always painfully conscious of her own shortcomings in that room; she sat meekly down on a hard chair, and took her youngest nephew on her knee.

"Martin wished me to call," she explained, after Mrs. William had remarked that the claims of the said plain sewing admitted of no morning walks in their household. "I was to tell you that Gale's account is provided for; he thought you might be feeling anxious."

"Indeed, we were more than anxious," said Mrs. William, relaxing a little; "it would have been ruin pure and simple for us. Where did the money come from, I wonder?"

"It was those silver spoons—the apostle spoons," said Madge. "Someone gave me six pounds for them; and they were no real use to us."

Mrs. William looked at her curiously. "Why, I thought you set such store on those spoons!"

"So I did," answered Madge simply; "but I value them more now that they have helped my husband a little when he needed it."

Mrs. William stitched down the length of a seam without making any comment; then, as Madge rose up to go, she rose too. "Well, my dear"—it was the first time Madge had heard the term from her—"Well, my dear, I don't quite see the advantage of apostle spoons myself, but if ever your husband is able to afford it, I shall be glad to hear that you have got another set to take the place of them."

The coal trade has not risen to that point yet, but Mrs. Page is quite content. She reminds her husband sometimes that of all their wedding presents, the set of apostle spoons was the only one that proved of any practical use—another argument in favour of her theory that quality rather than quantity ought to be the great consideration for wedding presents; and probably, when Page and Page own a coal-mine, instead of an office on Bell's Wharf, Mrs. Page may be able to carry her views into practice.

Sarah Pitt.

THE LESSONS OF SPRING.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR ALEXANDER ROBERTS, D.D., ST. ANDREWS.

"While the earth remaineth, seed-time shall not cease."—GEN. viii. 22.
"Thou renewest the face of the earth."—Ps. civ. 30.
"Now learn a parable of the fig-tree."—ST. MATT. xxiv. 32.

BEYOND all other times, at this season of the year all Nature seems vocal with the praise of her great Author. The most prosaic mind can scarcely fail, amid the various and newborn beauty of spring, to imbibe in some measure the spirit of poetry, and to hear all natural objects proclaiming the goodness and power of the Almighty. The whole earth is now throbbing, as it were, with the utterance of that solemn "Thou" of the Psalmist, when he declares, "Thou renewest the face of the earth." From the opening bud and the expanding flower, from the grassy field and the leafy tree, from the joyous bird soaring in the sky and the no less happy insect chirping among the herbage, there issues forth a voice which speaks to reason's ear of the Creator. Never is it felt more easy to realise the working of God than when we, having witnessed the barrenness and death of winter, behold life and beauty returning to the face of the natural world. A Divine breath seems now passing over the earth, and under its soft resistless influence the most marvellous effects are produced. Were it not that we are so familiar with the change, we could scarcely help feeling that a miracle, or rather a thousand miracles, have lately been wrought before our eyes. On every side we witness proofs of the presence and power of God, and we should gladly trace to His goodness all that charms us at this delightful season of the year. Our feeling should be that which a devout interpreter of Nature has expressed in addressing the Almighty—

> "Forth in the pleasing spring
> *Thy* beauty walks, *Thy* tenderness and love;"

and, with the Psalmist, we should be ready to say to God, as we contemplate the blessed results now flowing from His gracious Providence, "*Thou* renewest the face of the earth."

But we must beware lest our feelings end in mere sentiment, and should see that they are carried to practical account. Our Lord says to us, "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree;" and, seeking to act in the spirit of these words, we may well begin by finding among the lessons of spring—

A proof of our entire dependence upon God.

I need hardly guard any reader of this paper against the notion that the vicissitudes of the seasons are to be ascribed simply to the operation of what are called the laws of Nature, without immediate reference to the great Creator and Governor of the world. To leave God out of view while we contemplate His works is as irrational as it is unscriptural. A law has no intelligence or power to execute itself; nor can we conceive, without an instantaneous sense of impiety as lurking in the thought, that God should have established any order of things at first which would act independently of Him for all time to come. No; the only statement with respect to the recurrence of that period of the year now passing over us in which either the mind or heart can rest, is such as that of the Psalmist when he says, with reference to God, "*Thou* renewest the face of the earth." In the lengthening hours of day, in the softer and more genial air, in the sweet refreshing showers which have been falling on the ground, in the more powerful sunshine which has roused the torpid fields to germination and fertility, in the verdure which has crept over and covered the bleak and cheerless aspect of the country, in the budding of the trees and the opening of the flowers, in the unfettered flow of the rivers and the rich melody of the woods—in all these evidences of advancing spring we find illustrations of the continuous working of the Providence of God. By a suspension of His power He might in a moment stop the varied mechanism of Nature; or, by applying that power in a different way, He might produce the very opposite of the expected and desired results. Now let us only reflect how fatal would be the consequences should spring altogether cease, or should it even for any length of time delay its coming. Let the frost of winter continue to bind the earth in its iron fetters: let its snows continue to fall, its cold to blast, and its feeble sun to struggle in vain with the ice-bound fields; and then the seed which was intended to produce a future harvest must remain unscattered; the hopes of the husbandman must give place to despair; plenty must soon be exchanged for famine, and hunger will speedily be associated with crime, and pestilence, and death. Surely, then, we should, at such a season as the present, raise our thoughts in gratitude above mere order, to Him Who has ordained it, and should be ready both to feel and to confess our dependence on the faithfulness and love of Him Who has graciously declared in His holy Word that, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time shall not cease."

Spring as emblematic of misery followed by happiness.

An illustration of this may be found in the approach made by mankind at large towards that better future which has so long shone brightly and alluringly before them.

When we consider the present state of our world, it may seem almost impossible that those scenes of millennial happiness to which we have been taught to look forward should ever be realised. Are not all the

evils which ever existed upon earth still maintaining their place? What sin has disappeared, what vice has become extinct, that was ever practised in the world? It may seem to us as if hardly any progress had been made, and as if the fair visions of ancient prophecy could never assume a substantial form. But let us only think of the state of things from which spring has emerged. Reflect that only a short time ago everything appeared dull and dead. The plants, the trees, the streams, the flowers, the birds, all seemed lifeless, and the earth bore the aspect only of a vast cemetery, everywhere full of death. But now a striking change has taken place. There has been a stir and movement, as it were, among the dry bones: the breath of the Almighty has passed over them: they have caught animation from His Spirit; and we now see *that* earth, which was of late so bleak and cheerless, carpeted with green and covered with flowers, while life revels in every bud and sings upon every tree. Now, nothing surely could have appeared more unlikely, or even impossible, than such a change, had we not been certain from experience that it would in due time take place. And so let us not doubt that though the times in which we live may still have much about them that is dark and cheerless, they will at length be followed by those happy days which are foretold in the pages of Scripture. It is but a very limited experience any of us can have of the progress of the cause of righteousness during our stay upon the earth; but when we look back on the centuries which are past, and consider the advancement which has undoubtedly been made, we see enough to persuade us that the world's winter is surely, though slowly, passing away, and that even now we may be treading on the confines of its promised and expected spring.

Spring as emblematic of a coming resurrection.

Death, as we have seen, had reigned for months over the natural world, but has now given place to life, and where all was lately motionless and silent, all is now teeming with activity and enjoyment. Now, thus will it yet be with those who have long been sleeping in the dust. Death and silence have reigned within the dark chambers of the tomb, but these shall yet yield forth life and immortality. The body which has mouldered and decayed shall be fashioned anew by the hand of its great Creator; and the spirit which death had severed from its earthly companion shall resume its former habitation. However long winter may in this respect have reigned, it shall be succeeded by spring. He Who, year by year, causes life to rise after death in the natural world, shall do the same in the world of graves, so that "death shall be swallowed up in victory." When, therefore, we look around us at this season of opening verdure and abounding vitality, we see an emblem of the great coming resurrection; we see the day prefigured when all that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, when those that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man,

SPRING IN THE WOOD.

and shall come forth to enter, if they are Christ's, on the possession of never-ending glory.

Spring as emblematic of youth.

The husbandman, we know, is fully alive to the duty and necessity of diligently employing the days, and even the hours, of spring. He feels that upon the use which is made of these depends, under God, his future harvest. He is well aware that if this season is allowed to pass away unimproved, no subsequent efforts will atone for the neglect. If he trifle or loiter in spring, it will be vain that he is active and industrious in summer. His neighbours' fields will be covered with verdure, while his own lie bare or are overgrown with weeds; and when *they* put in the sickle in autumn, and reap the reward of their labours, *he* will have nothing but disappointment. Now, the point of analogy in this respect between youth and spring is plain, and it should suggest a most important lesson both to parents and children. It warns all parents that if they neglect their children when young, no future efforts will compensate for the loss. Youth is the season for training, disciplining, and cultivating the mind; and if that season be allowed to pass by without being diligently employed, what can be expected but disappointment? To the young, also, the thought of spring is fraught with the most solemn instruction. It reminds them

that now they are to form their characters; that now they are to sow the seeds of eminence, respectability, and usefulness, if these are ever to be attained in the world. Let them beware lest they spend their youth in idleness, or allow it to pass by without improvement. Let their tasks be diligently plied, let their hours be usefully employed. Idleness can yield them nothing but disappointment, if it does not even betray them into immorality, and thus tend to wreck their prospects not only for this world, but for that which is to come. Many persons are now living in poverty and wretchedness who, if they had only improved their youth, might have been surrounded with honour and abundance; and oh! how poignant is the regret with which they now look back on these ill-spent years! They lament that they neglected their early opportunities of learning: that they chose to trifle when they were called to labour: that they wasted hours of leisure which might have been devoted to self-improvement: that they contracted tastes among wild or wicked companions which embitter their existence and destroy their peace, even in the last stage of their life on earth; and that they can now trace an unhappy summer, an unfruitful autumn, and a disconsolate winter, back to an ill-spent spring—a youth passed in idleness or sin, while it should have been dedicated to industry and true advancement.

But here it must be added that it is sometimes with the young as with spring—very slowly and reluctantly does the evil yield to the good, and the worse give place to the better.

A powerful writer (John Foster, author of the well-known "Essays," and whose works cannot be too highly recommended) has remarked on this point:—"While the winter is forced to retire, it is yet very tenacious of its reign; it seems to make many efforts to return; it seems to hate the beauty and fertility that are supplanting it. For months we are liable to cold, chilling, pestilential blasts, and sometimes biting frosts. A portion of the malignant power lingers, or returns to work, as it were, under the most cheerful sunshine, so that the vegetable beauty remains in hazard, and the luxury of enjoying spring is often accompanied by unpleasantness or danger."

Now, so is it with those who are really in a condition of progressive moral or spiritual improvement. There is much that still lurks within them to hinder their advancement. Sin still retains a place in their hearts; and as a cold and wintry day will sometimes occur even when the year is far advanced, so may even experienced Christians be at times greatly harassed and distressed by the temporary prevalence of indwelling depravity. But it is, of course, in the case of the young that this is most seen and felt. They are naturally fickle, wayward, and changeable, just as are the early weeks or months of spring. But parents and teachers are not to be discouraged because such is the case. There may be a true progress towards good, even where evil sometimes appears in an aggravated and hateful form. The winter may be truly over, though it would still seem at times to rule the year. There should, then, be patience displayed in dealing with the young, and perseverance shown in training and instructing them. The harvest is yet many months distant, but the farmer does not on that account cease to expend on his fields the most assiduous labour. Go on, then, ye who have any youthful charge: go on instructing, counselling, and praying for those under your care; and ye may be cheered soon by observing some bud of promise, some indication of approaching spring, and, in spite of many discouraging appearances, may yet be blessed with a rich and abundant harvest.

"*All to the glory of God.*"

The whole earth is now, in a sense, "full of God's glory." His power, His wisdom, His love, and His liberality, find a thousand witnesses on every side. But then, alas! it is *irrational* nature which thus loudly and harmoniously magnifies and praises its gracious Author. His intelligent creatures upon earth, for whose sakes, chiefly, all that display of power, all that wealth of generosity, all that evidence of goodness and benignity, have been given, are too often forgetful of his existence, and fail to perceive His glory in His works. They may even admire and extol the products of His wisdom and His might, without thinking of Himself at all; and they very often enjoy all the bounties of His Providence without having a single sentiment of gratitude kindled in their hearts. Let it not be so with us. Let not inanimate Nature shame our indifference, our coldness, our carelessness, with respect to the

SPRING IN THE GARDEN.

SPRING IN THE MEADOWS.

glory of that God Who made and still preserves us, and Who is testifying in His works as well as in His Word that He is the very God of love. "If these should hold their peace," said our Lord on one occasion, "the stones would immediately cry out"; and does it not seem that the very stones and fields, and other inanimate objects in Nature, rebuke the impiety and ingratitude of many immortal beings who neglect to think of, to love, and to serve Him Who is the Author of all their happiness now, and of all their hopes for the world to come? Oh! let us seek to know God as revealed through His Word and by His Son, and then we shall delight to trace His hand in all those scenes of beauty which surround us in the world. Let it be our earnest prayer that He Who "renews the face of the earth" would also renew and sanctify our souls. A power as gentle, yet as resistless, as that now operating in the world of Nature is ready at our request to issue forth from the God of all grace, and make us new creatures in Christ Jesus. If we experience that power, then shall we not only find a rich and hallowed pleasure in those countless beauties which earth at this season spreads out before us, but we shall be able to look forward to a still fairer abode, where no promises shall ever deceive, no frosts shall ever injure, no death shall ever destroy—even the "new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," and of which it is said, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE.

BY MARY HAMPDEN.

CHAPTER XXI.

"THE day o' reckonin' has dawned for them as need to fear it!"

There stood the old gardener in the brilliantly-lighted room, with the chime of the Christmas bells yet dying on the air, and the message of universal goodwill but just announced.

With a little cry of fear, Edith turned from the window, clinging to Hector's protecting arm. Mrs. Weir half-rose from her chair, with an anxious look on her pale face; and Mr. Ford came forward from the shadow of the curtains to demand the reason of this strange interruption.

Lord Henry Wynn and Kate, not being members of the family, looked on with expressions of concern for their friends' trouble; and Lilian, knowing by an inexplicable second-sight that it was she to whom Bassett had alluded, held her breath to listen to the reproaches which she felt were not unmerited. It seemed to her as though she had all along anticipated this moment, when all the anger and blame would fall upon her, and her alone; she had known instinctively that evil was yet to come of her work, that her deception was not to go unpunished.

"You must explain yourself. You have startled your mistress, and disturbed us all. What is your excuse, Bassett?"

"Excoose! D' ye say *excoose*, minister? Ask them as would have bin the ruin o' this house; them as lied, and tricked, and duped ye, one and all: as would

have broke the heart o' the missis, and stole the money o' little missie. Ask them as plotted and planned for to benefit themselves at th' expense o' the family! I've waited patient till now. I've not bin in a hurry to expose 'em; but to-night, when there's feastin', and larfin', and *kissin'*, I comes here to say, 'Ye're deceived. They's makin' fools o' you;' and if it hadn't bin for *me*—for old Bassett, as you all on you despise ('cept little Miss Edy, bless her!)—you'd never a-know'd till too late—till the family was ruined and th' old house dead."

The old man looked around him with a glance of scorn, and, waving back the Vicar, who seemed as though he would have stopped him, continued to speak.

"You thinks for to silence me. I'll not rest till the tale's all told; you shall ne'er blame me for not a-warnin' of you! As for you, sir," turning to Hector, "it's my belief as how *you* wouldn't have bin so bad if *she* hadn't made you. (I wants to be just even to a man as have passed his life a-gamblin' and a-fiddlin'), and to do to others as I wants 'em to do to me; but the 'ooman—your sister—may I never speak truth agin if I says ought as is a lie agen her. You comed here some months agone (and you oughtn't ever to a-comed; but the missus wanted ye, and she wouldn't listen to *me*); *you* wasn't rich, and little missie wor a heiress; *you* was in debt——"

"Silence! I command you to leave the room." Mr. Ford was determined to exact obedience, and would have forced the old servant to desist from his offensive remarks; but Lilian, in a strange cold voice, took up the words—

"'You were in debt.' Go on, Bassett!—Mr. Ford, this must all be heard—all—from beginning to end; it must not be left unfinished. You cannot stay the truth, even if you would. For my sake, let the man speak!"

They all glanced at her pale rigid face, and eyes which seemed to glitter with the feverish intensity of the storm raging in her brain. She had advanced from her corner of the room, and stood facing them all in front of Bassett, as though defending him from their anger.

"Go on," she continued; "they shall not prevent you."

"So even you sees as how it won't do for to lie no longer. When you come here, it was you as fust made Mister Hector think o' the little missie's money. It was here, in this very room, when the sky was a-smilin' under the blessed sunshine, when the roses—a-shamin' of you by their sweetness an' innercence—was a-peepin' in at the winder, as you laid your plans and forced him into acceptin' of 'em. *You* knew how to coax, an' persuade, and arguey black was white; to say as how he would never repent o' it. I ask him now, if he has one spark o' true love for her whose innercent heart he's won, whether he *don't* repent, now as it's too late, as he follered th' example o' Adam and guv' in to a 'ooman's temptin'?"

Edith, sobbing and clinging to Hector, whispered in his ear.

"Darling, why don't you answer him? Why do you let him say such things about you?"

"Keep silence, dearest," he answered. "Let us hear it all, and then I shall know how best to reply." And the girl, quieted by this assurance, let Bassett speak on.

"You went away," said the old man, "but not afore you'd kissed her. I didn't know whether maybe all wasn't arranged and settled then, until I see her pretty cheeks a-growin' pale wi' worryin', an' her eyes wor often a-cryin'; and then I know'd as how she were a-sorrowin' arter you. Then come a time when your sister—she played you false; she lied to you, an' she lied to one an' all—she wrote a letter for you as I don't believe you'd a-dared to have wrote yoursel', and she deceived little missie into a-thinkin' it wor from *you*. I wouldn't have believed even *she* could a-done it, if I hadn't seen her wi' my own eyes; and here's the proof o' the wrong: the paper as blotted the letter. See how she did it, hold it up to the light! You'll read the words, 'Ever your devoted, Hector Bristol.' *You* never wrote 'em; it wor *she* as did 'un."

A cry from Edith rang through the room, but Lilian did not move nor speak; she watched the old man, as though fascinated by his vehement gestures; and the others dared not interfere while she stood there and allowed him to proceed.

"You never proposed for yerself; that letter you never wrote; our little missie's bin coorted for her money, an' not for herself. If the Lord hadn't delivered her enemies into my hands, she'd have wrecked her life's happiness through another's lies. It's *me* as have saved 'er. I've watchit o'er her ever since she wor a babby, and I made up my mind to rescue her from a man as only wanted her money, and as never wooed her. Little missie, little missie!" he continued, "you'll know some day as how I'd have killed myself sooner nor have hurted *you*, but it wor as much my dooty to speak out free and true as 't is for him to do so now. That 'ooman is the one as have lied the most. As for you, sir, you may care for little missie (for where's the man as could help it?), but you didn't ask her for yer wife, and I can't bear as how she should have bin tricked into lovin' of you. I've said my say, an' I don't bear no malice to no one; but as there's a Heaven above us, I've spoke the truth, and it's for them as have sinned to repent o' their evil-doin'."

There was a silence in the room: a complete silence, coming strangely after the old man's vehement words; and for a time it was unbroken. Of all those present, Lilian had the most perfect consciousness of everything that was passing; she had preserved her presence of mind completely; and it was she at last who spoke. Edith, dazed, bewildered, hearing only those words—"You didn't ask her for your wife"—could not find speech, but waited, in a faint stupor of wonder, for the sequel to the startling event which had just occurred. Hector could not stand forward to defend his sister, and would not condemn her, so was silent. Mrs. Weir looked beseechingly at Arthur, who, reading Lilian's guilt upon her face, did not dare to question her.

The girl's voice was quite calm, and, beyond a death-like paleness, she showed no emotion.

"You have heard all that this man has to say. I do not deny the truth of any portion of it, but I wish to clear my brother of any share in the disgrace which has fallen upon me, and which I have been for a long while prepared to bear. As Bassett told you, when we first came here I proposed to my brother the plan of freeing himself from his debts, by trying to win Edith Weir—our cousin, whom I knew to be rich—for his wife. He argued for a long time against my scheme, and only consented to try it when I told him that, to the best of my belief, Edith's mother had foreseen the possibility of such a marriage, and would view it with satisfaction. As time went on, my brother fell in love with Edith, and then he refused to carry out the plan of which I have spoken. He regarded with hatred and abhorrence the idea of any further deception; and, rather than face what he thought the temptation of proposing to her, he left Abbeylands, as you know, many weeks ago. It cost him a great deal to do so. You must not be hard upon him, for he made this great sacrifice willingly, of his own accord."

As she paused for a moment, Arthur Ford crossed the room with a look of unutterable pain on his face, and bending over her, asked in a low voice—

"I will believe all this; but tell me—you did not write that letter?"

Answering him aloud, and still with that statuesque rigidity of attitude, Lilian went on—

"In my brother's absence I told Edith—what was indeed true—that he loved her; and then wishing the matter to be arranged before his return, I wrote that letter, purporting to be from him, proposing marriage to Edith, and expressing a wish that the matter should not be mentioned to Mrs. Weir until his arrival, a few days later. Edith replied to that proposal in such a way that Hector was unaware of the deception which I had practised upon him. On the morning of his return I met him in the lane and explained all that seemed strange to him. He was very angry with me; and said that if ever you, all of you, learned the truth, neither you nor Edith herself would believe in the sincerity of his love. I hope that may not now be the case. I have done my best to show you that no blame should fall on anyone but me; it was my plan, my sole responsibility. The only defence I can offer lies in the fact that for years we have been treated unjustly by our family, and that the Weirs have always been our enemies. It was this feeling which prompted me to sacrifice their interests to my brother's happiness and future. When I have gone from Abbeylands, you will be able to forget my existence. Let Hector remain to be beloved by you all."

As his sister moved slowly from her position in the midst of the family group, and, guiding herself by the furniture, as though needing support, made her way to the door, Hector sprang forward to detain her, crying—

"If I have let you speak so, it was solely for Edith's sake, that she might know the truth; but, Lily, do not——"

But his effort was made in vain, for the girl had passed out of the room, carrying her burden of misery in her heart. She could not stay to face them any longer, and Arthur Ford was the only friend who wished to follow and console her.

"Hector! oh, Hector!"

He turned to answer that appealing cry; and his little betrothed ran into his arms, clinging to him with both hands.

"You *do* care for me? Oh, my darling! say you love me!"

"Love you, Edith! Yes, as Heaven sees us both."

"You have not learned to like me since—since—— Oh, I cannot speak of it!"

"I have loved you ever since I left Abbeylands for your sake."

Edith, forgetful of the presence of her friends—knowing only that Hector's words were true—raised her head and laid it trustfully on his shoulder. Her tears had robbed her face of some of its radiance; but as the sun peeps from among storm-clouds, so her smiles came back, bringing the old glad light to her eyes. The result which Hector had feared from the discovery of Lilian's fraud had not come to pass; he had dreaded its effect upon his little cousin's sensitive pride, and had thought that days and weeks of wooing might not suffice to win back her former confidence in his affection. But he had been mistaken. Tender, true-hearted, simple little Edith! What more did she need than his word—his assurance? She had no reason now to be ashamed of the letter which she had written to him before he had asked for her love; he had been fond of her all the while.

"Oh!" she cried, smiling upon them all, "do not be unhappy. Nothing has been changed, so what does it all matter? Mother," going down upon her knees, and hiding her April face on Mrs. Weir's arm, "we have Hector still. Don't cry any more."

CHAPTER XXII.

So old Ben Bassett had played his great card: had brought confusion into the Weir family; and his vehement denunciation of the Bristols had resolved at last into an attack upon Lilian only; the "Lunnon man" had not suffered by it, as he had at first intended him to do; the whole disgrace rested upon the sister, who had played the temptress—whose ungovernable ambition for those she loved had led her out of the path of honour. The old man was surprised—confounded at his own weak-heartedness. Now that "the reckonin'" had taken place, where was the general indignation which he had wished to arouse against the strangers? He had confidently expected that both Hector and Lilian would be driven forth from the home—would be outcast for ever from Abbeylands and all its privileges—and the result was so tame compared to that which he had imagined. There had been scarcely "a scene"; there had taken place no violent condemnation, with the exception of his own utterance; and the end of all was that Edith clung all the closer to the man she loved, and who had sacrificed so much for her, because an unsuccessful attempt had been made to degrade him in her eyes. Poor old Bassett! With all his faults, his obstinate self-conceit, his belief that the Weirs

depended for their safety upon his watchfulness, his aggressive hatred towards all whom he considered the enemies of the family, he was at heart tenderly devoted to the little Heiress of Aberstone, the baby daughter of the house, whom he had watched growing into womanhood as he himself advanced into old age: he loved "little missie" with all the rugged devotion of an untutored nature.

The one idea which he had held firmly in his thoughts during Lilian's confession and the conversation which had followed, was this: the marriage between Edith and Hector would not be broken off. His chief perplexity lay in his doubt as to his own wish in the matter. He had systematically set himself, from the very first day of the cousins' arrival, to the task of preventing such a match, watching with jealous eyes for the slightest action which he might turn to Hector's disadvantage; he had brooded over the conversation which he had heard, and, nursing his scheme with anxious care, he had even longed for the moment when he should put an end for ever to the claims of these relations: and yet, in his heart of hearts, now that the blow had been struck, and the result so long expected had *not* followed, he was but slightly disappointed.

During his stay at Abbeylands, Hector Bristol had more or less endeared himself to everyone; although fighting against preconceived distrust, he had won round those who had been his foes. And he had done this, not by great efforts to please, nor by any arts of manner or conversation, but solely by the convincing proofs, which he had unconsciously shown, of a noble nature underlying superficial faults. As Bassett had said, there was not a man or woman in Aberstone who did not feel in him a kindly interest; there was not a child who did not run to him; and all this quite apart from the obvious fact that his temper was by no means good. There are some men and women who possess this rare art of pleasing; and who shall say that the liking they excite is not a true instinct in the breasts of their admirers?

"Little missie's lookin' happy agen! Bless her heart! Then I haven't done much harm, arter all."

Such was the remark which startled the family group from their preoccupation. They had forgotten the presence of the old servant until his well-known voice reminded them that he was still in the room.

"You have acted very wrongly, Bassett," said Mr. Ford sternly. "You can have had but little thought for Miss Edith, or you would never have exposed her to such a painful scene. Thank Heaven! you have done less harm than you intended to do, but still——"

"I never wanted for to do harm to any as loves her; it's only as how I couldn't be sure he wasn't a-goin' to marry her acos his sister had forced him to 't. Oh, minister! you be a hard man to-night; but I asks him—himself, as have the most reason for to be angry agin me—whether he wouldn't have wished me to act so if so be as another had bin in his place? I've done my dooty, accordin' to my lights, and the Lord won't judge me harshly."

The old man's words recalled Hector to a sense of his own position, and, leaving Edith's side, he advanced to his aunt's chair.

"I don't want to blame you, Bassett. In so far as your action was dictated by dislike towards me, I most willingly pardon you. I do believe that you have been mainly influenced by a wish to protect Miss Edith from all harm; and, as I told you this evening, for your care of her I shall always be ready to thank you. I trust that you will never again have an excuse for thinking it necessary to use your vigilance on her behalf against *me*."

He smiled as he spoke, and extended his hand to the old man, adding—

"You are not a mere servant; you have been her faithful guardian and friend all her life."

"You be's a genel'm, maister; you be's a genel'm. Never no more will I go agin you, you may be sure o' that; and for all I've done I asks your pardon. I can't make no excoose, but that t'wor for her sake I done it, and I meant for the best.—Little missie, speak a bit to me; say as how you forgives me too, an' then I'll do my best i' the years to come to make up to him as you loves for the wrong I've done him."

Stretching out his hands towards her, old Bassett pleaded to no effect. Edith turned a hot, indignant face to him from out her mother's encircling arms: a face which showed no sign of relenting.

"Go away!" she cried; "how dared you speak so of Mr. Hector? You have been good to me—I know you are fond of me—but I can never, *never* forgive you!"

A passionate outburst of sobs ended her speech.

"Little missie, hear me just one bit. I done it all for you; and if you like I'll ask his pardon agen, though he's granted it once a'ready, an' bears no malice. I'll do anythin' on 'arth for ye both, but I can't bear to not hear a word from you. Little missie, little Miss Edy—my dear, as I've loved from a babby—speak to me only a word, to say as how you forgives me."

But still the old man appealed in vain, and with tears running down his sunburnt cheeks, he turned to go.

"Edith, my child," and Mrs. Weir bent low over the soft curls of the little brown head lying against her knee, "have you forgotten all that we have been taught: that we must ever be ready to pardon? Has the great Christmas truth, the lesson rung out by the bells but a few moments ago, been lost upon you? What has become of your 'goodwill towards men,' that you refuse to do your part to establish the peace which Christ has commanded?"

"It would be different—— Oh, mother, it is not for my sake! but—— Hector, my dear, brave, noble Hector—— How *dared* he? oh, how dared he?"

"Will you turn the great blessing which has been sent you into a curse?" whispered the mother. "Will you repay God for your happiness by neglecting His commands, by fostering evil feelings in your heart on this, His birthday morn? My little girl, is this what love is doing for you?"

"Mother, I——" but the excuse was checked before it was uttered, as Edith looked up, and saw the honest, wretched face of the old gardener.

"Have I hurt you so much? Oh, poor old Bassett!" she cried impetuously, running forward, and taking his hand. "I know it was all for my sake; it is not I who ought to blame you; and you are sorry. You will never misjudge Mr. Hector any more, so don't be unhappy any longer. Think—it is Christmas Day."

"Thankee, little missie, thankee! Christmas Day or no, I'd have bin a miserable man without I see your pretty smiles a-breakin' through your tears. May the Lord purtect ye; may your life be as bright as the blessed sunshine, and as free fro' cloud as life may be! I've bin mistaken; I've bin quite wrong, so I have, Mister Hector; but at the times when I've felt worst agin you, I've liked you in my heart, as all on us do. You'll make missie a good husband, I hope and pray, and I'll be as proud o' the master o' Abbeylands as I've bin o' its wee bit missus. The family and th' old house is safe enough now: the Lord be praised for it!"

Impulsive Edith pulled a white gardenia from Hector's coat, crying—

"I will give you another, darling, but I want Bassett to have this.—You will keep it always, won't you?" she continued, holding it towards the old man: "Mr. Hector's own flower that I give you. It must be a sign that we are all three friends for life."

"Bless 'ee, my dear little missie! I'll keep it until I die."

So old Ben Bassett went from the drawing-room quite restored to his former place in Edith's esteem, and happy in the thought that he had done good instead of harm by his denunciation of the cousins. "She won't have to spoil her pretty eyes by cryin' no more," was his happiest thought. "And Mister Hector, he's a real genel'm; there's summut more in him nor Lunnon ways, an' the family can be proud o' him."

"There stood the old gardener in the brilliantly lighted room."—*p.* 453.

The party at Abbeylands had met with an interruption, but the evening had not been fruitless. Kate and Henry had found the opportunity which they had so much desired of making their confession of mutual attachment, and peace was re-established in the Weir family; only to Lilian did it seem that no peace could come.

After the old servant had been reconciled to his young mistress, the guests took their leave: Kate, who was to spend the night under Mrs. Weir's roof, discreetly retired to her room; and Henry, when Mr. Ford at length returned to the family circle, was waiting to drive him home. Arthur had slipped away soon after Lilian's confession, his absence passing unnoticed by everyone but his aunt, who refrained from commenting upon it, as she guessed his intention.

How he had employed the interval we must leave to another chapter to disclose.

When the other three were left alone, standing at the hall door, hospitably seeing off their friends, and looking out over the distant landscape with its ghost-like trees casting long shadows on the moonlit lawn, Hector slipped Mrs. Weir's arm within his own, and, passing the other round the waist of his little betrothed, waited to say a few good-night words to each.

"I hope you are satisfied, dear Aunt Mary. I was unworthy of your confidence at first; but can you take the misery of the last few weeks as an assurance of my repentance and regret? You might safely pardon me, for I shall not easily forgive myself!"

Before Mrs. Weir replied she kissed him gently.

"My dear boy, you have suffered too much already for a fault which would not have been accounted great in the world in which you have lived. If we had all done our duty by you both, you would never have been tempted to marry for money, and your sister would not have learned to look upon us as enemies. I am so thankful that out of all this trouble peace has come at last; we must try to-morrow to assure Lilian that she need not anticipate farther anger or reproaches. So you love each other better than ever, you two, now that the storm has blown over? What do you say, my Edith?"

"Oh, mother, I never quite knew before how very, very happy I am!"

"You seem to grow happier every moment; or do you find that the expression loses force by repetition, and so feel obliged to add all those '*verys?*"

"It is so sweet to be able to laugh again!" cried the girl. "I thought, only a few minutes ago, that Hector only loved me by mistake. What a wonderful thing it is to understand anyone you love *perfectly!*—We should never doubt each other's affection now, should we, dear?"

"Never again. I could not be happy before, for I was dreading the moment when you would discover all. I never imagined that it could always remain a secret; and I thought I might lose my little Edith."

"Just as I thought, a few days ago, that I might lose *you:* that you would go away for ever from Abbeylands, and marry someone else."

"You will have tired eyes to-morrow, Edith, and a bad headache, if you stay up talking any longer," said Mrs. Weir, looking rather anxiously at her young daughter's pale cheeks. The evening had been a very tiring one for the girl, and fatigue easily told upon her sensitive nature. "You must go to rest, my child, and forget your Christmas party; try only to remember that the end of it all has been peace; that no one wishes to part you from Hector: that we all welcome him from our hearts.—Yes, dear boy, I am glad that Abbeylands has gained you for its master: this is the best conclusion to the tale of the wrong our family has done you."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"WHAT an awkward business it has all been!"

"Yes; but the harm which might have ensued has been prevented, owing partly to Miss Bristol's confession (blame her as we may, you must own, Henry, that she spoke out very bravely at the last), and partly through the simple trustfulness of my dear little Edith; she would believe anything that Hector chose to tell her!"

"But you don't doubt his sincerity yourself, do you?"

"No, no. I am afraid I have often been unjust to him in my thoughts, but I am not quite so bad as that; the young man has a way of saying things which cannot fail to impress one with a sense of their perfect truth. No," added the Vicar, "it has been a very painful scene, but everything has turned out for the best; and I can say now that which I would not have said two days ago: I am heartily glad of the proposed marriage; and I will give Edith to the man she has chosen, with full confidence in his affection for her. My dear Henry, pray don't drive so recklessly; you very nearly went over that heap of stones; and I heard the paling break when the wheel struck it, not a minute ago. You seem excited."

Lord Henry was handling the reins in a somewhat alarming fashion; allowing his spirited horse to dash down-hill in a way which was only adapted for roads in perfect order; still, the Vicar had not much reason to fear for his ultimate safety, for he was driven by a practised whip.

"The fence? oh! that only broke a bit of the top rail. To tell the truth, Ford, my thoughts were far away from this old hill and its surroundings. Would you prefer to drive yourself?"

"Oh no; I think I will trust you to do it, if you will promise not to think about Kate Burnside until we are fairly home."

"Dear girl! she is always in my thoughts, so you are asking an impossibility!"

"You are a fortunate fellow in having won such a good wife."

"I am indeed. Arthur, were you not very sorry for that poor girl—Miss Bristol?"

"Yes; but it was only just that she should suffer for her fault," said Mr. Ford firmly. "It will do her no harm in the future, for the secret is safe from repetition. I know Bassett too well to suppose that he would ever mention the matter under any circumstances; he would think such a thing contrary to his duty to the family; and Kate does not chatter. No; I am more sorry than I can say for Lilian's pain and trouble; but even that is for the best."

Henry gave a glance at his friend's face, and was surprised at the quiet smile which played upon it.

"I believe you went after her—you have been trying to comfort her, and that was why I could not find you."

"You have great penetration, and you are quite right, Henry. I found her in the library, sobbing as though her heart would break."

"And you acted the part of consoler?"

"I did my best," answered Mr. Ford simply. "It was a very difficult task; but I tried to persuade her that it was her duty to remain at Abbeylands. She was thinking of leaving for London to-morrow; she said she could not bear to remain another day under the roof of her relations; however, I overruled her objections, and made her promise to take no rash step,

but to wait a few days, till she has had time to find out whether home life is as impossible as she imagines. That is one step gained!"

"You don't want to lose her, Ford?"

"I do not think I shall lose her now. It occurred to me then that when she refused to allow me to make love to her the other day, she must have been suffering under a sense of the wrong she had been doing. Poor girl! She could never deceive anyone for whom she cared; and I fancy—mind, I only say I fancy—that she might come to care for me. She has learned to appreciate her little cousin; she speaks with gratitude of her aunt's kindness; and regrets from the bottom of her heart that she ever regarded them as enemies. There is no earthly reason why the old quarrel between the Bristols and the Weirs should not now be healed for ever."

Henry was silent for a few moments; he was not a little surprised that his friend should still wish to win Lilian's love now that she had more or less disgraced herself before the whole family; but the Vicar's next words explained his sentiments.

"She will need a protector—someone to help her back to her old footing among her friends. I hope very much that she will soon give me the right to provide a home for her."

"You are the best fellow that ever lived!" cried the young man impulsively, shaking his friend by the hand.

"You have nearly landed us in the ditch, my dear boy! One does not require to be a hero to marry the girl one loves. A few nights ago, when you were in such a state of distraction because Kate Burnside did not reply at once to your offer, I told you that I should be quite content with a deferred answer. Lilian, after blaming herself in a way which it went to my heart to hear, declaring that she was unworthy of me (of me, indeed! Who am I?), promised to answer me finally in a few days. In the meanwhile, I have comforted her, Henry, and taught her to hope again; and I am more than content to wait."

"You know all the happiness I wish you, Arthur. I suppose *you* will reconcile Miss Bristol and her relations?"

"I? No, indeed. I cannot help her there; but she said she would ask their pardon this morning when they met at breakfast. I know my aunt too well to fear any difficulty on that score. No; the storm has blown over, and the day shows fair beyond, as it should do for Christmas Day. I feel inclined to imitate little Edith, and say, 'Oh, I am so happy!' Dear little girl! I suppose we shall be having a wedding at Abbeylands before long."

Arthur Ford's description of the way in which he had succeeded in comforting his cousin was very inadequate; he would not have dwelt upon the skilful tact, the gentlemanly delicacy with which he had soothed the rebellious misery of the proud-spirited girl; he did not realise how great a task it had been; but the reader, who knows somewhat more of Lilian Bristol's character than had ever been made clear to the Vicar, can better understand what must have been the power of his reasoning; but then, he had not only argued: he had also pleaded—not for himself, but for her future.

"Don't let this mistake, which has passed away with the old year, which is over and gone, spoil your life. The years to come will obliterate it from the memory of these people, who are only too ready to love you: you will soon be as dear to them as though you had never tried to injure them. You have found a true home; don't throw such happiness away through any impulse of vanity. You are angry with me for the word? I can use no other, for your determination to seek your own living *is* simply the result of vanity, of false pride. You have wronged these people, and so you are ashamed to live among them. Would it not be more worthy to take up this cross of your own making, and carry it bravely until the load falls from your shoulders? It is your duty to stay: to do good to those who have forgiven you. It is always easy to run away from duty, but I won't believe that you are such a coward as to do that."

These had been his arguments, and finding her still unconvinced—unyielding—he had recourse to pleading.

"Lilian, if you go, I shall know that you think but little of any of us—that you don't care if we never meet again. I think so much of you—I so long for the moments in each day when I know I shall see you—that I can't be patient under your decision unless I am sure that it is the result of thought, and not of passion. My dear, you do not want to leave Abbeylands in order to get away from me? You need not fear that I shall say another word of the many that are in my heart, if you wish not to hear them."

"I *could* not listen: I dared not, for I knew that when all was told you would despise me."

"That was a mistaken idea. Lilian, I am a man of few words, as a rule, so I can only say bluntly, 'I shall love you all my life'; and I could never say that to anyone I despised. I don't press for your answer to-night; I don't beg you to fix a day, even, when I may ask you for it; but I do entreat you to remain here, where you are sheltered, and where you may find affection if you will but take it. Promise me that you will try to stay."

"I promise I will not go if you do not wish it."

Then Mr. Ford had risen with the intention of leaving her, but had paused at the door of the library to ask—

"Lilian, my dearest, you will give me the answer to my other question some day, will you not?"

And as he had looked back into the dimly lighted room, he had caught a look on the girl's face which had taught him to hope: a look of trust, and something more. It had warmed his heart, and sent him forth to his cold night-drive feeling that life was very sweet, and that Christmas-tide was indeed a time of peace.

"Some day," she had answered, with a smile that looked pathetic on her worn, wistful face: "some day. I dare not answer now."

Lilian's resolution to ask pardon of her aunt and cousin when they met at breakfast was never put to the test, for Mrs. Weir, kind-hearted and gentle as she always was, did not retire to rest until she had sought out her niece.

The girl had made no preparations for going to rest,

but was sitting before the fire, still clad in her white dress, and with the dying geranium blossoms falling from among the masses of her fair hair. She was very beautiful; her dark blue eyes magnificently expressive, but, surrounded by the deep circles caused by pain and sorrow, expressive of a misery which touched Mrs. Weir's motherly heart. She thought of Edith's sheltered youth, of the way in which she had been guarded from all the spoiling influences of the world; and she remembered Lilian's helpless childhood, passed in the midst of scenes of dissipation and under the care of a spendthrift father. What a different lot! Then why blame too harshly the result of that training? And the mother's heart sympathised with the cares of this girl, so young when thrown upon the world, without parent or guardian: so sincerely devoted to the brother for whom she had toiled all her life.

"My dear," and she stole to Lilian's side, and kissed her hot forehead, "I am so sorry for you! We have misunderstood each other all these months; but I will do my best to make up for it now, if you will help me. This night's painful scene will be forgotten; you will not think us enemies any longer, will you, dear? And from this Christmas we must begin a new life together—learning to love each other."

"Can you ever forgive me? Can you ever forget that I tried to deceive you, aunt? I do not *say* I am sorry—words are so useless; but I will *show* you, if you will let me stay."

"Stay? Why, of course you must stay! I cannot spare you, dear, or I shall have no one to comfort me when I have lost my little Edith. I shall want *you* to be my daughter then."

CHAPTER XXIV.

ERE another year had passed, Lilian Bristol's deception was forgotten; even old Ben Bassett never gave a thought, unless it were one of regret, to the scene in which he had played so prominent a part. The stranger-cousin had succeeded in endearing herself to the family which she had entered as an enemy; and, once they had accepted her as one of themselves, the old gardener, coachman, and general factotum—the "privileged bailiff," as Hector had once called him—no longer thought it his duty to resist her claims. She became a real sister to Edith, loving her devotedly, and

"'I found her in the library, sobbing as though her heart would break.'"—*p.* 458.

learning day by day to appreciate her innocent, frank nature, her unsuspecting trustfulness. The two girls were hardly ever apart, and consoled each other in Hector's occasional enforced absences.

Mrs. Weir was well pleased with the change that had taken place in the niece who seemed at one time destined to be a source of trouble rather than of consolation to her; and was content to see the way in which her little daughter trusted and cared for her cousin, knowing that to a nature such as Lilian's love and trust were necessary. And if her aunt was so well satisfied with the progress she had made, surely her cousin, Arthur Ford, was not less happy in it. Wishing to give her time to fully consider the question he had asked her: wishing also that she should stay at Abbeylands long enough to win back the place which had been hers at first, but which she had rejected, he had waited patiently before asking for an answer; the winter passed into spring, the spring into summer, before he heard from Lilian's own lips how dear she held his love, how truly she prized his esteem.

But one bright summer's day the whole affair was settled: the reply was given in a way which more than satisfied the good Vicar's modest estimation of himself; and Edith was at length contented in the knowledge that "Lilian was happy too!" And, after all, the Vicar's wedding was the first to take place; and his good old housekeeper found herself placed under a mistress—a "come-down in the world" which she greatly resented for a time, until the young Mrs. Ford proved herself well able to manage the economical household with tact and care—making shillings go almost as far as pounds, as she had learned to do in the old days.

Arthur never had any occasion to regret the step he had taken. He found himself relieved by his wife of many of his parish duties and difficulties, and cared for at home in a way to which he took some time in becoming accustomed.

"My dear, you spoil me!" (this was his only cause of complaint). "I feel as though we were living upon an income which might satisfy a king. Don't you think we are growing too luxurious? What will my poor people say when they have found out what wonders have been wrought at the Vicarage?"

Lilian answered with a loving smile.

"I am proud to think that I have been able to effect such a change. Your people know you too well, Arthur, to fear that you will grow idle, even with all your 'luxuries,' as you call them! Don't you think a clergyman deserves a good dinner? Do you find yourself less able to work because the parlour is upholstered in cheerful cretonne instead of magenta repp?"

"No, my dear; I think I observe an improvement in my sermons, which, no doubt, is owing to the change you mention." And Mr. Ford took his blessings and was thankful for them—like the good man he was.

A few weeks after his own wedding, he had the pleasure of marrying his friend, Lord Henry Wynn, to one of his best parishioners, the sensible Kate Burnside. Not a soul at Aberstone grudged her the happiness which had fallen to her share; and her neighbours, thinking much more of the splendid position which she would one day occupy than the girl did herself, were unanimously of the opinion which Lord Henry had expressed months ago—that she, by her many good qualities, was well suited for any rank of life: in fact, fit to be a queen!

The village wedding was not the simple ceremony which Kate would have wished, for Lord Saxby, with a party of friends, came down from London to give it the sanction of his presence, as the bridegroom's brother. The school-children, too, did their best, by forming an imposing array of white frocks and many-coloured bouquets, to render the occasion memorable. Edith was bridesmaid again, as she had been for her cousin Lilian; but Hector declared that everything had been arranged most unfairly, as there was not a bridesmaid left for the little Heiress of Aberstone herself!

But Edith was not married till two years after that Christmas Eve whose troubles all had agreed to forget; no one ever spoke of the past in any way which could cast a slight upon the Vicar's wife. Her fault had been forgiven long ago—even, as we have said, by old Bassett, who had denounced her so vehemently.

Those two years gave Hector Bristol time to persevere in the career which he had chosen for himself; and he was enabled, by his brilliant abilities, to win a position so well recognised in the world of talent that he was at length free to adopt a wholly literary profession, such as he had hoped to win, so that Abbeylands might be his home: a profession which did not require his presence in London. After a while he became famous; his writings were quoted by men in high places, his opinions on all the questions of the day were eagerly sought; and the Vicar of Aberstone was never so happy as when explaining to the country people the great work which was being done for them by his brother-in-law's advocacy of agricultural improvements, both in and out of Parliament; for, some years later, when the member for the division which included Aberstone retired into private life, Hector, responding to the unanimous request of the electors, consented to represent them in the Legislature of his country, where his talents won him a high position.

But we are anticipating in thus referring to the far future. His success came to him, as to other men, only when he had earned it; and during the first years, when he was often away from home, working in order to establish his reputation as a man of business, his task was sweetened and endeared to him by Edith's unswerving faith in his affection and belief in his abilities. Scarcely a day passed on which he did not receive a precious little letter, containing endless messages from all at home: anecdotes of the parish and of old Bassett's funny sayings: "his glimpses of home-life," Hector called them, and with good reason. Written with the most childlike simplicity, and dictated by the confidence that anything which interested herself would please Hector, they were the most charming souvenirs which she could possibly have sent him. One glance at the thickly covered sheets of tiny sloping writing, full of innumerable "Oh's!" and exclamations of all kinds, and vigorous underlinings—and he was able to feel that distance was, after all, but a slight separation when such speaking by post was possible!

In this way the time flew past until Edith's twentieth birthday; and then, in the midst of summer, came another day of rejoicing, about which old Bassett was never tired of speaking—the wedding-day of our little heroine.

Surely the June sunshine shed its glory over as sweet a bride as it had ever seen; and, best of all, no bride could have been happier. One glance beneath the antique lace veil at the pretty lips just trembling with the effort to restrain a sob—more of joy than of sorrow—at the rosy cheeks, and downcast grey eyes in which lurked many a smile, satisfied Hector Bristol that he had won an inestimable treasure—the whole heart-love of a girl whose nature was true and tender, simple and yet noble.

The Vicar, as he performed the ceremony, could not help thinking, as he looked at the pair before him, "How wonderful are the dispensations of Providence!" Three years back he had himself been arguing with his aunt against the claims of the Bristols, and had exerted his utmost powers of persuasion in order to induce her to help the two young people in any way which would prevent their coming to Abbeylands; he had tried to exclude them from the home to whose shelter they were entitled; and yet—now the one was his own dearly loved wife; the other the acknowledged head of the Weir family.

The Vicar thought of all the good which would have been prevented had his advice been taken; of the happiness which would never have come either to his little pet Edith or to himself; and he thanked God with true humility for the defeat of those plans by which he had thought to safeguard her from possible sorrow.

Mrs. Weir also remembered the time when Arthur had urged her to let Hector go out into the world, and earn his own living, as a man should do; and she smiled to herself at the remembrance. This marriage was just the peaceful ending to all the feuds of the family for which she had prayed and hoped; and she was content—nay, more than content—to give her little daughter to a man who had shown himself capable of putting aside the faults of his past, and whose temptations had been so bravely resisted: she felt that she could indeed love Hector Bristol as a son.

And when the words had been pronounced which made the half-cousins man and wife, when Edith had received her mother's loving kiss and the congratulations of the Vicar and his wife, the next person upon whom she bestowed one of her sweet shy smiles was old Bassett, the faithful friend and servant of the family.

"God bless you, little missie!" cried the old man. "May He give you the lot as oughter be yourn—may He guard you fro' all evil, and gi' you the blessin's you deserve!—An' you, Mister Hector, bless you too, sir—as knows how to love and how ter forgive. I've waited for this end o' all the trouble, and now as I sees it, I'll be content to go to my rest as soon as the Lord wills! Ay, little missie—as I dandled as a babby in my arms—there's nought else upon 'arth as could make me feel as joysome as I feels to-day; and when I can no more watch o'er ye and guard ye, I can leave ye to the care o' the Lord, as loves His own!"

Then the old man bent down and rescued one of the drooping white roses which the children had scattered before the youthful bride.

"I'll keep 'un wi' the flower you give me Christmas Eve," he murmured: "you and Mister Hector. God bless ye both!"

With a radiant face, Edith clasped his hand, crying through a shower of painless tears—

"Oh, Bassett! how can I thank you for always having been so good to me? I can think of nothing to say, but that I am so very, *very* happy!"

But old Ben Bassett was wrong when he said that he could never again feel "as joysome" as on that particular occasion; for he lived long enough to know that Edith, his "little missie," was the most blest of wives and mothers, and to hold in his faithful arms the infant "Heir of Aberstone."

THE END.

OUR SILVER WEDDING.

THE rings of five-and-twenty years
Have formed the silver chain
Which binds our happy hearts to-day,
And wakes our thankful strain.
O chain of love, so bright and strong,
Which hath all change defied,
And still in blessed union holds
The bridegroom and the bride!

'T would seem as if upon our way
The clouds had darker grown,
But still in sunshine or in shade
Each heart has held its own.
O silver chain, whose links of love
No mortal can divide,
Thou hast, through time's strange changes, held
The bridegroom and the bride!

Our silver wedding! Ah, how sweet
The music of its bell,
To thee and me whose hearts have loved,
In weal and woe so well!
O chain of love, how bright and strong
To keep us side by side,
Till to the better Home we come—
The bridegroom and the bride!

WILLIAM COWAN.

THE WINGS OF PRAYER.

BY THE REV. J. TELFORD, B.A.

THE late Bishop of Calcutta told Sir Monier Williams that he was once visiting an outlying part of his diocese where Buddhism was the prevailing religion. He found a pious Buddhist at his devotions in one of the temples, and asked him for what he had been praying.

"I have been praying for nothing," was the startling answer.

The Bishop next inquired—"To whom have you been praying?" but received the still more significant reply—

"I have been praying to nobody."

"What!" exclaimed the astonished Bishop, "praying for nothing to nobody?"

It was no wonder that the Buddhist's answers surprised the Christian minister. To have no requests to bring to the mercy-seat: no sense that when we pray we come to a living, loving God, who waits to bless us—that is indeed the way to rob our petitions of any power or efficacy. Such prayer is a poor maimed thing, without wings to soar to heaven. We once heard a simple-minded man pleading earnestly for a blessing: "Thou art in the midst of us," he said, "and all we have to do is to make our requests known to Thee." It is not easy to find a sharper contrast to the Buddhist's notion of prayer as a round of monotonous repetition than that humble Christian's thought. "I am coming for pardon, for grace, for every good, to the God who hears and answers prayer." Faith and desire, then, are the two wings of prayer, without which it cannot gain any answer of peace.

FAITH.

The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Enoch, before his translation, had this testimony: that he pleased God. For that reason his name is inscribed on the roll of the "Men of Faith." "Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." If there is no God to bless us, we may cease at once to pray. It would but be self-deception to persuade ourselves that we could find any help at the mercy-seat if there were no God to meet us there. The Psalmist paints a glorious future in his verse—"O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come." Sin and sorrow sooner or later bring all men here for grace and pardon. That was the Psalmist's confidence; it is the confidence of the Christian Church to-day. There is only one God who can answer prayer, and to Him all His children will turn for succour. Long before it had any Temple, the Old Dispensation had a glorious promise. "In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Exodus xx. 24). Solomon's wonderful prayer at the dedication of the Temple called forth another assurance of blessing. "The Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before Me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put My name there for ever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually." (1 Kings ix. 3.) Such promises were intended to strengthen faith. Every worshipper might realise that the Great Friend and Helper was near him as he prayed. Even in these days the Church had caught the precious truth—"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

Elijah, in the great controversy on Mount Carmel, stakes his cause on this one thing—The true God is the God that answers prayer. Baal's prophets accepted the Tishbite's challenge, for to have refused it would have been to confess that their own religion was only an imposture. Their frantic earnestness, their baffled and despairing persistency, Elijah's bitter sarcasm against those deceivers of the people who had so long taught them to forsake the only God who could bless and save, still form one of the most dramatic scenes of Israelitish history. "They called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered." When Elijah prayed, there came that glorious answer by fire which made all the people fall on their faces, with the confession—"The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God." Such illustrations of the power of prayer help all men to understand that God "is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." But Jesus Christ gives faith new pinions in that invocation of the model prayer: "Our Father which art in heaven." What power there would be in our petitions if we grasped this truth in its unutterable depth of meaning! The thought which moved Christ Himself to pray is here: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." "Father, glorify Thy name." That was the invocation of His own prayer. He puts it into the lips of all His true disciples. "Father"—there is a whole Gospel in that name. The revelation of the Father in Christ as infinitely tender, infinitely merciful, infinitely mighty, gives new meaning to the words our Saviour has taught us. We pray to our Father—

> "Not as one blind and deaf to our beseeching,
> Neither forgetful that we are but dust,
> Not as from heavens too high for our upreaching,
> Coldly sublime, intolerably just."

Faith grows mighty in the presence of such thoughts. We feel that God's heart is open to us. Every throb of filial or parental love illustrates that opening phrase of the model prayer. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" What

blessed links bind all the earth to God! Even the prodigal may be confident of welcome when he reaches that resolve—"I will arise and go to my father." Those who keep close to God's side have richer blessing—"Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine." To hear the Spirit's voice within, crying, "Abba, Father"—to offer the prayer which Jesus taught the disciples as those to whom He has given the privilege to become sons of God—what confidence that lends to our petitions at the mercy-seat!

Every fresh experience of the power of prayer also gives strength to the pinions of faith. One answer to prayer inspires the suppliant with fresh courage. He feels that he has found the right place to pray. There he resolves to abide for ever.

"I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live."

It is a blessed resolve. Every answer to prayer teaches us to pray more earnestly. Thus true faith is ever gaining strength. Through all delays it sees shining forth a gracious purpose to help when it can help most effectually: which delays only to bless more freely. Let us feed our faith on God's promises, on God's character, on God's dealings with us and with His Church throughout all generations. Such faith will lend new strength to prayer, and make it indeed prevail with God. If such faith is ours, prayer, though it be for patient resignation to the will of God, cannot fail to find its answer.

DESIRE.

But effectual prayer needs to be borne upward on the wing of strong desire, as well as that of mighty faith. Without this, there is no real pouring out of the heart to God. James Montgomery's lines—

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
> Uttered or unexpressed,"

are full of meaning here.

There are moments in life when we feel that we must pray. Every other door of help is closed. Friends cannot succour, wealth cannot alleviate, every earthly prop seems to be taken away. Jacob felt thus when he wrestled all night with the angel. Many of us can remember such hours. We still say, "I felt as though I had never prayed before." We need to cultivate this spirit of desire. Whatever request we bring to God, let us come as those who feel He alone can grant it. What a picture Shakespeare paints of Hamlet's uncle, who cannot find acceptance because his desire for mercy is not so strong as his love of sin!—

> "Pray can I not,
> Though inclination be as sharp as will:
> My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
> And, like a man to double business bound,
> I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
> And both neglect."

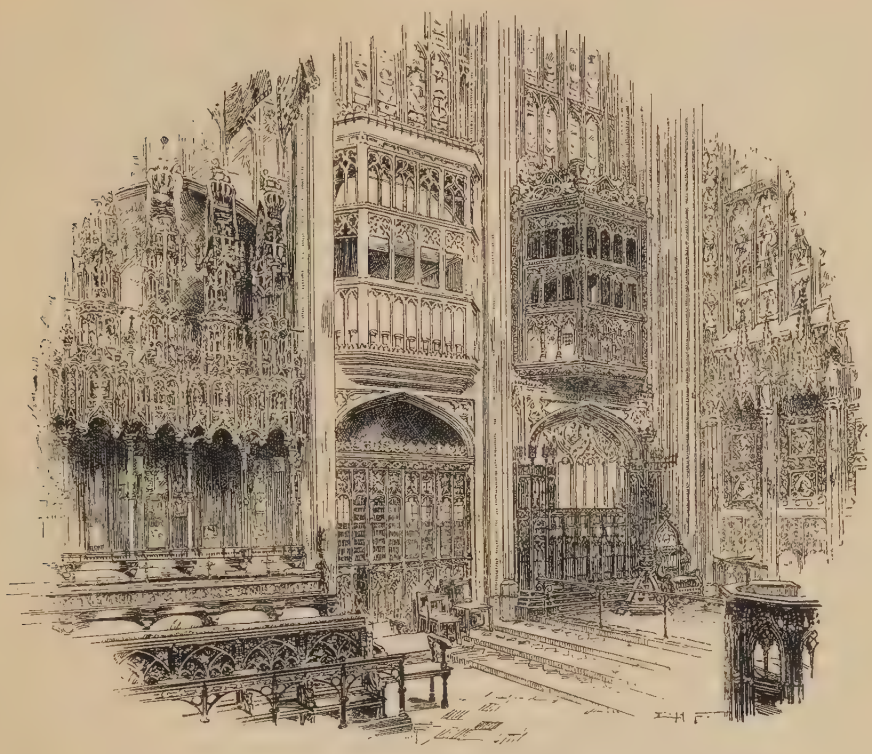
The vain struggle ends as one might expect it would end. The king whose hands are stained with a brother's blood finds no comfort, because he is a stranger to true penitence—

> "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
> Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

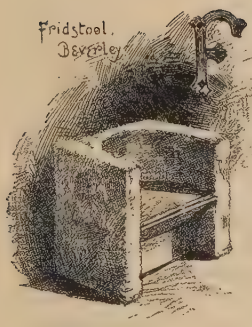
It is a great truth. Prayer which has no strong desire to urge its plea will not wing its way to heaven. Had the King of Denmark's desire for pardon been strong enough to move him to repentance, his prayer would not have been unanswered. The God who delighteth in mercy waits to say to every penitent, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee."

Desire lends wings to prayer. Even in a Buddhist temple it prompts many an accepted petition. When Miss Bird watched the worshippers in Japan, she saw some "who offered their prayers with a pleading agony, no less real than that which ascends to our Father in heaven from anguished hearts in England." We want more of this earnestness. Every experience of life shows that God is the unfailing source of grace and blessing for the world. The sense of sin brings us to Him for pardon; the burdens of care and sorrow teach us that we need a strong arm on which to lean in every moment of need; the approach of death to ourselves and to those we love warns us to fly to God for refuge. There are many prayers unoffered because we do not see what God waits to bestow. Look at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer. Who but a true disciple would offer it? It means that all the world belongs to God. Reverence is due to His holy name; His kingdom is to embrace the whole earth, bringing peace and joy and righteousness to all mankind; His will is to be the law of every life. They who desire to see that glorious day when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," will plead mightily with God for the outpouring of His Spirit, and spend their own lives in hastening the coming of His Kingdom. Read St. Paul's prayers, that you may see how much the longing for a lofty Christian life will move us to plead with God for ourselves and others. "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment. That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Archbishop Tait used to say "two things were essential to a man's due discharge of each day's round of monotonous and often tiresome duties. The first, to keep the spirit fresh by constant prayer; the second, to quicken and enlarge the intelligence by constant and varied reading." We need the stimulus of prayer amid the whirl of business toil and care. God intends life to be a true following of Jesus Christ; to understand that every gift of grace is an invitation to take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord; to learn that there is help in every need, guidance in every perplexity, grace to resist every temptation—that is the way to lift the soul towards God in fervent desire. Such prayer, prompted by need and offered to Him who can alone satisfy it, will bring us often to the mercy-seat. That is the place where unfailing stores of blessing open up to all true suppliants. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

SOME CURIOUS CHAIRS IN OUR ANCIENT CHURCHES.



CHOIR STALLS AND ROYAL PEW, ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR.

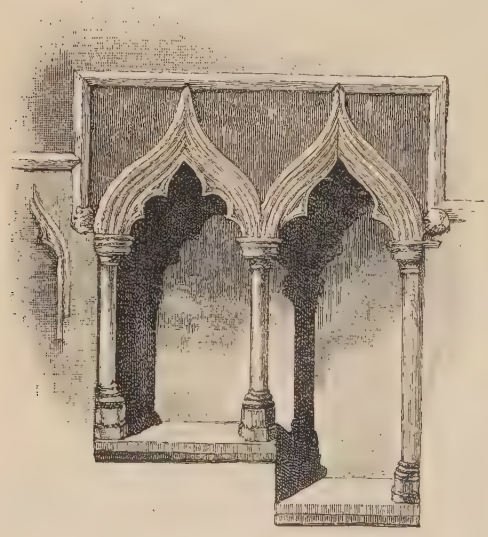


FOREMOST among the curious seats preserved from olden times in some of our ancient churches must be mentioned the massive and antique frid-stools, of Saxon workmanship, placed in structures that had the privilege of sanctuary. The frid-stool in Beverley Minster is a low, sturdy chair, hewn out of a block of stone into a semicircular form. It has been broken, and repaired with iron clamps. Two antiquaries in Tudor times mentioned that there was a Latin inscription upon it to the effect that it was the chair of peace, and whatever criminal sought it for security had full protection; but this wording is now obliterated. It stands close to the screen of the Percy Chapel, which is on the north side of the great east window. The privilege of sanctuary extended around the church to a distance indicated by stone crosses placed in various directions, three of which are still standing. The Hexham frid-stool stands in the abbey church; and the limits of the sanctuary around it were also marked by crosses at equal distances from the town in four different quarters. Though of a different outline from the Beverley example, it resembles it in being low and massive; the base of it is fashioned out of a block of stone in the simplest manner. It is possible that this example once had an inscription likewise, as a roughness on the elbows may have been lettering. We are told that the Saxon king Ina enacted that if any person guilty of a capital crime took refuge in a church his life should be spared on condition that he recompensed the friends of the deceased individual according to justice and equity; and that King Athelstan granted the privilege of sanctuary to the Church of St. John of Beverley; and that Wilfred, the founder of Hexham Abbey, obtained the same privilege for his church. And these frid-stools remain to us as an abiding testimony. There is another frid-stool at Sprotburgh. York is known to have possessed one. It has been suggested that these chairs may have been used by the Saxon bishops at ceremonials.

In Jarrow Church there is a venerable-looking old chair, made of plain planks of wood, that has been time out of mind associated with the Saxon monk and historian, Beda. It is called the Venerable Bede's

chair. And though there have been critics bold enough to express their opinion that there is not sufficient intrinsic evidence to establish its claims to Saxon antiquity, it must be owned that there is the same absence of proof that it is of later workmanship. North-country antiquarians relate that there were numerous virtues attributed to it formerly, and that brides were often seated in it immediately after their marriage to insure their future happiness. The planks of which it is composed touch the ground, and rise to a convenient height to form the back and sides. From the front edge of the seat the sides are sloped away till they die into the back at its full height. It is worn and hoary, fibrous, dry, and parched-looking, as beseems its centuries of existence.

As years went by, the builders of our ancient churches recognised the necessity of seats for the officiating clergy, and provided them in the thickness of the walls, at a convenient distance from the altar. Sometimes we find only one thus placed, sometimes two, more frequently a group of three; and we have instances in which four and five seats have been thus constructed. When there are more than two they are placed on different levels—perhaps to denote the difference in the rank of the ecclesiastics for whom they were intended. At a short distance from them we occasionally see a larger recess, also left in the thickness of the wall, as though meant for the seat of a superior dignitary on grand occasions, when it would probably be embellished with suitable garniture. Sometimes window-sills were made into seats. There was generally, however, a handsome canopy or arcade extended over the group, more or less ornamented, according to the style of architecture in vogue at the time of its construction; and to the east of them a piscina was usually hollowed out of the wall likewise. We have a few examples of these sedilia of Norman workmanship—as at Leicester St. Mary, and in the churches at Earls Barton and Wellingore, in Northamptonshire—but a much larger number of thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth century workmanship. Curiously, after the Reformation this provision for the clergy was discontinued. In some ancient churches there is a line of stone benches on each side of the chancel. In Great Sampford Church, for instance, there are eleven stone seats on each side of the chancel; and in St. Mary's Church, at Stone, in Kent, there are stone stalls on each side of the chancel and at the east end as well. These examples are, however, exceedingly rare. We may mention Chalk Church, in Kent, as containing an example of a single seat in the wall on the south side of the chancel; and Chaddesden Church, in Derbyshire, as having three single seats in different parts of the edifice; and Milton Church, in Kent, as showing us two with arched and cusped headings, whereof one is a little higher than the other, whereas it is not unusual to find them on the same level, as at St. John the Baptist's Church, at Wolvey, Warwickshire. For instances of four of these seats we may refer to St. Mary's Church, Luton, and All Saints', Turvey, Bedfordshire; and for an example where there are five, to Southwell Minster. As already indicated, the great majority show us three seats. In St. Botolph's Church, Helpstone, in Northamptonshire, there are three of these seats on each side of the chancel. Sometimes there are no divisions between them, for in Spennithorne Church, Yorkshire, there is a stone seat, with two elbows, that is wide enough for two persons; in Baslow, Denby, and Whitwell Churches, in Derbyshire, are two stone sedilia. In Broad Clyst Church, Devon, there is a combination of seats with a handsomely carved canopied tomb, with a sculptured effigy of a knight upon it, that is very curious. At a first glance it is difficult to realise this intention; but on a closer scrutiny, lighted with the recollection of numerous instances in which other tombs are made to do double duty, it is quite apparent. There are three seats of equal height in this example, divided from each other by buttressed pilasters, and the canopies are enriched with crockets and finials. In the depth of the recess behind the seats lies the knight, with angels at his head and a lion at his feet.



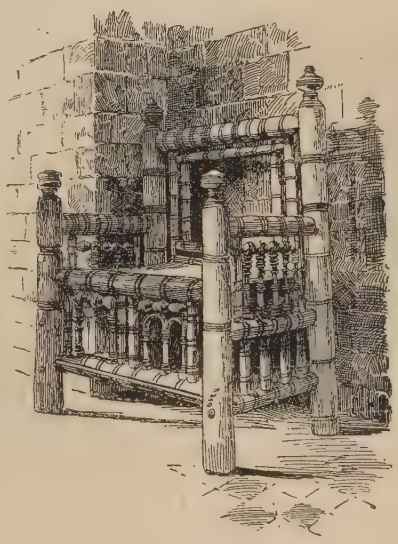
IN MILTON CHURCH, KENT.

Besides these stone seats thus arranged in twos and threes, or fours and fives, as the case may be, many ancient churches are still in possession of rows of ancient carved oak stalls, similar in kind to those that grace our cathedrals. These stalls are furnished with seats that are provided with hinges, by means of which they can be lifted up and placed slantwise against the back of the stall. The under-side of the seat is then exposed to view, which fact has led to the use of a great deal of carved ornamentation. The carvings are often of a grotesque character, representing odd animals and birds, though foliage is still more frequently found on them. In the old church at Manchester now used as the cathedral there are angels to be seen on them, as well as apes and foxes. The examples in Nantwich Church, Cheshire, are generally quoted as of supreme excellence. The carved oak stalls in the choir of St. George's Chapel, in Windsor Castle, are also of marvellous richness. They are the seats of the Knights of the Garter, and over each stall, under a canopy, are placed the sword and mantle, helmet and crest, of the knight to whose use it is

EPISCOPAL THRONE, WELLS.

assigned. Drooping over each stall, too, is each knight's banner. Holinshed has handed down word to us that almost all the masons and carpenters that were of any account within the land were sent for and employed upon the works with which Edward the Third enlarged and improved the castle; and the original stalls were probably among the last items upon which they lavished their skill. Small brass plates affixed to the backs of the seats give the names and styles of the knights to whom they have been apportioned. Among them are pointed out such of the older plates as record their occupation by celebrities, such as Sigismund, Emperor of Germany, 1418; Casimir, King of Poland, 1452; the Earl of Surrey, of Flodden Field fame; and various Elizabethan personages of distinction. The stall occupied by the Sovereign rises above the rest, and is even more sumptuously rich than the others. As we gaze upon them we are brought face to face with the old Plantagenet times. We know the plague was raging and carrying off so many of the king's workmen in 1362 that special writs were issued to the sheriffs of various counties to impress men for the king's works. The counties of York, Salop, and Devon, for instance, were each required to find sixty masons and diggers of stone; and in 1363 glaziers were impressed in a similar manner, from which we can gather that the works were then approaching completion. We may picture William of Wykeham, the architect, coming and going, planning and setting out work, surmounting difficulties, accomplishing intricate undertakings; the impressed workmen busy at their tasks; knots of idlers looking on; the courtyard littered with scaffolding and building refuse; the gorgeous chapel gradually taking shape; and eventually, after the roof was perfected, with its costly carvings, and the marble floor was finished, the stalls placed for the use of the knights. We know that William of Wykeham received a shilling a day for his pay, and we know, too, that his work was replaced in the reign of Edward the Fourth, and that the stalls as we now see them are of somewhat later workmanship; yet, as indicated, they are still touchingly redolent of Plantagenet and Tudor days.

Most of the bishops' thrones in our cathedrals are of interest. A throne, it may be mentioned, differs from a stall by being placed on a daïs, approached by steps, and furnished with a canopy. Episcopal thrones are generally placed on the south side of the choir, and east of the stalls. Wells and Winchester have representative examples, the one of stone, the other of oak. The Wells throne is made of stone. Above the cusped canopy rise tall niches, with crocketed finials that touch the dim triforium above them. A panelled front encloses the raised floor on which the seat is placed. The Winchester example is of oak. It is, as usual, at the east end of the line of canopied stalls. Over the seat projects a canopy with fine gables, each surmounted with a finial, the whole presenting a sumptuousness of ornamentation that it would be difficult to surpass. In Chester Cathedral, soon after the Reformation, a monument composed of richly carved stone-work, formerly part of a shrine, was made into a throne for the bishop, and the upper part of it shortened and fashioned into a canopy. In Ripon Cathedral the stalls are dated 1489 and 1494; and the front of the bishop's seat is enriched with a representation of an elephant with a houdah on his back with men in it, one of whom is blowing a horn and another casting a stone. The stalls, too, are elaborately carved with subjects representing the spies with grapes, Samson at Gaza, a fox preaching to geese, and



ANCIENT CHAIR IN HEREFORD CATHEDRAL

a griffin seizing a rabbit. The throne in Exeter Cathedral is a superb example.

In Hereford Cathedral there is an episcopal chair of great antiquity. Tradition asserts that it is the same in which King Stephen sat when he visited Hereford. It was removed to the palace at one time, but brought back again to the cathedral. The height of this chair is three feet nine inches; and it is composed of upwards of fifty pieces of oak, arranged rail-fashion, with the distinguishing feature of a row of semicircular arches in front of the seat. A groove along the edge of the seat points to the probability that something had been fixed to it at some former time of the nature of a step, or stool. Traces of vermilion and gold indicate that it has been ornamented with colour and gilding, like the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey. It is claimed for this chair that it is one of the oldest in the kingdom; and, placed on a daïs under a canopy, it must be conceded it would become, also, one of the most kingly aspect.

John Bunyan's chair is still taken care of at Bedford, in the vestry of the Baptist Chapel. It used to stand in the old meeting-house, and has been reverently placed in this part of the new one. There is an interesting old chair in the vestry of Much Elney Church.

The coronation chair, however, holds its own in the matter of historic interest. After we have gazed at the beautiful vistas of clustered columns crowned with the glorious vaulting, at the perfection of the tracery in the superb windows, at the countless chapels, at the monuments of the mighty dead, at the pavements worn by so many loitering feet, at the mosaic work laid down before the shrine of the Confessor by Abbot Ware, at the innumerable tokens of bygone ages and people, we still turn to it again and again with unabated pleasure. We read it has been put under microscopic examination, and that traces of gold and colour have been detected. Antiquaries never tire of poring over its details. There is another chair—or was—that was used at the coronation of William and Mary preserved in the Abbey; but it does not appeal to us like this one. Associated with it is the large rounded dark Scone stone that figured in the coronation of Scottish kings, and that Edward the First brought from Scotland in token of his victories. We know seven Saxon kings were crowned standing on the king's stone at Kingston-on-Thames, and that William the Conqueror stood on the gravestone of Edward the Confessor when the crown was placed upon his head, proving that some special advantages were supposed to be assured by the use of a holy stone; and we can but conclude that the "greatest of the Plantagenets" thought he was transferring to his metropolis the regality and good fortune that it conferred.

Even the coronation chair, though, when its colouring was bright and its gold glistening, doubly royal as it may have been with the Scone stone lying in the shadow below it, did not approach the splendour of King Solomon's throne: "Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom. (1 Kings x. 18-20.)

SARAH WILSON.

THE UNKNOWN HELMSMAN.

ALL eyes were strained, striving to pierce the darkness, and many a sympathetic heart stood still as those crouching under the sheltering cliff fixedly watched two bright red lights far out at sea—two flaming signals of distress stationary on the cruel rocks.

It was a wild and stormy night. The wind moaned and sobbed as it sped on its rapid, unresisted course over the raging seas, but shrieked and howled with baffled fury in the caves and countless fissures in the rocks, at finding no outlet for its gigantic force. The very cliff, sheer and rugged, seemed shaken by the power of its smothered passion, and to threaten destruction on the little hamlet nestling so trustfully at its foot—the little fishing-hamlet it had for so long protected, and over which it had kept faithful watch since first it sprang into existence.

One minute, and all was black as in a tomb peopled with the dead; the next, for miles around, the crags and headlands were thrown in misty relief as the heavily charged clouds rushed past the moon, leaving her unveiled in their headlong course.

The waves leap on like an endless brigade of soldiers in well-ordered files rushing madly on to meet the foe; the front ranks meeting with instant destruction and being hurled back on to those behind, till all to the fore is confusion and uproar; so the foremost waves dash themselves to pieces in impotent fury on the immovable shore, and recoiling with the force of their own impetus, meet the steady roll of the incoming swell. Both imbued with irresistible strength, they struggle, and, neither able to obtain the mastery, a volume of water is thrown up high in the air, which, dissolving into spray, calls into life a thousand shadowy forms and strange fantastic shapes in the white weird moonlight.

And ever and again a rocket is seen out at sea, shooting high where the bright red lights are shining, whilst the bell summoning the lifeboat crew peals and clashes as if suddenly possessed of an independent demonic life.

"I see her—theer her be, stuck fast on the old Gimlet rock!" shouted a husky, eager voice from amongst the group collected on the beach, as for an instant the moon lit up the scene with a soft, filmy brilliance.

"Yes, there her be, sure enough," muttered an octogenarian fisher. "What be the lifeboat after? In my young days I reckon us'd been half-way to'n by now, wi'out all these new-fangled notions o' ropes and launchin'. The Lord be wi' the poor souls aboard her to-night! Not one o' em' 'ell be saved wi' that theer rock a-borin' a hole in her bottom as easy as if 't were but a nutshell! Ain't yer ready, maisters?" he shrieked in quavering tones.

Aye, all were ready—the boat run down close by the sea, the crew in their places, motionless and stern as men who know that they might never see their homes or hear the voice of wife or child again. Yet all were ready—ready to die, if so God willed, for those they went to save. Only the captain was missing. Where could he be?—why did he linger so long?—he, always the first at his post, the last to leave the boat. Before their impatience had found time to vent itself in murmurs, a small, brown urchin, bare-legged, bare-headed, rushed breathlessly up to the lifeboat.

"Feyther's struck down," he gasped. "The doctor says 't is pararlsis, and mebbe he 'll never walk no more."

Consternation and horror shone on every face as the news flew round. Short-handed they already were. In such a gale they dared not venture with still smaller crew. A shout went up for volunteers: no voice responded to the call. Alas! 't was but a tiny fishing-hamlet, hardly able at the best of times to man the lifeboat with a full and able-bodied crew; and to-night two of the strongest were away, seeking to save their herring-nets ere the storm should burst. "Heaven grant that they were somewhere safe ashore this night!" was the prayer of their anxious wives.

Again the shouts were heard: "Who volunteers, who volunteers for the lifeboat? There's folks in danger out at sea!"

"The Lord knows," cried the veteran fisher, "a half-score years ago these ears should not ha' heared that cry in vain! Mates, I'd gladly give the rest o' my life to be young and strong once more this night; but now this arm"—and he impotently struck his right arm against a ready-poised oar—"can scarce lift a suckin' babe; oar or tiller 'd master 'n."

Once more a rocket shot high in the air a last despairing cry for help, sent up by those awaiting death upon the rocks.

"'T is hard—'t is cruel hard!" muttered the old man, rubbing his eyes with the back of his weather-stained hand.

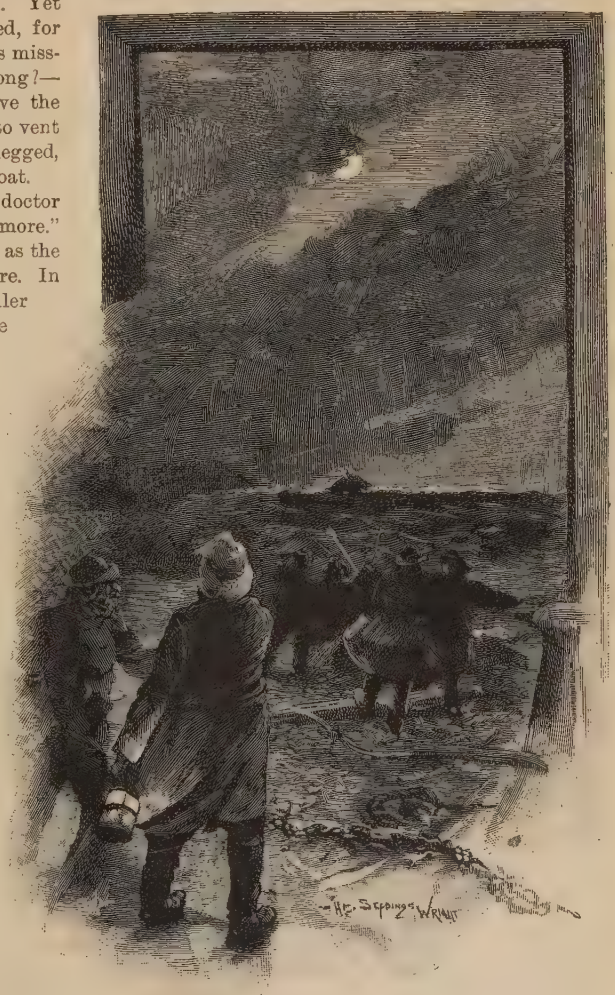
For the third time rang out the hopeless cry for volunteers; but now there was instant response. A figure clad in tarpaulin and sou'-wester leapt lightly into the boat, and grasped the tiller with both hands.

"Let go the rope; shove off, my men!" shouted a clear, authoritative voice.

Like sheep they obeyed the tones of command; the rope was let go, and many willing arms ran the boat down to the water's edge. Now they held her back whilst a gigantic wave broke its strength, now they rolled her on with the backward suck; at last the lifeboat was safely launched. For a second she was seen by all quivering high on the crest of a wave, as if resenting the rough usage she met with, the next she vanished from sight, hurled into the black abyss beyond.

The excitement of those left behind ran high as they eagerly questioned one another.

"Who were 't?"—"Whose were the figure as volunteered?" "Have ye any idea?"—"I seem to know who



"'I see her, ... fast on the old Gimlet rock.'"

'twere, but can't just rightly say! 'T was someone young—'t was a mere lad!"

Suddenly their surmises were cut short by a piercing cry: "Wheer be Miss Lorna—wheer be our Lorna Leigh?"

"Miss Lorna were by thicky [that] rock, 't is but a minute gone, wi' my babe in her arms. Sure her can't be fur off," answered a handsome black-browed woman.

"Here 's your babe, woman!" cried the old fisher piteously; for his was the voice which had startled all; "and our Lorna—her 's—her 's gone to her death out on the sea. Her it were as volunteered for the lifeboat."

"'T is impossible! you 'm getting doited, grandfeyther. Miss Lorna, wi' her soft pink hands a'most like small anemones: her durstn't lay hold on tiller in sic a storm; her couldn't manage 'n if her tried," were the disbelieving comments raised on the old man's speech.

"I tell yer all," persisted he, in wailing tones, "our Lorna is fighting for life out on thicky [yonder] mad white horses. Who else but her were 't as slipped the bairn in my arms—and 't were her light hand as took the sou'-wester off my head—I 'll stake my life on 't! I never reckoned for why her did it till now I see as her were gone. I feel as we 'll never see her more!"

Dead silence, and still silence, as the old man's words carried conviction to unbelieving hearts. Faster and ever faster the belief gained ground, till all could have sworn that it was indeed their Lorna, the pet and pride of all the fishermen and their wives, the idol of every child around—who had risked her life out on the roaring chaos.

Four months ago she and her mother had come to live in the obscure Cornish fishing village—sent as a last chance for life, the doctor said, for that scourge of many nations, consumption, had laid its merciless hand with cruel grip on the fair young girl. She spent her life in the open, on the sea or by the shore, learning of all who would teach, till now she could sail, reef, and steer with the best, and manage oar as one born to the work; could set fishing-lines, help draw-in nets, and fearlessly take out the crabs and lobsters from their pots. She had mastered the tides, rocks, currents, and eddies for miles around; and those small fingers, which turned out many a dainty garment for mothers of large families, had learnt deftly to mend the clumsy lobster-pots, never shrinking from the coarse, unwonted task. And wading at low tide among the rocks with slender, bare feet, shrimping-net in hand, Lorna would fill a pail with the tiny shell-fish when others gave up in despair; the most hidden holes, the slyest of refugees, not escaping her sharp eyes and skill.

With cheerful looks and loving words she went her way. No man wanted for a word when Lorna was by; whilst children became the proud possessors of toys unheard of, undreamt of before; and women learnt to look for her gentle presence when in trouble or distress, till Lorna became an influence, an integral part in the life of the village. Rough men ceased their oaths in her presence, and none so degraded but shrank from her learning of their habits of intemperance and sloth; and women tidied up their homes for fear *Miss Lorna* should drop in and witness any dirt or disorder.

Many a sob was now heard as those who loved her stood blankly gazing into the impenetrable gloom. They shrank together as a tall lady, clad in deep mourning, came hurriedly down the short, steep cart-track to the beach.

"Where is Miss Lorna?" she cried, on nearing the first of the group.

Receiving no answer, she deemed herself unheard in the uproar, and came closer.

"Where is my daughter?" she called in louder tones. "It is not fit she should be out on such a night as this!"

Still no answer. None would be the first to tell the widowed mother where her darling was. *Not fit to be out on such a night!* What would she say when told the truth—how bear the awful news?

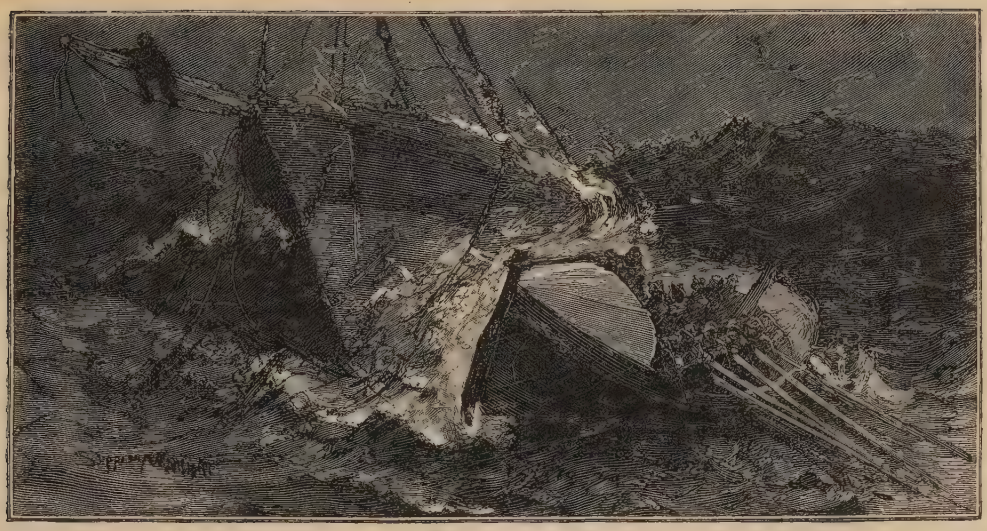
Though unable to distinguish the pitying looks and compassionate gestures of those around, the contagion of fear spread quickly to the mother's heart.

She turned to a woman beside her, and asked with fear and alarm as to where her child might be. The woman shrank back; she could not be the one to deal the blow; but Nan, the black-browed woman, with greater courage, truer sympathy, stepped forward and told the half-dazed woman all they knew, and all they feared. How a ship had struck on the rocks—how Lorna had been there when volunteers were called for, and how grandfather Dave felt sure she had taken his sou'-wester and gallantly gone to the rescue of the shipwrecked folk, after placing the babe she had been carrying in his arms.

No word issued from the mother's white, drawn lips. She drew closer to the seething sea, and clasping her hands, gazed into space with eyes that seemed to cleave the darkness and to compel the night to deliver up the secrets it shrouded so blackly. And then this woman, who rarely prayed, sank on her knees and prayed as only those can pray in bitter pain. And sobbing women, all other feelings merged in noble sympathy, forgot that they, too, had sons and husbands out in deadly peril, and dropping on their knees added their heartfelt prayers to those of the stricken mother.

Meanwhile, the lifeboat ploughed her way through foam and spray, each inch of her slow but steady advance being fiercely disputed by the angry waves. At first the men, dismayed at finding their lives in the hand of a perhaps incompetent stranger, rowed with faint uncertain will, but confidence grew minute by minute, and they pulled with cheered hearts as they marked the well-judged course pursued. Now they ran before a volume of water which threatened to engulf them, now they bravely breasted one heavy swell after the other which threw them off their arched backs as a duck does the water, the boat being turned again and again with inflexible purpose to a point a mile to windward of their goal. Nobly the men toiled on, yet found time to marvel as to who their unknown guide could be, whence he could have sprung!

For an hour they steadily rowed on, unhesitatingly obeying the words of command. At last, weary, but with unconquered spirits, they raised a cheer. There,



"Carefully he started along the bowsprit."

to the left of them, the bright red lights were shining, towards which they were rapidly drifting broadside on. A minute more and they were close under the bowsprit of the stranded vessel—a large steam-yacht, evidently the property of a man of means.

Speedily the work of rescue began. One by one those on the yacht crawled along the bowsprit, desperately clinging with hands and knees, and dropped or were dragged into the little, tossing lifeboat. Sometimes one or two would quickly be taken in, then an interval would follow during which the boat wrestled for her position with the spluttering sea, which foamed and lashed itself with fury at being thus robbed of the prey it had marked as its own. But patiently the little craft resumed its work, and steadily, one by one, lives were saved. At last fourteen had been taken in—there only now remained the captain, the young owner of the yacht. Carefully he started on his perilous journey along the bowsprit, when the ever-watchful, roving eye of the unknown helmsman spied a black, perpendicular wall of water bearing full upon them with terrific force, like some monster holding its gigantic strength awhile in leash, so as to dash and seize upon its victim more securely. Instantly arose the clear, ready shouts of command, "Back, white! pull, blue! give way, all," and the boat shot forward on the upreared crest of her would-be destroyer.

Immediately they could swerve from their headlong career, the boat was again bravely, unweariedly headed for the Old Gimlet rock.

But what had happened? With dismay the men looked at where the two red lights had been. One was gone and the other fast disappearing before their horror-struck eyes. Muscles stood out like cords, and every nerve and sinew was strained to the utmost to reach the spot ere their last beacon should have vanished. On the boat shot, as if launched from a bow, and as she neared the fatal rock a sharp-eyed sailor spied his captain gallantly fighting to keep his head above the seething water which sought to tear him to pieces. Such was the rate at which they were travelling that, the first time, the boat swirled past unable to reach him; round she came, as if swung on a pivot, and as they again dashed past, half a score of knotted ropes were flung with well-judged aim close by the struggling man. He seized the nearest, and held on with the grip of despair; and even as the ill-fated vessel with her last remaining light plunged beneath the hissing waves and sank for ever by the treacherous rocks, he was dragged by strong arms into the one tiny refuge from the jaws of death.

Though soaked and cold, the lifeboat crew raised a faint cheer. More than half their work was done—there only now remained the journey home. But the rescued men were silent; they could not join in the cheer. Death had been too near—they seemed to feel his cold hand still resting on them, and deep awe filled their hearts. Silent, too, was the helmsman. Erect and motionless, he made for a point far below from where they had started, thus gaining all possible advantage from tide and wind. He allowed the worn-out men to row easily as they spasmodically travelled forward, now borne aloft on a watery mountain, now sloshing heavily in a trough till again they should be carried on their homeward course.

The storm had seemed to lull, but now it burst forth with fresh fury. It tore off the helmsman's disguising sou'-wester, leaving exposed to view the clear-cut features of a young girl, looking wan and ethereal in the ghostly moonlight, with short fair curls tossing wildly in the gale.

Deep amazement, mingled with pride, filled the hearts of those who now, at last, recognised in the helmsman who had so nobly brought them through their perilous undertaking their Lorna Leigh—their pupil! But pride quickly gave place to dismay as they noted the frozen look on that fair face. Never had man among them seen Miss Lorna look like that. With rigid features, and wide, unblinking eyes, she

fixedly gazed at the goal she longed to reach—her haven of rest. And as a streak of moonlight streamed full upon her pallid face, it might have been hewn out of marble, so white, so unearthly quiet, was it in its terrible rigidity, had not an expression in the staring eyes shown their consciousness of a task still lying unfinished—that they must wait ere they could rest.

The rescued crew gazed spell-bound, as if a spirit had risen from another world to bring them through the dangers of the night.

With unerring instinct the safest channel through the rocks was chosen, with care and skill the boiling breakers ploughed through, till at last the lifeboat, dragged by triumphant men and women, lay once more safe, high and dry upon the beach.

Cheer after cheer rang through the night as those on land welcomed the return home, and willing arms helped both rescued and rescuers, all numb and stiff with wet and cold, to step on shore.

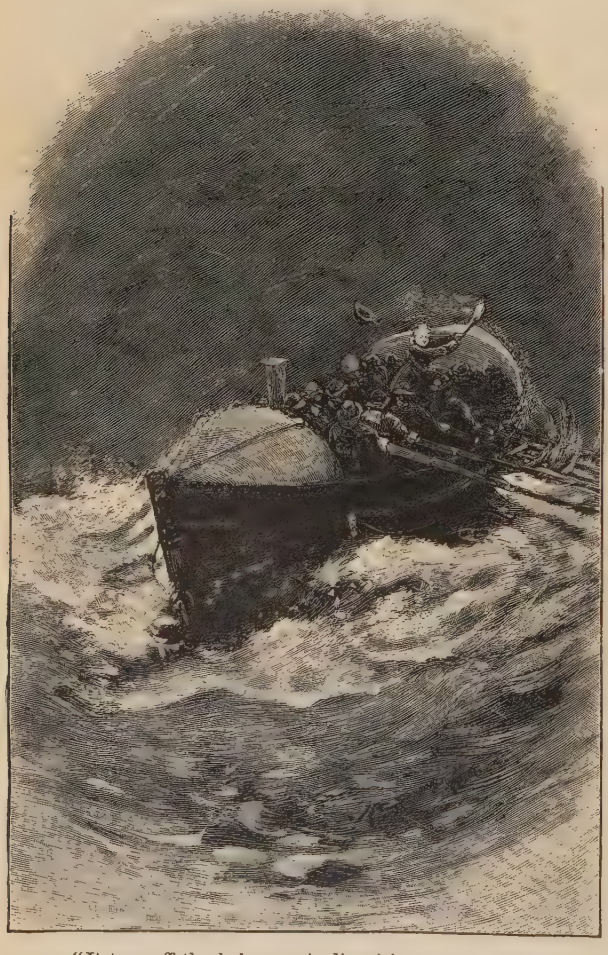
Lorna alone stirred not, but still stood looking with far-away eyes into the darkness, as if she sought for something she could not find. Her mother rushed forward with a bitter cry; but one was before her. The captain of the yacht, whose gaze had been riveted on the young girl's face since first uncovered, was already by her side. He stooped over her and said, in low but thrilling tones—

"Your task is over: come away and rest."

She took no heed, unconscious alike of his words and presence. A chill foreboding seized him, and he laid his strong grasp on the two small hands, still gripping hard the tiller, and sought to unlock their cold, stiff clasp.

"Come," he said, "there remains no more for you to do. You have saved us all; your work is done."

The slight form shuddered, but gave no other sign of life. The captain quickly raised her in his arms, and stepped with her on to the beach. A choking sound was heard, and a bright red stream rushed from between the half-parted lips of the unconscious girl. The young man's heart froze with icy dread as he felt her life-blood, hot and throbbing, rushing over him. Urged on by fear, he rapidly followed his many excited guides, and laid his precious burden on a low pallet in the first small cottage reached.



"It tore off the helmsman's disguising cap."- *p. 471.*

Her work indeed was done! No human aid could avail. She never spoke again, but watched her mother with unseeing, wandering eyes, as she hung over her darling, yearning for one last ray of recognition, which never came, listening hopelessly to hear those sweet, pale lips once more say *mother*.

Early next morning the village church bell tolled slowly, dully, eighteen times. Aye, in eighteen short years had that young life blossomed, lived, been cherished, and passed away.

Many a year has come and gone since then, but still a lonely woman lives among those fishermen—among those who ever cherish and keep green the memory of her child. Always their guide and comforter, she strives to fill the place once held in their hearts by Lorna, thus, she fondly believes, fulfilling what would have been the wish of her buried darling.

And no summer draws to a close without a beautiful yacht, the *Lorna Leigh*, being seen cruising in these waters. As each anniversary of the fatal storm comes by, a solitary man pushes off from her in a small boat, and lands at the little fishing hamlet, and then pursues a never-varied road. Across the beach, along the stony road, and over the fields, he wends his way till a tiny churchyard is reached. He enters and follows a well-worn path, and stops at last by a grave, marked by a small stone, and planted with many old-fashioned flowers. Reverently he lays down his offering of pure white blossoms, and, standing with uncovered head, reads again and again the simple words on the marble headstone:

"*Lorna Leigh, aged* 18;"

and the inscription below:

"*For others' sake she gave up all. She withheld not even her own life.*"

J. EVELYN.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

HOW NOT TO FIND FAULT.

ONE who was a guest at a dinner-party given by Dr. Whewell, the famous Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, relates the following :—The Master was finding fault, in the presence of the assembled company, with an old favourite servant who was waiting at table, for some act of omission, when the man quietly interposed with the inquiry : "Had we not better talk of this, sir, when you and I are alone ?" This made Dr. Whewell look very foolish, and he afterwards said that he felt at once that he was wrong and the servant right. This is an illustration of one of the ways in which we should *not* find fault. There are times when most people are in duty bound to find fault ; but their fault-finding has either no effect at all, or one the opposite of that which they intended, so badly is it done. To find fault well is a fine art, requiring a considerable amount of tact, judgment, and, above all, sympathy.

WHY HE WAS HEALTHY AND HAPPY.

We were on a recent occasion talking to a young man who is employed in a large linendraper's shop in London. Seeing that he was very healthy and cheerful-looking, we asked him what open-air recreation he indulged in. Did he ride a bicycle, row, or what did he do to make him look so strong and manly ? "Ah," he said, "I have no time for any of those things ; and if I look happy, it is because I try to help others in my spare moments. As a rule I am at work ten or twelve hours in the shop, but on Saturday evenings and Sundays, and whenever I have an hour or two, I go down to ———, in the East End, and hunt up drift children. We get them into a room and try to teach them something. When anyone gives us money, we have a tea for them. Then there is a Bible-class and a glee-class for young men. It is work like this that keeps me well. Give me the drift children, and I am happy and healthy." We found that there were other young men in the same establishment whose recreation after their long hours of work was of the same unselfish kind.

"WHEN WE ARE DEAD."

Oh ! how much should we do, how much leave undone, if we only looked at the doings and the leavings undone in the light of death ! What memory will this leave when I look upon such and such a person dead ? What memory shall I leave when I am looked upon as dead myself ? A little Sunday-school boy died, and his mother and sister went into the room where his body was laid, his face beautiful in death. As they looked at the dead, the little girl asked to take her little brother's hand. At first the mother was averse from this, for the hand of the dead is very cold ; but as the child was importunate in her request, the mother took the hand of the dead and put it into the hand of the living. The child looked at it fondly, and caressed it lovingly, and then, looking up at the mother, said, "Mother, this little hand never struck me." That little boy had no legacies to leave behind—nothing in the way of property — but he had left what was better, the memory of gentleness and forbearance and kindness and love. We, too, shall be looked upon when we are dead ; and no doubt thoughts of the past, connected with what we said, and did, and were, will rise up in the minds of those who look upon us. It is a sweet thought for those who look upon us to say, "Those eyes, now closed, looked tenderly on me ; those hands, now stiff, were gentle in their touch to me ; those lips, now mute for earthly-ever, spake words of love to me." Memory will be busy as people look upon their dead. And when ours look upon us, may we in all things leave them such a legacy of thought as was left by that little hand.

GIPSY PRAYERS.

A gipsy is not exactly the person to whom one would go if one wanted to be taught how to pray. He might be a very good person to go to if we wanted to be taught how to make a clothes-peg or a skewer, or how to mend a kettle or to re-seat a chair, or, perhaps, to steal a fowl, but we should never think of saying to him, "Now teach us how to pray." And yet some good thing may come out of Nazareth too, and the One who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath ordained praise may out of the mouth of gipsies and their kind ordain prayer. I think we may learn something from these three gipsy prayers :—"O Lord, do give my wife a lovin' heart as well as me." Another gipsy prayed, "O Lord, Thou knowest that I did put bad canes in the chairs ; but, O Lord, forgive me—I won't do so no more." A third prayed, "O Lord, my son is gone out to-night with his fiddle to the public-house ; forgive him, O Lord, and turn his heart." Straight and plain they all said what was in their heart to God. They sought no fine words ; they just told Him what they wanted, what was uppermost in their hearts ; there was reality and downrightness in their prayer, "*Do* give my wife," etc. "Do !" "Do !" a little child says to its father when it wants something very much. It is a little word, but it has ever so much in it. Let us also say, "Lord, *do* give." Oh, how much earnestness and intensity there may be in that word "Do" ! Then

there is the man who told God all about the bad canes, and that although God already knew all about it. He doesn't say, "I will keep away from God because I put in those bad canes," but "I will tell Him all about them." Tell God all about *your* bad canes — the sins you have committed in what meets you in daily life; the prayer that enters into particulars is

A GIPSY'S CAMP FIRE.

always a real prayer. But what bad English the poor gipsy talked in his prayer! Forasmuch as two negatives are equal to an affirmative, his saying, "I won't do so no more," is equivalent to his saying, "I will do it again"; but God knew what the poor gipsy meant, and He goes by what people mean. God knew the gipsy's heart-talk, and that was that he wanted to be forgiven for the dishonesty of having cheated the people who employed him to re-cane their chairs, and that he would never do the like again. Then there is our poor friend who told God that his son had gone that night to the public-house with his fiddle, and who wanted God to forgive him, and to turn his heart. You may learn something from this poor man's prayer. When you are praying for those who are dear to you, never shrink from bringing their badness before God. Don't be afraid that they will appear as any the worse before Him, because you tell Him what they are doing, and how dreadful it is. Spread the badness of their case before Him, ask Him to look in mercy on that very badness—this thing and that—ask Him to forgive them, and to change them in the midst of it all. "He is at this very moment in sin; but forgive him, O Lord, and turn his heart."

A DEVIL'S "MISSIONARY."

A writer about the West Coast of Africa asks, "What is the use of sending missionaries to convert the heathen, if our traders in heathen lands thrust upon the natives a poison which destroys them with more certainty than any war, pestilence, or famine? Will no one set on foot a holy crusade against this curse? . . . . Tempted by greed and avarice, white traders introduce the poison to the natives. Souls of men are bartered for money, and Africa is being slowly but surely desolated by the foremost missionary nation on earth." The same writer informs us that the so-called rum and gin, which is sold for 2s. 6d. per dozen pint bottles, is known to the native as "missionary." This "wet damnation" is called "missionary" either because it is frequently introduced by ruffians who pretend to be missionaries, or because it is brought in by people with white faces, the countrymen of real missionaries. We do not know of anything that enables one so fully to realise how much bad Christians hinder the spread of the Gospel as the calling of rum and gin "missionary" along the West Coast of Africa.

"THE QUIVER" HEROES FUND.

We are glad to have to record another case which has come before us for reward under THE QUIVER Heroes Fund—this time from Liverpool. And, like the last case which we reported, it was for bravery in face of fire that the award was made. On the night of Sunday, the 17th of January, the attention of Police-constable David Lawson was called to a reported fire in a dwelling-house in Burlington Street. He found that the seat of the trouble was a bedroom at the back of the second floor, where the wall-paper and the bed-clothes were in flames. Constable Lawson, at great personal risk, helped to carry down no fewer than five persons from the endangered premises. The fire originated in a fall of burning soot from the chimney on to the floor of the room, and the danger was heightened by the fact that all but one of the persons rescued are reported to have been the worse for drink. Indeed, two of the unfortunate people died in the hospital from the effects of the burns and shock. We were glad to send Constable Lawson the bronze medal of THE QUIVER Heroes Fund, with the red ribbon which indicates that it is bestowed for gallant conduct in saving life on land. May we once more remind our readers that we are always glad to have particulars of authenticated instances of bravery in the saving of human life at the personal risk of the rescuer? It is, of course, impossible to grant a medal in every instance, but the fullest consideration will always be given to a well authenticated case.

TWO POWERFUL PREACHERS.

Death has been very busy of late among our great preachers of the Gospel, but it has rarely silenced a more eloquent voice than that of the late Archbishop Magee, who was called away so soon after his translation from Peterborough to York. Messrs. Isbister

have just issued a volume of the Archbishop's sermons under the title of "Christ the Light of all Scripture." The volume is edited by his son, Mr. Charles S. Magee, who has wisely adopted a chronological arrangement of the discourses. This, of course, enables the reader to follow the maturing of the preacher's thought, especially as the ten sermons were delivered at dates which range from 1854 to 1889, no less than four of them being assigned to the earlier year. Throughout the series there is evident the same earnestness and eloquence, and that unwavering fidelity to truth as he saw it, which ever characterised the late Archbishop.—Far removed from Archbishop Magee in many respects, but almost rivalling him in earnestness, is the other powerful preacher of whose work we wish to speak in this connection, and he—the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes—is happily still to be heard among us. His volume of sermons on "Ethical Christianity" is his contribution to Messrs. Sampson Low & Co.'s series of "Preachers of the Age," and it is prefaced by a portrait of the preacher. It seems but yesterday—though as a matter of fact it is more than four years—since our Special Commissioner interviewed him at the outset of the Wesleyan West End Mission, and already Mr. Hughes is one of the most popular preachers in London; and deservedly so, as we see in the addresses which make up this helpful volume, and which are instinct with fervour, timeliness, and evangelical truth.

IRONY.

Charles Lamb gives very good advice when he says, "Clap an extinguisher upon your irony if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it." For "blest" one might almost read "curst," so seldom is irony of use, so often does it do hurt. It is used on a few occasions in Holy Scripture, such as when Elijah mocks the false prophets of Baal, telling them to cry aloud to him, for he is a god, and is perhaps on a journey, or is asleep, and must be wakened; but its use is very sparing indeed. Irony should be, like a sharp and bright surgical instrument, kept carefully in its case, and not brought out except for a useful and necessary surgical operation. It should not be like a sharp penknife in daily use. A wound may be inflicted by an ironical curl of the lip, or by a word, which may leave a lifelong scar, and unnecessarily make us a lifelong foe.

THE CENTRAL FIGURE EVERYTHING.

When Leonardo da Vinci had completed his great picture of the Last Supper, he asked a brother artist to inspect it. "How beautiful is the painting of the sacred vessels on the table!" These were the first words of the critic. On hearing them, Leonardo took a brush and smeared out this part of the picture, not wishing that anything should divert attention from the central figure. This story should warn preachers not to allow the illustrations they use, or any unimportant details, to hide from their listeners Jesus Christ. It is their business, and indeed that of all His disciples, to set forth as in a picture the Saviour, both by their lives and words.

FROM NATURE UP TO NATURE'S GOD.

We have, many of us, read and re-read those lines of Wordsworth's on "The Trossachs," in which he says—

> ". . . Life is but a tale of morning grass,
> Withered at eve. From scenes of art that chase
> That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
> Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities."

But how slow we are to learn the lessons of the poet's lines, or to acknowledge the handiwork of our Heavenly Father in the march of the varying seasons! At no time is this more apparent than when spring is with us, and the trees are waking to new life.

TRIFLING WITH THE LIFE TO COME.

We all know the words spoken by Sir Walter Scott near the end of his life: "I have been the most voluminous author of the day. It *is* a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principles,

"The trees are waking to new life."

and that I have written nothing I should wish blotted." In the same spirit Cervantes says: "One thing I dare affirm. Could I by any means suppose that these books would excite one evil thought or desire in those who read them, I would rather cut off the hand with which I write than give them to the people. I am at the age when it does not become me to trifle with the life to come, for I am upwards of sixty-four." There is no age at which it is safe to trifle with the life to come, but it shocks even those who are not thoughtful and religious to see people on the point of leaving this life committing sins which we know from the Word of God hinder entrance into His Kingdom. Better to see them cutting off their hands or other offending members.

OTHER LANDS—AND OUR OWN.

As a writer on other lands and their denizens, Dr. Hartwig has long been famous, and we are glad to see that Messrs. Longman are placing his works within the reach of most students, and certainly of all libraries, by the issue at a greatly reduced price of the two handsome volumes containing "The Tropical World" and "The Sea and its Living Wonders." The former is illustrated by eight plates and 172 woodcuts, and has for its very expressive sub-title, "Aspects of Man and Nature in the Equatorial Regions of the Globe." Dr. Hartwig devoted the greater part of his attention to what we call "the lower animals," but as he was pre-eminently a naturalist, this only gives special value to his work. "The Sea and its Living Wonders" has twelve plates and 303 woodcuts in this new edition. But the book is so well known that we need do no more than commend the attention of our readers to this very accessible issue of it.—The same may be said of the Rev. J. G. Wood's deservedly popular "Bible Animals" and "Homes without Hands," which Messrs. Longman have also issued, practically uniform with Dr. Hartwig's books. Volumes better fitted for gift-books or prizes, or likely to prove of more lasting value, it would be difficult to find; and we hope all Sunday-school libraries will take advantage of this opportunity of acquiring them, if they do not already number them among their charges.—The fifth volume of the Jubilee Edition of Cassell's "History of England" carries on the story of our land from the Peninsular War to the death of Sir Robert Peel, and so brings to a point within the ken of many still living this careful record, with its abundance of illustrative engravings. No teacher should be without the help that these pictures can so effectively bestow.—We have received from the Ragged School Union the bound volumes of their magazine, *In His Name*, for 1890—91. The portraits of the more prominent and more devoted workers in this good cause, and the interesting records of useful service done, give special value to the neat volume. Mr. John Kirk and his workers deserve high praise for the excellent way in which they do their work.—A month or two ago we referred in these columns to the Rev. J. Neil's "Pictured Palestine." We have now to mention a new edition of another work by the same author, entitled "Palestine Re-peopled" (Lang, Neil & Co.). Long residence in the Holy Land gives Mr. Neil the right to speak with authority on all questions affecting it and its past or present inhabitants. We cannot endorse all his views, but we gladly bear witness to the ability with which he sets them forth.—"The Martyrs of Blantyre" (Nisbet) is a deeply interesting record of the missionary heroism displayed in "the Dark Continent" by Henderson, Bowie, and Cleland. Many a name is famous in history and romance for deeds less noble and for slighter sacrifices than these men made for their Master's sake. The author of this little memorial volume is the Rev. W. Robertson, who expresses in his preface a hope that this record may serve to inspire other workers to follow in the steps of these devoted labourers.

ALABASTER BOXES

should not be sealed up until our friends are dead. The fragrant perfumes of sympathy and love should be given to them beforehand for their burial. Post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened soul. Speak approving, cheering words while ears can hear them, and before it is too late for the hearts of your friends to be thrilled and made happier by them. The kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say before they go.

THE CURSE OF DRUNKENNESS.

Somewhere about the year 1800 the Duke of Kent, father of her present Majesty Queen Victoria, was appointed Governor of Gibraltar. The garrison was notorious for its drunkenness and insubordination, which the Duke was furnished with the most positive injunctions to put down. The instructions were most ably carried out—single-handed, and in spite of mutiny and rebellion. Perhaps no better commentary on the thorough effectiveness of the reform could be given than that contained in the complaint of an old Chelsea pensioner some years after. Said he: "The Duke of Kent—I recollect him right well. *He was a very bad man. He would not let us drink.* To be sure, 'twas surprising how the deaths in the garrison diminished after many of them wine-shops were shut up. Perhaps the Duke meant us well, but about wine-shops his notions were most unaccountable." Since those times drunkenness has very much diminished, thanks to the efforts of Band of Hope societies, Blue Ribbonists, and other reformers. Public opinion, nowadays, is against excessive drinking; and those who would do so are often kept by shame from indulging too freely. Each of us has an influence, and if we were careful to use it aright, the stain of drunkenness, that now rests upon the English character, would soon be removed.

WHAT WE ALL CAN DO.

Christ came to give the world "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Let none of us then complain that we are too busy, or too poor, too young, or too anything else, to serve Christ, for if we can do nothing else we can smile on someone. Mark healthy children under circumstances however depressing: their natural tendency is towards looking on the bright side of things. Christians must emulate children in their brightness as well as in their submission. Some years ago a distinguished and prosperous author excited universal attention by the statement that his boyhood was the most unhappy part of his life. Circumstances must be very exceptional to make such a statement possible, for most of us look back upon childhood as our brightest time. It has been well said, "Christianity wants nothing so much in the world as sunny people, and the old are hungrier for love than for bread; and the Oil of Joy is very cheap, and if you can help the poor on with a Garment of Praise it will be better for them than the richest earthly covering."

"Looking on the bright side of things."

"THEY ARE ALL TEMPER."

There is a Persian saying, "Make it a habit to be happy, and avoid being out of temper, or thy life will pass in misery." The advice is excellent, but the motive, though good, falls short of the best. It is pleasant and not wrong to secure as far as possible one's own happiness; but the end would be attained, and in a better way, by considering first the effect on others of our looks, manner, speech, and actions. The possessor of a bad temper is looked upon as a person to be pitied and apologised for, rather than as a culprit. "As people," says a great writer, "confess to bad memory without expecting to sink in mental reputation, so we hear a man declared to

have a bad temper and yet glorified as the possessor of every high quality. When he errs or in any way commits himself, his temper is accused, not his character, and it is understood that, but for a brutal bearish mood, he is kindness itself. If he kicks small animals, swears violently at a servant who mistakes orders, or is grossly rude to his wife, it is remarked apologetically that these things mean nothing—they are all temper."

MAN PROPOSING—GOD DISPOSING.

On that Thursday morning in January when we were informed of the death of the Duke of Clarence, it seemed so strange, sad, and startling to read in the newspaper of the day news about the presents and other preparations for his wedding that were being made throughout the country. Man was proposing, said the paper; God had disposed, said the telegram. We do not know why the Prince was called upon then to die, but we can trust the God who makes history that it will be for the best.

THE LATE DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Of all the things related about the Duke of Clarence in the newspapers, what most pleased us was this. When he was with his regiment at York, the authorities of the Minster wished to have a seat placed for him apart from the other people; but the Prince would not hear of this, and preferred to take his chance of a seat with ordinary worshippers whenever he attended Divine service. This was proper feeling, and seemed to show that he understood that in God's sight all are equal—that in comparison with the Infinitely Great Being the most exalted person on earth is infinitely little; only a poor worm, only a miserable sinner. It is admitted that the Prince was not a man of marked intellectual ability, but he had what is better—a pure and amiable character. In the midst of great temptations he seems to have lived a pure life, and he had enough character to make him firm in his resolution of marrying his first and apparently only love, or no one else. It is said by those who knew him that he was very diffident in himself, but very conscientious about any public duty he undertook. Indeed, he seems to have feared the responsibilities of his position more than he valued its privileges, for he told a young man whom he knew at Cambridge that he would be glad "to chuck the whole thing for five thousand a year."

"AH! THIS IS COMFORTABLE."

In his last moments, when the veil of the flesh was parting asunder, and the everlasting sanctuary opening before his eyes, the great Bishop Butler remarked to his chaplain that "it is an awful thing to appear before the Moral Governor of the world." The chaplain reminded him of "the blood which cleanseth from all sin."—"Ah," replied the bishop, "this is comfortable," and with these words on his lips he gave up his soul to God. The sequence is a necessary sequence. He only has access to the Eternal Love who has stood face to face with the Eternal Righteousness. He only, who has learned to feel the awe, will be taught to know the grace.

NOT A SMILE.

Discipline is an admirable thing, but it may at times be a little too severe, as the following anecdote shows. Wellington once took passage to Portugal in one of His Majesty's frigates, the captain of which asked him if he did not admire the order and discipline the ship was in. "Certainly," answered Wellington. "I could not have supposed it possible; everything goes on like clockwork; but, sir, I would not command an army on the same terms you do your ship for the crown of England. I have not seen a smile on the face of any individual since I have been on board her." There used to be homes, of people whose religion was of a mistaken kind, where the discipline that prevailed was of this sort. Happily we have now learned that the less like a prison a home is the better. Indeed, it is possible that we have gone to the other extreme, and that family government is a thing of the past. It is not, however, on the faces of members of an ungoverned house that we see most smiles, but in homes that are governed by true love—love that shuns the extremes of unsympathetic severity and sentimental weakness.

"THE QUIVER" ORDER OF HONOURABLE SERVICE.

As our readers must remember, this Order is closed in all classes except the Distinguished Members' class, to which only those domestic servants are eligible for admission who have been in their present employment not less than fifty years. Two years have passed by since we last published a list of accessions to the Order. We have now pleasure in giving the names of those who have been since enrolled, up to and including 23rd February, 1892:—

Name.	Address.	Years in Present Situation.
Breadmore, Mary	Malmesbury	51
Brown, Ann	Belgravia, S.W.	68
Budd, Elizabeth	Farnham	51
da Encarnação, Luiza	The Deanery, Madeira	52
Ferguson, Ann	Killygordon, Donegal	51
Hunt, Mary Ann	Camberwell, S.E.	50
Stalgate, Susannah	Swansea	50
Thompson, Harriett	Wakefield	51
Thrower, Rachel	Bungay, Suffolk	51
Young, Euphemia	Edinburgh	57

Applications for admission to the Distinguished Members' class are still received, and must be made on forms which may be had by application to the Editor of THE QUIVER, accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope.

THE WORTH OF THE BODY.

When Francis of Assisi was dying, he said, as he looked upon his poor body, worn with fastings and

vigils, and self-inflicted chastisements, "I fear that I have ill-treated my brother, the ass." He looked upon his body as a mere beast of burden; but that is not the aspect in which Holy Scripture presents the body to us. Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. God condescends to dwell within it. It is the outer court of the soul, even as the soul is the outer court of the spirit. The Apostle (1 Thess. v. 23) prays that the whole spirit, and soul, and body of the Thessalonians be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think much of the body in a right way; respect it, value it, take care of it. Some make it a mere peg to hang clothes upon, some a mere barrel to hold food and drink, as the case may be; but remember thou that it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and that within that very body God Himself would dwell.

WE SHALL SOON BE DONE WITH TIME.

When Colonel Napier, who was himself a fine soldier and the father of three others, was dying, almost his last words to his wife were, "Sarah, take my watch; I have done with time." A day is coming for all of us when we shall have done with time, and have to do with eternity. Surely this thought should make every moment seem valuable to us!

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from January 23rd, 1892, up to and including February 23rd, 1892. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver" Waifs Fund:* J. J. E., Govan (51st and 52nd donations), 10s.; Ivy, Westminster, 5s.; Anglo-Indian, Oundle, 5s.; A Glasgow Mother (22nd donation), 3s.; F. A., Kensington, 2s. 6d.

For "*The Quiver" Lifeboats:* M. S. H., 5s.

For Dr. Barnardo's Homes: Ranceby, 5s.

Dr. Barnardo further asks us to acknowledge the receipt of the following amounts towards the Funds of his Homes: Anti-Jesuit, 10s.; M. E. B., 10s.; P. S. T., Datchet, 10s.; In Memoriam, L., Leamington, £1.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

61. What great truth is set forth by David in the first part of the Nineteenth Psalm?

62. Which of the Apostles makes a similar declaration?

63. What six words are used by the Psalmist to express the value of God's revealed word?

64. From what three classes of sins does David pray to be preserved?

65. Quote a passage from the Psalms which shows David's complete trust and confidence in God.

66. What example have we in the Old Testament of a heathen king's faith in God's providence?

67. Quote passage in which our Lord tells us He provides for all the wants of His people.

68. What is specially noted in David's prayer for pardon after his great sins?

69. What marks of true repentance are seen in the Fifty-first Psalm?

70. What words are used in the Eighty-fifth Psalm expressive of God as the source of all good things?

71. What is meant by the term "Valley of Baca"?

72. What is the general teaching of the Eighty-fourth Psalm?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 400.

49. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." (Is. xi. 1.)

50. He speaks of Christ as dying with the wicked (or malefactors), but as being buried with the rich, which was literally fulfilled. (Is. liii. 9.)

51. "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please. (Is. lv. 11; St. Matt. xxiv. 35.)

52. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Is. xl. 1; St. Matt. iii. 3.)

53. He speaks of Christ as a Shepherd, both feeding and caring for His flock. (Is. xl. 11; St. John x. 11—16.)

54. Our blessed Lord commanded His disciples to go first to the House of Israel, and St. Paul said it was necessary the Gospel should first be preached to the Jews. (Is. xl. 9.; St. Matt. x. 6; Acts xiii. 46.)

55. The contrast between the evil and the good, both in this world and the next. (Ps. i. 1, 2, 4—6.)

56. In the words, "ungodly," "sinners," and "scornful." The first expresses restlessness in the spiritual life; the second, intercourse with sinners; and the third, complete union of mind with the profane. (Ps. i. 1.)

57. The ungodly are likened to chaff carried about by the wind from place to place. (Ps. i. 4.)

58. The first and second verses are quoted by the Apostles as the words of David. (Ps. ii. 1, 2; Acts iv. 25, 26.)

59. It is an appeal to the rebellious to do homage to the king while there is time, and doubtless refers to the obedience and adoration due from man to Jesus as the Son of God. (Ps. ii. 12; 1 Sam. x. 1.)

60. It sets forth the irresistible power of Christ's Kingdom, even when all the powers of the world rise against it. (Ps. ii. 4—6; Acts iv. 27, 28.)

ON HOLY GROUND.

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.

"IF there be a regal solitude," says gentle Elia, "it is a sick-bed;" he goes on to explain that there the patient lords it without control, indulging caprices unopposed, tumbling and tossing and moulding his pillows to the ever-varying requirements of his temples! In another and a *higher* sense, there is majesty around the couch of weakness and of pain—the majesty born of endurance, of trustful obedience, of unfearing faith. The sufferer yielding to heaven's will, and, triumphant over murmurings, has entered upon holy ground, and the light of that victorious life reflects the shining of the Master's face; the King Himself has led the way across the shadowed Cedron,—ye whose weak steps seem to have faltered to the threshold of Gethsemane! the Lord of all has chosen you to share His cup of suffering. Even so shall it come to pass at last that ye sit enthroned with Him for ever in the glory of His Kingdom.

To the Christian the workaday round, the toil, the mart should be holy ground too, in the sense that God's presence sanctifies even what seems sometimes hard drudgery; but the Lord's prisoners have been brought into His very banqueting house, His royal palace, enfolded beneath the shadow of His wings. There they learn what no other place can ever reveal; again and again some tireless worker is called to rest for a season in quiet and infirmity, but what power afresh inspires that soul, what seasons of communion are realised with Him Who, looking up to heaven, *sighed*—that Heart whereon were laid our sicknesses, our burdens, and our sorrows! Many of us know what it is to enter some chamber of sickness, where one lies whose existence we count dreary, and a hush comes over our excitement, and the dews of peace seem to fall from Heaven anew, as the weak voice praises the Master, and records His goodness in unshaken trust.

"Who am I, a wordy preacher, compared with this great *doer?*" cried Luther once, beholding the heroic patience of a fellow-believer, called to endure sorrow and pain; the place of honour is the bed of sickness, the desert of trial, and the King of earth and heaven glorifies it with His eternal promise: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee."

"*Do not lose your sickness,*" was the counsel of one to whom a sufferer lamented that the days of health had been lost; gather up the treasures of adversity and weakness, and even here below there will be some gleams of knowledge *why* in His loving-kindness the Lord has chosen the way of shadow. Does not sickness make us more sympathetic, more tender-hearted, more pitiful towards others? A thoughtful writer remarks that in order to see into mankind, into life, and into *ourselves*, suffering is needful; trouble gives a larger vision, a clearer understanding, and thus it softens our judgments. But, above all, it leads us to know the *Lord*—"the most excellent of sciences," for in the furnace of affliction we seem to comprehend as never before that Brother born for adversity, who was made perfect through suffering.

Then does not sorrow make us more *prayerful?* We can cling to no strength of our own, nor do we know where to look for guidance in our difficulties and our cares. Perhaps this is the hour when the tempter bids us reproach our Lord, and crucify Him afresh by doubting the love and pity of His heart. But the evil whisper is hushed as we recall how He has interposed of old for our help, how He has redeemed us in severe troubles, and never forsaken us even when we lost all else, and Christ was our only Elim. We have never passed this way before, but He will not suffer our feet to be moved, and we steal away to Him, pleading in our helplessness, and feeling the touch of His almighty power. It is holy ground whereon the storm-tossed saint cries in confidence to the Master; the sorrow that leads us to Him is as the angel that troubled the waters for joy and healing. The place of trial is bright with such radiance as prosperity never revealed—the sweetest attributes of the soul are drawn forth in the hour of affliction. Dr. Cumming once reminded his hearers of the Cairngorm mountain in Scotland, whereon the Highlanders gather rock-crystals; when the sun comes out after heavy rains, they search the mountain's brow for shining objects—the storm has washed the earth from the crystals, and now they reflect the sunshine. So the Master's jewels are, oft-times, discovered shining for Him where the floods of trouble have overflowed; and the Lord thinketh upon them. Not one of the gems for His diadem can be forgotten. Whither art thou passing, oh! thou afflicted, tried with tempest, as thy feeble steps are crossing the holy ground of grief? Every hour brings thee nearer to that haven where storms are not, that land of flowers that know not the sharpness of thorns, that home where never a sigh of pain is heard, and where in all His beauty thou shalt see the King.

MARGARET HAYCRAFT.

[*Drawn by* SYDNEY COWELL.]

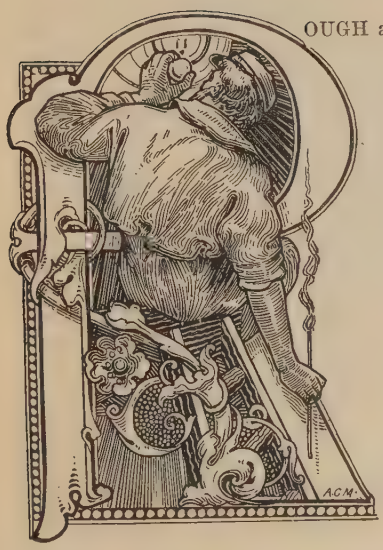
A SONG OF MAYTIME.

(*See p.* 542.)

LIGHTHOUSES, AND THOSE WHO ATTEND TO THEM.

BY G. HOLDEN PIKE.

EXPOSED TO THE ELEMENTS.



OUGH as the old ocean may usually appear to an unseasoned landsman, there was a time when its dangers, on the average, were much greater than they are to-day, provided that care is taken to have good ships and all the appliances which modern science places within reach of the mariner. The loss of life and of vessels at sea is still a heavy total; and it is much greater than it need be if all the precautions that might be taken were properly observed.

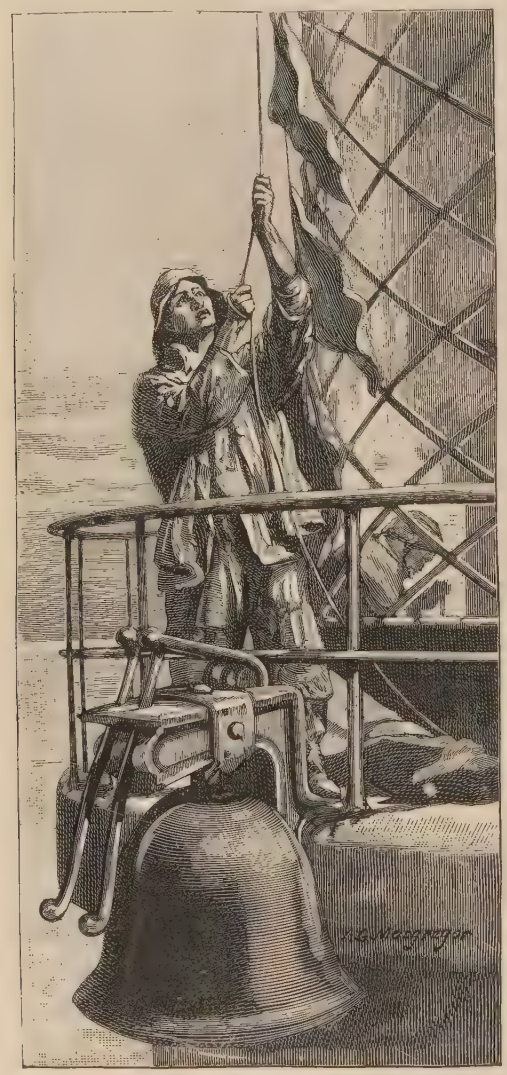
In past times it was different; men paid the penalty of ignorance; they were the victims of pirates, dangerous rocks were not marked, and lighthouses, as we know them, did not exist. How different is the case to-day! The British Isles alone have more than six hundred lighthouses and lightships on their coasts; our neighbours the French have between two and three hundred; and in the waters of the whole world there are not far short of three thousand. The lightkeepers are thus quite a numerous class, and being in a large number of instances separated, as it were, from the world, they are found to be extremely thankful for any attention that may be paid them by Christian people, who, for example, may supply them through the post with acceptable reading. One friend, who has made this service a kind of life-work, is Mr. John Green, an invalided pastor, of 46, Sandbourne Road, Brockley, who, though unable ever to leave his house, has perhaps a more extensive acquaintance with lightkeepers, at home and in foreign parts, than any other person in the country. No one else of whom I have heard has ever so extensively studied the subject. Mr. Green is known to lightkeepers, near and far away, as a friend who sends them Mr. Spurgeon's sermons and other evangelical literature. In consequence, he receives a large number of letters from various members of his constituency, which often give most interesting particulars of the hardships and other characteristics of a lightkeeper's life.

I first met with Mr. Green in that extremely picturesque part of West Somerset in which the pastorate he held was situated. Probably many will hardly have heard of Stogumber, a dozen miles from Taunton, and four miles inland from the little port of Watchet, on the Bristol Channel. It was at Stogumber, however, more than twenty years ago, that I found Mr. Green occupying the pulpit of an historical chapel, dating from Puritan times. The village itself was not unknown to historical fame in a moderate degree, for it supplied victims to the "Bloody Assize" in 1685, and has many other notable associations of a religious kind. Then the valley between the glorious old Quantock Hills on one side, and the Brendon range on the other, is one of the finest in England. When we first visited the country it seemed as though, in the course of a few hours' journey from London, we had got for the time into a bit of Old England itself. The houses were old-fashioned, and the people had old-fashioned ways —the wood fires on the hearths in the farmhouses being similar to what they had been for some centuries.

When I again met Mr. Green, he was a confirmed invalid in his house at Brockley, and he seldom or never left his room. There he sat year after year, relieving the tedium of confinement by attending to his large constituency of lightkeepers, supplying them

with profitable reading and corresponding with them. My friend seemed to be a kind of pastor to these out-of-the-way people; and, with a large atlas always at hand, he was able to form in his mind a tolerably correct notion of each one's actual situation.

Lighthouses were very few and far between in the ancient world, and of those which really existed only scant particulars have descended to us. Even in our own sea-girt isles they are of comparatively modern date. The Eddystone, off Plymouth, which from first to last has had such a tragical history, was among the first, the original structure having been reared at the end of the seventeenth century. The Eddystone was a place of hidden danger to many a richly laden vessel, fated there to come to grief after a prosperous homeward voyage. The original structure, designed by Mr. Winstanley, was swept away by the "Great Storm," as it is called in history, of 1703. The second, erected by Rudyard, a silk-mercer, of Ludgate Hill, was burned in 1755. The next was completed in 1759, and was the work of a Yorkshireman named John Smeaton. This is now a thing of the past, a new tower having been erected a few years ago.



HOISTING THE SIGNAL.

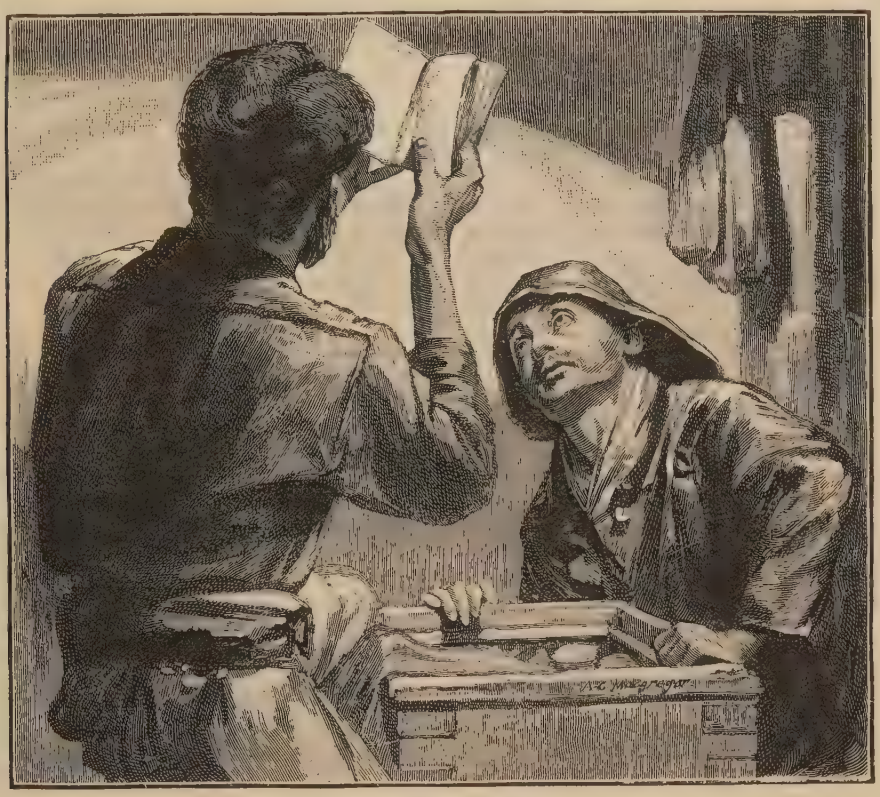
Among other more celebrated lighthouses is the Bell Rock, which casts "a ruddy gleam of changeful light" on the east coast of Scotland. Another is the Skerryvore, off the coast of Argyllshire. Then might be mentioned the North Foreland, and the Fastnet, off Queenstown, and many foreign lighthouses which have something remarkable about them. The first stone lighthouse erected in Europe was at the mouth of the river Garonne, in the Bay of Biscay, in the fourteenth century; but at first the lights used were extremely poor, consisting only of candles, or a common coal fire kept bright by bellows.

The importance of having the various lighthouses efficiently maintained in our case is obvious: for we are a maritime nation, with a trade averaging something like twelve hundred millions sterling a year. When Mr. Green first thought of the lightkeepers, the idea occurred that he could best confer benefit upon them by supplying them with wholesome reading. With much time on his hands, the ordinary lightkeeper has good opportunities for self-improvement; but although books were not unknown in his dwelling, the supply in some of the colonies seemed to be anything but liberal. The more distant stations in the British Empire were naturally the worst off—lighthouses, for example, in Newfoundland and Canada. There are between five and six hundred coast-lights on that part of the American Continent alone, some being in extremely secluded situations, where winter is long and rigorous, during which the lights are not burning, as even the sea itself is frozen. Others, in more favoured situations as regards climate, are in the Australasian colonies. Of course, in the case of an invalid it would be impossible to give attention to all of the lightkeepers of the English-speaking race: that would require a much larger agency, and it would be attended with considerable expense. As it is, the distribution of reading could not be carried on if outside friends did not supply the publications, and also the stamps with which to pay the postage.

I have before me a number of letters received by Mr. Green from lightkeepers at home and abroad, and these show in what light the men view the efforts that are made for their benefit. The gratitude of the men and their families is the best return that can be made to their friends in England.

Thus, after remarking that he has been greatly cheered by receiving a packet of papers, the keeper of a lighthouse on the English south coast goes on to say: "I can speak from experience in some cases how much these packets are appreciated at isolated rock lighthouses, having spent part of my time in these lonely situations, exposed to the fierce elements, and often much danger attached to them. How much consolation is derived then from such profitable reading you may judge. Three, sometimes four, months at a period are spent at these isolated rocks, and cut off from attending the means of grace. Contentment at such places is only attained by fellowship and communion with God."

Another lightkeeper, on one of the Orkney Islands, in acknowledging a packet of reading, sends thanks in the name of himself and his assistants. "We are pleased to think that a stranger in the heart of the mighty London should have time to think of us keepers on this sea-lashed Skerry, to send us tracts and books. We do appreciate anything of that sort." He goes on to show that they are not altogether destitute, as the Board of Management makes considerable grants to each station. There are four keepers, and the principal of these goes on to say: "This is a station where they never keep men with families that require schooling. The principal is always a man up in years, the three assistants generally young men, sometimes unmarried." The lighthouse district to which he belongs extends from Berwick-on-Tweed, along the east coast, and after taking in the Orkneys and the Shetlands, going along the west coast, taking in the Outer Hebrides, to the Isle of Man, which is also included. In that ample area there are sixty-five stations. Rock stations are allowed four keepers, the others have two. unless a lighthouse has two towers, as is sometimes the case, when extra men are allowed. The characteristics of these northern seas are oftentimes different from what is commonly supposed. A violent gale at the southern end of England will occasionally soften into a mere gentle breeze in the far north.



THE LIGHTKEEPER'S TREASURE.

One of the remarkable solitudes of the sea off the west coast of Scotland is referred to by a man who writes from a little island called Ailsa Craig, which is visited by a boat once a week. The place is not regularly visited by any minister; but on one happy occasion the master of a Scottish manse, who happened to be making a careful study of the Craig for literary purposes, made a stay with the lightkeeper. The latter appears to be a good-natured man, willing on the one hand to entertain strangers, and on the other to give any possible pleasure to any friends who take notice of him. Hence he asks Mr. Green, "Should you like to have a collection of sea-birds' eggs? I will be most happy to send you a few next summer if still here."

The lightkeeper at Thunder Bay Island, Lake Huron, occupies an interesting station; for the great lakes of North America are really inland seas, and, as we are told, "their navigation is subject to the like vicissitudes which are connected with the navigation of the Baltic, the Black Sea, or the Mediterranean." Lake Huron is the third largest lake in the world, and has an area of twenty thousand square miles.

In one of his letters the lightkeeper speaks of the terrible gales which sweep the lake. The lighthouse is really a life-saving and coastguard station combined. It is also a station where much fog occurs, and then a warning whistle has to be blown

continuously. It is four miles to the mainland, but letters have to come fourteen miles by water. "The soil is poor," adds the lightkeeper—"sand and rocks, no settlers, only three fishing stations on the route." They only travel that way in winter, when they cannot go by water or on the ice. He also adds: "We lay in our supplies in the fall for winter, and go after the mail about three or four times a month."

The most desolate of desolate stations in the hard North American winter, this station is the most delightfully cool retreat in the summer weather, when holiday folk are anxious to escape from the heat of the inland towns. It is then that the lightkeeper has his own friends come to see him, while other roving adventurers are sure to appear, to be glad of information or accommodation. Probably the high Alps themselves do not offer a more exhilarating atmosphere.

There is an elderly retired lightkeeper, who also lives on the shore of Lake Huron, at Georgian Bay, who now, as a Christian man, devotes his evening of life to promoting the good of others. He is so thankful for the papers sent out, that he will occasionally remit a small sum towards general postage expenses. He is not badly off; and it shows how moral worth is valued at Collingwood, Ontario, where he lives, when we find him elected as alderman to one of the wards of the town, his services at the same time being secured for nearly every municipal committee. Speaking of his adventures, the veteran says: "Last fall I took a few weeks' cruise around the Thousand Islands, on the north shore of this bay. I invited our pastor and family, with a few other friends, and a right good time we had. We stormed the various camps of hundreds of ladies and gentlemen." Prayer-meetings and services were held, leaflets distributed, and other work done. "So, you see, we worked," adds the writer. "I have been thinking of the parrot's words, 'Work, you lubbers, work!' Very good. This is the way we ex-lightkeepers do out here."

Perhaps one of the most lonely stations in the world is occupied by the lightkeeper at Cape Norman, Newfoundland. The summer is charming, but the winter is, of course, long and severe, and, on account of the ice, the lighthouse has no need to show its friendly gleam from December to May. Having spent twenty years of his life in his solitary lodgings, the lightkeeper has recently been allowed to remove for the remainder of his days to more congenial quarters. What inhabitants there are thereabout are dependent on the fisheries; but as a rule they are so miserably poor that they have hard work to find the necessaries of life. Hearing of their poor condition, Mr. Green asked the man to name such as were unable to afford the purchase of Testaments or hymn-books for their children. Thus the supplies of good reading are not altogether confined to the lightkeepers, but go out from them to others.

If all the lightkeepers had just the right notion of what kind of information to send to England, a collection of facts might be made of great interest and value. Now and then Mr. Green's correspondents will prove this by the interesting way in which they will describe their surroundings. An intelligent settler on the prairie in the neighbourhood of Calgary, North-West Canada, thus tells of the pleasure and profit which had attended the reading of Mr. Spurgeon's "All of Grace," which he gave to a young man who was off to the Rocky Mountains, and who had promised in turn to lend the book to his companions. That youth had arrived at the station in a state of semi-blindness, through walking over the dazzlingly white snow-clad landscape without wearing goggles. After being kept in a darkened room for a time, he came round, however. "I am not without hope," adds the farmer, in a letter to Mr. Green, "that God may enlighten his spiritual understanding also, and to that means your book may be a valuable help." The next neighbours are spoken of as a Godfearing family, the father being a man who had attained to some celebrity in England as an inventor. He also had read what had been sent, but had lately met with an accident. "Verily, my friend," the writer goes on to say, "you may reasonably hope that your efforts in sending out these publications will be blessed to many; and may God bless you also on your sick-bed."

Mr. Green's work is thus not strictly confined to lightkeepers, although these command his chief attention. Any lonely English people in out-of-the-way places that he can hear of, he sends to. New settlers in bush or backwoods; telegraph men at isolated stations in the centre of Australia; the descendants of the mutineers of the *Bounty* on their island home, and the handful of men on the solitary Tristan d'Acunha, are among those who are reached by our friend's packets.

The same correspondent also gives some particulars of the native Indian races. "Calgary is a town of four or five thousand people, of almost every nationality, though English are the most numerous," he says. "The Indian population in this locality is numerous, but declining. They often come to our house, frequently when Mrs. —— is alone, and, with one exception, we never had any trouble with them. On that occasion a party of about forty of them came by on a hunting expedition, and finding no one at home—our house is a mile at least from any other—they began to plunder, and carried off some clothes of my wife's, and some of mine, which were outside the house, and other things. These were Crees, and probably knew no better; the Stonies and Blackfeet seldom steal. I fear many of the Indians are now short of food at times; but it is astonishing how long they can go without food, and suffer no apparent inconvenience; and the meals they can make when they do get plenty of food, after a two days' fast or so, are astonishing. There is apparently a belief in God in all these Indian tribes."

In some few instances Mr. Green corresponds with certain persons who are not lightkeepers, but who write from the most out-of-the-way places, where their surroundings are more or less remarkable. Thus one Christian tradesman among the mountains of British Columbia says: "This place is a small township on the Canadian Railway. There are about seventy white people in the place and near by, also about one hundred and fifty Indians. It is about one

hundred and eighty miles east of New Westminster, and amongst the mountains. It is a central place, and I send religious papers from here to different parts of the country. We have no church, but we hold prayer-meetings every Sunday evening in a friend's house, and every Sunday afternoon I hold meetings with the Indians. The dear Lord has given me the privilege of sowing the seed, and to Him, in faith believing, I leave the harvest."

I close this brief account with one more illustration from home. The lightkeeper at a station some few miles from Yarmouth is a Christian man, and in a description he gives of the circulation of a number of publications consigned to him we see how far-reaching the best kind of reading may become among the hardy toilers of the deep. "I divided them, and gave some to each family," he says. "After they had read them they put them into their friends' sea-bags, and they were taken on board of the different fishing-vessels and circulated amongst the crews, who read them, and passed them from one to the other as opportunity offered. I am pleased to say there is a good work going on amongst our fishermen and sailors, and as soon as they find salvation they seem as if they cannot do too much to help on the salvation of others."

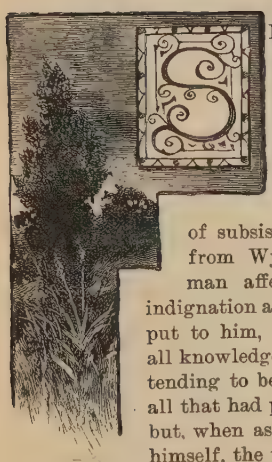
Such, then, is the interesting constituency to which my invalid friend, John Green, ministers in his own way, now that he is debarred from that pastoral work for which he was trained, and which he very ardently loved.

Mr. Green has to look to friends for supplies, but those friends never fail him. Mrs. Spurgeon has for long sent him parcels of her husband's sermons and other publications for distribution; and others have also liberally contributed to the common stock, postages, which are a heavy item of expenditure, not being overlooked. Probably no confirmed invalid was ever more happy in the service so providentially given to him. Visions of the charms of West Somerset often rise before his mental vision in his sick-chamber; but he is content to labour and to wait.

THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS.

BY FAY AXTENS.

CHAPTER XXV.



SIR JOHN got home in time for the hunt after all. The examination of Claydon proved the existence of a good deal of mystery in connection with his mode of life, as well as his means of subsistence, since his hasty exit from Wyldeholme. The accused man affected much surprise and indignation at the questions which were put to him, and emphatically denied all knowledge of the missing will—pretending to be in complete ignorance of all that had passed since his departure; but, when asked to give an account of himself, the plausible story he had prepared was found to be almost from first to last in complete contradiction to known facts. In the face of this, it was decided to refer the case to the regular judicial court for trial, when the matter would be carefully sifted, and some more satisfactory conclusion arrived at. Further proceedings were therefore adjourned in order to allow time for witnesses to be called, and to allow the defendant full opportunity of instructing his solicitor and retaining counsel, but, owing to various considerations, in the meantime bail was refused.

This was an event for which Claydon was scarcely prepared. He had been sanguine enough to believe Dick Hardy's representations that a bold face on the matter would disarm suspicion, and bring them all safely through a somewhat ugly crisis. But, apparently, it was not so. His small wits, which had not been trained to knavery on so large a scale, were fairly puzzled to know how best to act for his own advantage. He was quite aware that there was little reliance to be placed on Richard's honesty and disinterestedness. He was as likely as not to forsake him at any moment, should it prove more convenient; if he should succeed in carrying out the project of marrying the beautiful heiress, which Claydon had long suspected was his idea, then, so long as he was at liberty, it would be quite within his power to shake himself free from any responsibility with regard to the well-being of his accomplice.

Claydon, who clearly foresaw this, did not at all like the idea of remaining a prisoner while Richard Hardy was at large; yet he felt it would be unwise rashly to expose, or, in any way implicate, the person on whom his hopes of advantage were placed.

For himself he had little fear of exposure, conscious that his conduct throughout had been strictly negative. He was quite willing to bear the infamy of suspicion, so long as it did not affect his liberty, and brought him adequate compensation in a pecuniary sense; but, unless he could be sure that it would be so, he had no desire to hide the truth or shield a miscreant, especially one who treated him, he knew, with contempt. He might as well bear one disgrace as another, since whichever way things turned out, his character was sure to suffer.

The news that Claydon had been committed for trial without bail reached Dick Hardy on his marriage morning.

"Faith!" said he to himself, "I am just in time; but it's only what I expected. It is, perhaps, rather risky to stay even for another day, but fortune always favours dare-devil Dick, and I really can't resist that run with the hounds to-morrow. It's the last I shall

get in the old country for a very long time to come. Only two more days, and the lovely Rosamond and I will be 'across the Border and awa'!' and then let old Claydon take care of himself, for we shan't trouble about him. When once we are out of the country, he can say what he likes."

The marriage accomplished, Richard felt more safe, without regard to Rosamond; but it had altered his position with Claydon, and he was particularly anxious to get clear of the country before that person was aware of what had happened. The postponement of the trial would, of course, give both Claydon and the solicitors who were prosecuting him a little breathing space, of which each would be equally anxious to make the best use, and he had quite discernment enough to see that Claydon did not trust him, and would not hesitate to turn informer should it suit his purpose.

As for Anthony, he welcomed the short time of remand as a doomed man does his reprieve. For him the interests were so conflicting and so involved that he could only watch the results in a kind of dumb despair. Looking at the small, smooth face of the valet—which had seemed since his last acquaintance with it to have developed a cunning and calculating expression that he never remembered noticing before—he could not help a strong feeling of conviction that the man knew more than he chose to say, and his blood burned in his veins to wring the whole truth out of the smooth-tongued, obsequious creature whom he had succeeded in bringing to bay. He could not look at the man and think of the tiny, prattling, innocent child, who had so entwined himself about his heart, without a fresh impulse of resolution to gain for him the rights of which he had been so cruelly and treacherously deprived. But when he thought of Rosamond, with all her unreasoning fancies and high-flown ideas, her ignorance, her capriciousness and lack of judgment, and remembered how such an event would affect her, he grew sick at heart, and would almost have been glad to throw up the whole affair. It was a constant weight upon his spirits, and one which it seemed difficult to believe time would remove. He could find no pleasure in the present, and looked forward with dread to the future; yet he was at least thankful that the present proceedings had brought forth no immediate results.

Anthony did not return with Sir John to Lawley Manor, for he had no heart for the festivities which the commencement of the hunting season was about to usher in; and, besides, there was business to be discussed, which was quite sufficient excuse for his remaining in London for at least a day or two longer.

He had determined, however, to go down for the Sunday, for he felt uneasy and distressed in mind on account of the girl whom he still believed he loved. They had parted in coldness, if not in anger. Their last words had been words of mere civility; and though Anthony had written to her in his usual kind and affectionate manner, he had received no reply. He was not much surprised at this, for Rosamond disliked writing so much that she scarcely ever wrote, unless actually obliged, even to her lover. Still, he had an uncomfortable feeling that they were unreconciled, which he was desirous of getting rid of but could only do so by means of a personal interview. So he entrusted an affectionate message to kind old Sir John—who now, at any rate, pretty well understood the state of affairs, and would have been only too glad to set things right if he could—telling Rosamond that he should see her again, without fail, on Saturday night. Sir John, however, had no opportunity of delivering that message, for he only arrived very late on the night of Rosamond's marriage-day, and the newly made bride had been glad to plead an excuse to retire very soon after dinner to her own boudoir, to which Lady Lawley alone had admittance.

The next morning was one full of bustle and excitement. Even Will, who during the last week had grown almost unbearably moody and silent under the cold treatment he had experienced, woke up and looked as if he had a little interest in life. He and his hale old father were up betimes and out in the stables in consultation with the head groom.

"I don't quite like the look of that 'Flyaway,'" observed Sir John to his son. "There's a vicious expression in her eye, I fancy. Anderson admits she has a hard mouth, but he won't own up to any fault of temper. However, Hardy is bent on riding her, and as he hasn't quite come to the end of his nine lives, I suppose he may as well take the first shine out of her as anyone else."

"She's a splendid animal," returned Will carelessly, "and I daresay only wants management. I had half a mind to try her myself, but for a conservative preference for old favourites."

"Ah, very likely!" growled Sir John. "You're just such another mad-brain. However, it's no good talking to you young fellows—you will have your way."

Lady Lawley, whose tastes were of the quiet drawing-room type, by no means shared her husband's enthusiasm for the excitement of sport; but, as a devoted wife should, made a point of sharing, as far as she was able, in his pleasure. On occasions such as this the Lawley carriage was always conspicuous among the rest of the gay equipages at the appointed place of meeting, and to-day it was occupied by two ladies—the languid, elegant Lady Lawley, and her beautiful guest, whose sparkling face and vivacious manner made their carriage the special object of observation. The strange quietude and listlessness which had possessed her the day before had quite passed away, and she appeared gayer and in brighter spirits than she had been for a long time. In crimson and sables she made quite a bright figure, even among the pink-coats who came flocking round about, and, as she flashed quick glances here and there, and smiled on one and another, it seemed difficult to imagine a more beautiful creature.

Richard Hardy, who looked handsomer and more defiantly reckless than ever as he rode forward, keeping well in check the tall, strong mare, shot a meaning look into the blue eyes which met his eagerly for an instant as he and his wife exchanged a coolly polite greeting. Lingering for

a moment to look at her, as she dispensed her queenly favours of nod or smile, he felt a delicious experience of the sweets of triumph; and when, a short time after, the signal was given for the members of the hunt to muster round the gallant old Master of Hounds—when, at the cheery bugle-note, the eager, impatient steeds broke from their curbed restraint and bounded away after the dappled pack, who skirted the grey, cool borders of the distance like a moving mist—the last vision he carried in his mind was that of a graceful golden head, and his last thoughts were of fleeting glances and flushed cheeks.

But when the real excitement of the run began, when the hounds had drawn a coppice, turned out a fox, and were in full cry across country, all such thoughts and recollections quickly vanished. With the keen instincts of a true sportsman, Richard Hardy, on his hot-spirited steed, kept ahead. No obstacles daunted him. Ditches and fences, at which wary farmers who valued their bones looked askance, offered little hindrance to his mad career. On he went, leading the way through stubble and bracken for such as liked to follow, plunging over broken stone walls and ragged fences, listening to no advice and heeding no warnings.

"Her eyes implored him to speak."—*p.* 492.

"Look out there, mister!" shouted a heavy farmer, who was sedulously plodding after them, as he turned off sharp in the direction of a gate in order to avoid what seemed but a low wall ahead. "Better not try that: there 's a ugly heap of stones t' other side!"

The rest of the huntsmen, who credited their neighbour with possessing pretty accurate knowledge and a fair amount of pluck, followed the advice, and steered off towards the gate, but Richard, with a low laugh, expressive of the profoundest contempt, struck boldly on and took the leap.

Those who witnessed the attempt might perhaps have had the curiosity to watch for the reappearance of horse and rider in the upland beyond, but just at that moment the hounds turned sharply in the opposite direction, and away like the wind went the eager sportsmen in hot pursuit.

When the hunters were once out of sight, the fair occupants of the Lawley carriage had had quite enough of the sport, and the coachman was ordered to drive home. The reception at Lady Gayworthy's that evening, at which many of the gallant huntsmen would be present, was far more in their line. They would be quite content to hear an account of the day's exploits, and did not care to make any attempt to witness the sport.

Rosamond, especially, had reasons for wishing their return to Lawley Manor to be as speedy as possible, for there were many arrangements yet to be made for her sudden and secret departure that night. In the first place there was Anthony to be thought of. She could not quite reconcile herself to the idea of leaving him without a word. She knew she had been behaving very badly to him for a long time past, and her present action by no means made matters better.

To exonerate herself from blame, or even to make excuses for her conduct, would not be very easy, but she could at least say in her own defence that the climax had come upon her suddenly, that she had no time for consideration, but had been hurried into definite action by force of circumstances. She could at least ask his forgiveness for the offence, and plead as an excuse for her hasty flight her own dread of being obliged to give him pain. It would, of course, be a terrible blow to Anthony, and would probably spoil all his dreams of happiness, and utterly ruin his life.

When Rosamond came down that evening, ready dressed in her lovely lace gown and diamond ornaments, Lady Lawley noticed that she seemed strangely quiet and preoccupied. She gave a long lingering look all round as she stepped into the carriage. She was going away never perhaps to return, and the question came home to her with renewed force—"Was this wild pursuit of pleasure sure to result in real happiness?"

It was a question she knew not how to answer, so she shook it off with a laughing jest that set her thoughts to a livelier tune. Who should be gay, if she were not? for was she not now a bride in bridal array? and better far than the diamonds that flashed on her snowy neck and arms and glittered with every turn of her head, was the simple gold ring which lay hidden and unsuspected against her heart.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MEANWHILE a very different scene was being enacted at the Rectory. Little thought Rosamond, as she stepped into the carriage in all her resplendent magnificence, and set off with a smiling face and a jest on her lips, of the fate that had befallen the man whom now she called her husband. She had seen him ride away in the morning, gay and triumphant, full of confidence and hope, and defiant of danger. She had seen his tall, handsome figure dashing onward foremost among the rest, as if his redundant strength and spirit ill brooked restraint, and panted for wider scope. Could she now have looked into a certain darkened chamber, she would hardly have recognised, in the helpless, prostrate, senseless form that lay there in passive silence, the bold, strong, reckless rider of but a few hours ago.

It was a sorry accident that had befallen Dick Hardy. He had yet to learn that discretion which is the better part of valour. Heedless alike of advice and example, he had taken the wall, and found out too late the penalty he must pay for his folly. It was true that it was a low one, and appeared no more formidable than many another which had come in their course, but it chanced that the ground on the other side was waste land, and thus all the rubbish and broken stone where the wall had fallen into ruins had been systematically pitched on that side. The consequence was that Flyaway, alighting unexpectedly on the heap of rubble, had an ugly fall, and pitched her rider over her head.

Dick, though hurt, was nothing daunted, but sprang to his feet, caught the rein as the tall mare struggled up again, and finding she had, curiously enough, sustained no serious injury, mounted and attempted to rejoin the hunt; but, though the horse was uninjured, the rider was not, and Flyaway, soon discovering that her master was not able to exercise any check upon her, flung up her head, laid back her ears, and started off in a mad gallop, delighting in the consciousness of her own power and freedom.

It was an awful ride for poor Dick. Faint and dizzy with pain, he could do nothing more than simply cling to the saddle. He was utterly powerless. He seemed to be swimming in a sea of black trees, red roofs, and grey clouds. When they came to a gate or a hurdle he could only draw in his breath, cling with his little remaining strength to the mare, and imagine himself swallowed up in a yawning abyss. Presently a deathly faintness took possession of him. His brain reeled, his fingers relaxed their hold, and sense and sound melted away in deep and dreamless oblivion.

He was found lying stunned and bleeding on the ground, just as he had fallen, by some farm-labourers a few hours later, not many miles from Carsthorpe; for Flyaway had been on her homeward course when she succeeded in flinging her rider over her head. They picked him up, imagining he was dead, and carried him to the nearest cottage, from whence, after the usual delays, he was conveyed to the Rectory.

Felicia had been busy all day in her father's study, taking advantage of his absence from home for a few days to institute a thorough investigation into the

dust and rubbish among the book-shelves and ledges, for the study was sacred from the weekly ravages of the broom and duster. With loving care she had set herself to work to rearrange all the books, and set in order the papers, that would get untidy in spite of the constant care she bestowed on them.

Every now and then she would pause a moment to look into some well-worn volume, trying to feel the same interest and extract the same amount of pleasure from these cursory glances at well-known favourites as on former occasions. But somehow or other to-day the printed words seemed to have no meaning for Felicia, and, as she closed the books and replaced them with weary impatience on the shelf, her thoughts would travel back with persistent reversion to that dangerous and forbidden theme which, like the canker-worm in the rose, gnawed at her heart, and refused to be ignored.

It had been but a brief, momentary dream, the first dawning of love, but what visions of bliss and happiness, never to be realised, it had opened up to her! She knew that she had met her fate, that never again would she find one to whom she could give her heart's allegiance as she had done to Anthony. But the thought of it was treason. His love was already possessed by one who, she felt, was utterly unworthy of it and knew not how to value it, and *she* must be silent and repress the upbounding, clamorous passion, which had burst its bonds and longed to find voice and action. If only he had been free—a dangerous thought!—what might not have been? for surely she had caught that look in his eyes which told her their souls were one?

Yes, she must believe it; she did not love unloved; but it was a conviction she dared not dwell upon, for it would be dishonouring alike to herself and Anthony. Loyal and true as such a nature as his must undoubtedly be, he would fight to the last against the new, subtle feeling of unison between them which threatened the peace of a pledged affection. His heart had been long ago given away. What right had he now to reclaim it, or what right had she to require it at his hands?

Over and over again she tried to put away the memory of that rapturous moment, when, thrilled with the close, warm touch of his hands, she had looked into his eyes and heard him call her "Felicia." How sweet her name sounded on his lips! Oh, what a poor, pitiful apology for the strong, bold, overmastering tyrant, was he who had come to her some months ago in love's guise!

How well she remembered the complacent, half-amused, half-pleased feeling that had shed a soft influence about her heart when gay Will Lawley, flinging aside, with the impatience of a would-be lover, the restraint which had grown up between them, took her hand in his, and called her by her Christian name.

What a tame experience compared with this! and yet at one time she had really begun to believe that she cared for Will, and had felt very keenly, as girls will do, the quick transference of his devotion from her to the beautiful Miss Wylde. Her pride had prevented her from showing to anyone how much she felt, and not even her father, who in most things shared her confidence to the full, ever guessed that young Lawley's altered conduct, marked as it was, had caused her the least pain. The bitter, angry, jealous feelings of wounded pride and newly awakened affection had long since died away. How insignificant they now seemed, how childish, how futile! Should she ever think of *this* in the same light? Ah, no! her heart told her that that was impossible; and the knowledge did not tend to make her burden and weight of trouble any the easier to bear.

She was still in the study absorbed in thoughts such as these, while mechanically she went on with her work, when a strange noise in the hall and the sound of unknown voices woke her from her reverie. She ran quickly to the door, flung it open, and there in the hall such a sight met her view as turned her dizzy with fright and horror. Four men were bringing in her unfortunate brother, who had now sufficiently recovered consciousness to groan with agony under the rough but kindly natured attentions of his bearers. One glance at the dark, tangled head, covered with dust and gore, the drawn brow, and white, closed eyelids, was enough for Felicia: she guessed what had happened, and scarcely needed the explanation which one of the men hastened to make. Only for a moment did she lose her self-possession; then, calling the awestruck servants, who were running hither and thither and doing nothing, she ordered the room to be ready without a moment's delay, and the Carsthorpe doctor to be summoned, while she administered restoratives to her unhappy brother.

At last, with groans and muttered imprecations on his hard fate, Richard was conveyed to his own room and laid upon the bed in a half-fainting condition, while Felicia, doing what she could to ease his pain, anxiously awaited the doctor's arrival.

"You're a good girl, Floy," said Dick faintly, as she bent over him; "you're too good—much too good. It don't pay nowadays;" and he turned his head away and closed his eyes as if he could not bear to look at her.

The doctor was not long in arriving, though it seemed ages to Felicia. A year of dread and misery, intermingled with rebounding hope, seemed summed up in those few minutes of suspense. Suppose the doctor said her brother would die? The idea was insupportable, yet it was one that could not be altogether set aside. In this hour of necessity the old love and devotion flamed up again with renewed warmth in Felicia's heart.

He had not been a particularly good brother to her at any time: he was a constant source of anxiety and trouble, but she loved him tenderly all through, and now more than ever in his helplessness her heart turned to him, and she felt she could not bear to lose him. But at last the doctor had come, and, after a long and careful examination, ascertained the extent of his injuries.

"It is not quite so bad as I feared, Miss Hardy," said he reassuringly. "That blow on the head is the worst feature, having caused a slight concussion of the brain, and he must be kept very quiet. The great danger to avoid is brain-fever, so don't on any account allow him to excite himself." In his heart he thought

Dick Hardy a scamp, but he had long cherished an admiration for Felicia, and would have done anything he could to relieve her anxiety and spare her feelings. He was a young man, but a rising practitioner, and, as he was already making a good position for himself among the county families, he might be excused if he allowed himself to cherish hopes.

"I have not yet telegraphed to my father," said Felicia, with a look of relief. "I waited to hear your report. I don't want to alarm him more than is necessary."

"No, of course not. Will you entrust me with the message? I am going at once into Carsthorpe, and will send it without delay."

"You are very kind," said Felicia; "I shall be very glad indeed if you will; but he can't be home before to-morrow in any case, I fear."

"We must have our patient a great deal better before that time, Miss Hardy," said Dr. Leigh, cheerfully. "I shall come in again this evening. Good-bye."

It did not seem as if the doctor's hopes were going to be realised. When Felicia returned to the bedside, she found her brother getting hot and restless, and apparently not much relieved by the cooling applications the doctor had ordered and waited himself to apply. He looked but a sorry figure in bandages and splints, for, in addition to the wound in his head, he had broken his arm and bruised himself considerably. As the hours went by, he became more and more feverish. While Felicia stood patiently by, continuing her unwearied ministrations, the sufferer lay restlessly tossing about and moaning aloud in hot impatience.

It was very easy to say, "Don't let him excite himself," but far from easy to accomplish in this case. For, while he lay here, was not his bride looking anxiously for his appearance in the gay, crowded drawing-room, awaiting with eager, nervous expectancy the moment when they should steal away together and take their flight, like wild, untamed birds, as they were, to a sunnier climate and a freer life? Was *this* to be the end of all his carefully laid plans and his well-managed manœuvres? And all through his own wretched obstinacy and folly: that was the worst part of it.

In the meantime, Rosamond, thoughtless of any such catastrophe, entered the drawing-room with her gayest and most fascinating smile.

It was not until quite late in the evening that the news of the accident was known. Some few who had attended the hunt that day came in in total ignorance. "Whatever became of Hardy?" was a question that had more than once been asked and received no answer; but presently Will Lawley, who, coming home through Carsthorpe, had heard all the account, arrived. His manner was grave and subdued as he made his way directly to the spot where Rosamond sat languidly fanning herself and smiling at the flatteries of her small crowd of admirers.

"Oh, here's Lawley!" said one young fellow as he came up—"rather late in the day, but just in time to tell us the news if there is any.—By the way, Lawley, perhaps you can answer the question that everyone is asking. Whatever happened to Hardy that he did not turn up at the death? Have you seen anything of him?"

"No," said Will, afraid, he hardly knew why, to tell the news, yet longing to know how Rosamond would take it. "I have not seen him, but I have heard of him."

"Where is he? Is he coming? Is he here?" asked Rosamond, with ill-concealed anxiety.

"No, he won't come to-night. He is at home, and likely to remain there."

Rosamond grew white as death. Her hands trembled, and she felt icy cold all over. Could Richard have been arrested, and had Will come to expose them both before all these people?

"Why, what has happened? Do tell us!" chimed in several voices in chorus. Will looked at Rosamond. Her eyes implored him to speak.

"He has had an accident. They say he is dying," he said bluntly; but no sooner were the words out of his mouth than he sprang forward with an exclamation of horror.

"Good gracious, I have killed her!" he cried under his breath, as Rosamond rose to her feet and gave one wild glance round. She neither spoke nor cried, but gasped for breath, pressed her hands convulsively to her heart, where lay her wedding-ring, and fainted away in Will's arms.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ALL through that long, dreary evening, Richard Hardy lay moaning and tossing on his bed of pain, too angry and impatient to submit to the gentle influence which would fain have brought a few moments' rest to his fevered brain. Felicia was in despair, but she still remained by the bedside applying cool bandages as fast as he tossed them aside, till her arms ached and she felt ready to drop.

Kind old Sir John came hurrying to the Rectory as soon as he heard the first rumour of disaster, without either waiting to recruit his inner man or to change his attire. He knew his good friend the Rector was absent from home, and his heart was stirred with pity for the girl on whom the full weight of this new trouble and responsibility would fall. He longed to be as a father to her in her father's stead during this trying time, and so, without a moment's delay, hastened to her aid.

But, comforting as it was to her to know that she had a faithful friend at hand, she felt he could be of little real use on this present occasion. The doctor had expressly desired that no one should be admitted to the patient's room, and therefore Sir John's wish to be allowed to share Felicia's watchings at the bedside was not to be entertained for a moment. Indeed, she was obliged altogether to refuse him admittance to the sick-room, for, as she wisely observed, the sight of Sir John would probably excite Dick more than anything else, as it would so forcibly bring back to his mind all the events of the day.

"Well, my dear, there's one care I can relieve you of, anyway," said he. "I shall take Bert home with me to-night, so you won't have him to think of. Where is the little fellow, I wonder?"

"I don't know," said Felicia. "It is time he was in bed, but I'm afraid he has been forgotten."

Sir John found the child curled up in the big arm-

chair in the dining-room, with his fist pressed tightly against his eyelids that he might not see the shadows; for there was but a dim light in the room, and the fire burned low and fitfully. Bertram was trying hard to get over the fears which his vivid imagination, unwisely developed, had engendered, and would have scorned to admit that he was afraid. But, all the same, he did not like to look at the "bogies," which, in his imagination, were dancing on the walls and ceiling.

When Sir John came into the room, he jumped up with a cry of delight, and ran towards him, asking where was his dear Floy. He hadn't seen her for such a long time. Sir John told him that Uncle Dick was very ill, and that he was going to take him home with him. Bert looked very grave, but went away at once to tell Janet to get his things ready in obedience to Sir John's request.

Late that evening the doctor came again. The patient was very feverish, and wandered in his mind. Felicia already looked worn-out.

"You must have a nurse, Miss Hardy," said Dr. Leigh decidedly. "This is too much for you. I will telegraph to Greychester at once."

"Oh, no, no. Indeed I don't want a nurse, thank you—unless," she added, "you think it necessary on his account."

"No, I was thinking of you. You will make yourself ill, and we can't have that, you know."

"You need not be afraid of that, thank you," she replied. "I am quite well and strong. I do not want any more help than Janet can give me."

"Well, go and get some sleep now," said the young man, who would have put himself out to almost any extent to serve Felicia; "I will stay with him for an hour or two, and we 'll talk about a nurse to-morrow."

Felicia shook her head with quiet decision. "I could not sleep, thank you. I don't feel at all tired," was all she would say; and the doctor, who could dictate to anyone better than to her, was forced to take his departure.

But when the lights were low, and the house still, Felicia began to feel the loneliness of her position. She had, however, little time for indulging in reflection, for her patient kept her fully occupied. As the weary hours wore away, he grew more and more delirious, and would start wildly up in bed, heedless of pain, calling for his boots and his horse with awful imprecations such as his sister had never heard him use, and which often made her wince and turn hot and cold with shame and horror. The sleeping-draught which had been given seemed to have not the slightest effect. He was haunted with the most fearful visions. Sometimes he imagined himself hurled into a bottomless ditch, and clutched frantically at the bed-posts and bed-clothes to save himself: at others he fancied himself entangled in meshes of golden hair, and attempted to pluck off the bandages in order to free himself. Rosamond's name was constantly on his lips —sometimes with threats and fierce words of invective, sometimes with the most tender and ardent expressions of endearment. Often he would attempt to spring out of bed, calling loudly to Rosamond that the cab could not wait, that they should miss the train, that the fiends were on them; and once he used Anthony's name in a way that made his patient nurse recoil. Once or twice she was in despair, and made a movement towards the door to call Janet; but it was evident that he was physically incapable of doing himself injury; and indeed, every fresh effort seemed to exhaust him more. At last he fell into a kind of stupor, and lay still for a while, breathing heavily. Felicia was now able to snatch a few moments of rest, if not of sleep, so she retired to an easy-chair by the window, from which she could watch the face of the slumberer and detect any movement or change. Her mind was busy with many conjectures as she sat there. What was the meaning of all this wild talk? It was surely not all the outcome of a fevered imagination. Her quick observation had told her long ago that there was some secret understanding between her brother and Rosamond Wylde: the nature of that understanding was the problem that was now puzzling her mind.

Suddenly, while still she was thus thinking, Richard opened his eyes; then raised himself and glanced uneasily round the room as if searching for someone or something. Felicia made no movement, but sat quietly watching, till presently his eyes rested on her, and, with a look of relief, he beckoned her to go to him. She went, and he signed to her to bend down that he might whisper to her.

"Rosamond, my love, you've made a fool of me all along," he whispered, "but you're mine now, and I don't care. Go and fetch me the little tin box. It's in there."

"Which box, Dick? Where is it?" said Felicia, trembling all over, with a strange presentiment of dread, but determined to do his bidding. He looked puzzled at the question, and for a little while did not seem able to collect his thoughts, but presently he pointed to a large desk that stood on a table at the far end of the room, reiterating the words, "The little tin box. It's in there."

With shaking hands Felicia tried to open the desk. It was locked. She looked for his keys, and tried each of them, but none fitted. At last she remembered that he wore a little key fastened along with his watch-key on his chain. She tried it, and found it exactly fitted. The next moment she had the "little tin box" in her hands, and was hurrying across to the bedside with it.

"Is this it?"

"Yes, yes—that's it. How long you've been, my love," he said, impatiently clutching it with an iron grip. "Is there anyone here? Who's that up in the corner?"

"No one. Dick; no one is here but I."

"Yes there is. It's that Lestrange. Look how he is grinning. Hide it—quick!"

With a cunning like that of a madman, he hid the box under the bedclothes, and pushed Felicia away. She did not attempt to thwart him, but stood in the shadow of the bed-curtains, waiting till the delusion had passed. There was dead silence in the room for the space of a minute. Felicia's breath came thick and fast; her heart beat like a drum summoning troops to battle.

Then the sonorous voice of the old clock in the hall broke the silence, and reminded her that it was four

o'clock. The fire moved uneasily, like a sleeper, who, being roused before it is time, turns over on the other side and goes to sleep once more.

Then silence again.

Presently, however, there was a movement in the bed, and Felicia saw that Dick had cautiously taken out the box from its hiding-place, and was trying to open it. She watched intently, her anxious curiosity being strained to the highest pitch, when suddenly a feeling of shame came over her that she was taking advantage of his helplessness to play the spy. Involuntarily she moved away, but Dick pulled aside the curtain and ordered her back.

"Open it, Rosamond, quick!" he said. He had but one hand he could use, and was unable to do it himself.

She obeyed, and opened the box, but no sooner had she done so than she dropped it with a strange thrill of horror. The contents consisted of a piece of parchment tied with red tape.

"What are you doing? Give it to me, Rosamond," he cried, in a hoarse, excited whisper. "*You* don't want it. You've got the certificate. Give it to me, I say."

She dared not disobey her brother, he looked so fierce and angry, and yet she felt as if she *must* see the inside of that parchment. With ready resource, she caught up a roll of paper, which was lying on the little table near the bed, tied it up with pink string she had just pulled off a medicine-bottle, substituted it for the parchment, and gave it to her brother.

He seized it hastily, and crushed it in his hand.

"Put it on the fire," he ordered; and, on Felicia obeying him, watched the flames dart up and consume the paper, with a ghastly smile on his pain-racked face.

"There! there! It's done for now. Let them do what they like. I don't care. Come and kiss me, Rosamond. Come and kiss me."

Utterly heedless of her patient, who, now being fully satisfied, lay muttering to himself more or less incoherently, Felicia went to the other side of the room, where she was screened from observation, and, with trembling hands and heightened colour, undid the tape and opened the parchment. She could not tell why such fear and horror possessed her, but before unrolling it, she shut her eyes and drew a long breath before she could summon up courage to look at it. When she did at last do so, however, her eyes seemed riveted to the page. It *was* the missing will!

She grew cold as she faced the awful reality of her brother's guilt. For a long time she stood simply looking at it, the cold perspiration standing upon her brow, her throat feeling hot and dry like one lost in the Sahara. Then, clenching her hands like a white statue of despair in her unutterable misery, she knelt down and prayed that they both might die.

How the next few hours passed Felicia never knew. It was enough that that moment had changed everything for her. What a fearful thing was this which had come into her life! How all other troubles dwarfed and paled before the terrible intensity of this!

She cast a glance of withering scorn at the crushed, helpless man who lay muttering like an imbecile on that bed of suffering. Did he not deserve all this, and more? Why should she use such ceaseless endeavours to prolong the life of one who had acted so wickedly and treacherously—one who entailed so much misery on the man she loved? Had he not done enough wrong in that life of his? Was it not enough that he had brought disgrace and poverty on his family and embittered his father's life, without adding this last burden to his own conscience and their disgrace?

For one brief moment sisterly affection was swallowed up in bitter feelings of scorn and loathing. How could she attempt to palliate his guilt with that mute witness of the will before her? It was only too evident that he was in some measure a participator in the wicked deed. With that parchment in his possession, with the knowledge of that sin upon his conscience, what a double part he had been playing all these months! Felicia knew he loved Rosamond. It was evident that his love for her was the motive for the crime. Towards what end was he making? What might not already have happened? The thought filled her with sickening dismay.

Just then the sufferer, who had relapsed again into stupor, moved, and asked faintly for water. After that one scornful look, the sister of his youth had turned her back upon him, and shut her heart against him; but at the sound of his voice, plaintively appealing to her kindness, the old feeling of love gushed up from the deep wells of her heart. After all, he was her brother, her only brother. Nothing could alter that. If she could not pity him, who would? If she refused to have compassion on him, who would tend and minister to him? Resolutely she put from her mind the hard, cruel thoughts and feelings, and, going back to the bedside, forced herself to minister to his need with all her former gentleness.

It was now daylight. How cold and grey everything looked! Felicia felt it would never more be light to *her*. She cleared away all traces of that terrible scene, and set herself to consider how she must act in this matter. It was clear that action, one way or another, devolved on her. She could not stand aloof, and allow matters to settle themselves. She must either participate in her brother's guilt and make some effort to shield him, or she must go to the man she loved, with the full confession of a crime, the disgrace of which fell on her as well as him whom she must thus expose. It was hard enough in either case; but when her thoughts reverted to the dear and honoured father, on whom this blow would fall so heavily, her heart sank within her. She knew not what to think or do, but as soon as Janet came to relieve her at the bedside, she went away to her own room, and, falling on her knees, prayed in silent agony for guidance and strength.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

By the time the doctor arrived that morning, Felicia's face wore but little trace of the anguish she had been passing through. Her manner was quite calm and composed. The anxiety and natural agitation of the previous evening had given place to a subdued composure. To a casual observer she might have seemed far less tired and jaded in the full light of morning

than she had done on the previous evening; for though she had not closed her eyes all night, she had a bright colour, and her movements were quick and alert.

But the doctor's keen scrutiny was not to be deceived. He knew that all this outward composure was but fictitious. His heart was sore with pity for her trouble, but he dared not offer any further suggestions, or urge his anxiety for her welfare, for there was a look in her eyes which made him feel only too acutely that this was an affair in which he had no right to interfere.

"Is there any hope?" she asked, in a hard, cold voice, as if she would be almost glad were the answer in the negative.

"I trust so," he replied gravely, not liking to say to her that he considered his patient's case extremely critical, yet unwilling to conceal the truth. "He is sleeping now. If it continues he will probably do well. The excitement you mentioned was greatly in his disfavour; I had hoped it could have been avoided. Mr. Hardy will be home in a few hours, I trust?"

"Yes," said Felicia, with a sinking heart. "Sir John has very kindly offered to send to Carsthorpe to meet him, which will avoid any delay. I believe Sir John is down-stairs now waiting to see you, so I won't keep you any longer"; and she turned back into the sick-room with a smile that froze him to the heart.

How she dreaded the awful moment when she must make known to her father the discovery she had made! She felt she had need of all her fortitude, for however hard it was for her to bear, it was harder still for him, who loved his son so dearly, and had been cherishing such fond hopes of his reformation. Her fears on his behalf were not unfounded. He had prepared himself for what he thought was the worst that could have happened, little thinking what a gulf of misery lay yawning beyond the verge of this trouble.

"It is impossible!" he said, in broken tones, when he caught the meaning of Felicia's words. "Dick never could have done that; there must be some mistake."

But there lay the will on the table before him—the very will on which the prospects of so many hung, and on the discovery of which so much time and labour and money were being expended. He was a man with a high sense of honour, and as he looked at that parchment he felt, however he might try to excuse or disguise the circumstance, the very fact that it had been found in Richard's possession was a sufficient evidence of his guilt. If he had not been actually instrumental in obtaining the will, he was at least participating in the sin by wilfully and unlawfully concealing it. It was a hideous disclosure, and the worst had perhaps not yet been found out.

The Rector was quite broken down.

"Something must be done," he said at last, breaking a long, long silence, during which his daughter had been kneeling beside him, crushed with a deep sense of the disgrace that had fallen upon them both. It took him, as well as Felicia, a long time to realise fully the consequences which this discovery must lead to. But at last he broke the silence that was becoming so painful, with the words, "Something must be done," as if their only hope of surviving the blow lay in some immediate act of restitution.

"Yes," said Felicia, trying hard to control her feelings for her father's sake.

"Lestrange is still in London, I suppose?" he continued, drearily.

"He returns to-day. Let me send for him, father, and tell him everything."

"*You*, my child? No, no; you have had to bear the brunt of it too long. You shall be spared that."

He stroked her head with his old caressing manner, and she flung her arms about his neck and kissed him tenderly.

"I would rather tell him, father; indeed I would," she said eagerly; for she could not bear to think that her father should have to face the painfulness of that confession. "It was I who found it, and I will restore it. He is a good man, and will have pity on us."

While they were still talking together, they heard the sound of a voice in the hall which made them both start. They had had many visitors from Carsthorpe and the neighbourhood through the day to inquire for Richard, and to hear all that was to be heard. Many kind friends, including those at Lawley Manor, had come with offers of assistance and expressions of sympathy; and now here was another asking for Miss Hardy in tones which plainly said he would not be gainsayed. Felicia's white, set face grew rosy red, and her heart leaped up with overmastering force. The tones of his voice sent every nerve vibrating as if touched by an electric current.

"He has come," she said, drawing herself together with a supreme effort at composure. "Let me speak to him now, father;" and, starting up, she caught the ill-fated roll of parchment, and went out with firm, steady step, and a look of strong resolution, to meet Anthony.

The next moment they were standing face to face in Felicia's morning-room, where he and she had spent more than one happy hour in pleasant and congenial converse.

"I am glad you have come, Mr. Lestrange," said Felicia, when the cold, undemonstrative greeting, which covered a deep mine of feeling on both sides, was over. "I wanted to see you. There is something I must—I ought to tell you."

She felt she could not bear any polite preambles. She must go direct to the point and get it over, or she might lose her self-control. He looked surprised for a moment, then coloured hotly, for he thought he knew to what she was alluding.

He had not been in Carsthorpe an hour before learning what was now common talk—that Rosamond had fainted on hearing of Richard Hardy's accident; and with those confirmed suspicions of their secret meetings in mind, it was natural that he should immediately draw conclusions as to the purport of Felicia's communication.

"I think I know what you mean," he said, with a stern, set look deepening on his face. "I have not been altogether blind, Miss Hardy. I have long had my suspicions."

She grew white to the lips. Never but once had she seen that hard, determined expression on his face. Was it possible, then, that he knew all? Was the valet, Claydon, who she knew had been committed

"She dared not disobey her brother."—*p.* 494.

for trial, an accomplice in this sin, and was it through him that her brother had been implicated? All manner of conjectures rushed rapidly through her mind while she stood in pale silence looking at Anthony.

"If you know, there is no need for me to tell you," she said at last, with repressed feeling.

"It is common gossip," he said bitterly, looking away from her, as if desirous of avoiding her gaze. "It could not have remained undiscovered much longer, I imagine."

She thought he meant to imply that any confession which she chose to make on her brother's account was now too late—that it was of little value since it only preceded impending discovery. This apparently utter want of feeling surprised and pained her. He scarcely seemed to recognise how extremely trying a duty this was which she had taken upon herself. A sense of cruel disappointment, of keen mortification, came over her. It was no more than she might have expected, for Anthony had a right to feel anger and resentment against the duplicity which had been practised upon him, nor was there any reason why he should attempt to spare her feelings; yet she could not help that feeling of disappointment. He had always been to her so different from other men, so far removed from the generality of the world's low level of thought and action, and thus in this testing-time she *had* looked for consideration at his hands, even though he was the injured, and she, in one sense, the injurer.

"May I ask what reasons you had for your suspicions?" she asked, in a tone of cold reserve. "It

has come upon me so suddenly. We were in complete ignorance of it, Mr. Lestrange—my father and I—until last night. I do not wish to stand aloof from the consequences of my brother's sin, but I must say to you that it has been a great shock to us. I can hardly realise it even now."

He looked at her in startled surprise, and was frightened to see how cold and white she looked.

"I beg your pardon," he said hurriedly. "You were alluding, I presume, to the—what shall I say?—flirtation which everyone says has been going on between Rosamond and your brother?"

It was Felicia's turn now to look surprised. It was evident he did *not* know the whole truth. She took hold of the table to steady herself, for neither had yet thought of such a thing as sitting down.

"Rosamond has perhaps admitted it to you?" he added, as she did not reply.

"No. I learnt it from my brother; but I guessed before that she—that he—that they cared for each other."

Anthony bit his lip, and turned away. It was not a pleasant subject for thought or conversation.

"I too have guessed it," he said, "but I did not know that they really cared for one another. Do not think, Miss Hardy, that I shall hold Rosamond to her engagement. If your brother loves her, and she wishes to marry him, he has more right to her than I. I wish there had been more openness about it—much pain might have been spared; but I do not bear him any malice."

"You are very generous, Mr. Lestrange," said Felicia, in tones of strong feeling, "but I see you do not know all. You do not know how deeply my wretched brother has wronged you. Will you have any pity or forgiveness for him when I tell you—God knows how hard it is to tell you!—that he is guilty of a still greater deception than you have imagined? He has not only stolen away Rosamond's affection for you but—see here."

She ended abruptly, overcome by the tumultuous passions which filled her heart, and handed to him the ill-fated roll of parchment, which, until now, she had held tightly clenched in her hands. Then she turned with a quick, agitated movement, flung herself on the couch, and hid her burning face in her hands.

For a long time there was silence. After the first startled exclamation, "Is it possible?—the will!" Felicia's strained senses caught no sound or sign of movement. Crushed with shame, overwhelmed with emotion, she could not look at him or speak to him. She had not meant to give way thus to weak and futile agitation. On the contrary, she had meant to preserve her fortitude and composure, that, should his anger and resentment be hot against Richard, she might, for her father's sake, plead with him to deal gently. It might be, he would be willing at least to spare them a public exposure. But in times of strong emotion it is not always possible even to remember the fine resolutions one makes in calmer moments, and Felicia, as she sat there in speechless agony, not daring to lift her eyes, drew her breath hard and bit her lips to keep herself from giving way altogether.

Meanwhile, Anthony, regardless of her presence, stood staring blankly at the long-lost will, so suddenly, strangely, and unexpectedly restored to him. Now at last he could understand the secret intimacy between Richard and Rosamond; for, if Richard had been in possession of the will, Rosamond must at least have been cognisant of the fact. Like a lightning flash there came across his mind Rosamond's repeated declaration that the will would never be found; he remembered her rooted disinclination to discuss the subject, her absolute refusal to give evidence. It was clear that he was on the verge of making some painful revelations. It required an effort to brace his mind to the task.

He was hardly able at first quite to realise his exact position, but presently his eyes fell on the silent figure, so appealing in its abandoned misery, and his heart rushed to his lips in pity for the girl whose trouble was surely as heavy and hard to be borne as his.

Forgetful of anything but human pity in the presence of this great sorrow, he went quietly to her side, knelt down, and drew her hands away from her face, holding them firmly within his.

She lifted her white, troubled face, and looked at him with dark eyes full of pain.

"Felicia, we have both a sore trouble to bear. We must help each other," he said gently.

This was too much for Felicia. Her nerves were already strained to the highest pitch, and his kindness and gentleness broke her down altogether. How cruelly she had misjudged him! The hot tears rushed to her eyes, she buried her face in the cushions, and for a few moments sobbed convulsively.

He did not attempt to restrain or console her, for he felt that at such a time mere words were vain and empty. He just waited till she was able to recover her composure.

"Please forgive me," she faltered at length; "it is very weak and foolish of me."

"This strain has been too much for you," he said; "you must go and get some rest. Another day I will ask you to tell me all you know."

"I will tell you now," she said; "I could not bear the weight of it on my mind another day. Please sit down, Mr. Lestrange, and I will tell you quickly."

He obeyed, and took a seat beside her on the couch. Then, in a few brief words, she related to him the events of the night before, every circumstance of which was burnt in upon her mind as if with a brand of hot iron.

(To be concluded.)

THE STARS AND THE CROSS.

BY THE REV. THAIN DAVIDSON, D.D.

"The Lord doth build up Jerusalem; He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names."—PSALM cxlvii. 2—4.

AS the best known constellation in our northern hemisphere is *Ursa Major* (sometimes called "the Plough"), so the best known, probably, in the southern hemisphere is *Crux Australis*, or "the Southern Cross."

Each side of our globe has, therefore, its own most conspicuous sign, or group of shining stars. But it is the privilege of those who reside at or near the Equator to command a view of both of these beautiful constellations. Standing within the vicinity of the Line, and looking up, the eye can sweep a wide celestial dome, which includes the Northern Plough on the one side, and the Southern Cross upon the other.

Now, it is of extreme importance that intelligent Christians should be able to behold at the same time the two hemispheres of nature and of grace.

It is the case with many good people—I believe they are hardly aware of it—that they separate these two conceptions: the conception, on the one hand, of the great Personal Ruling Force in the universe, and the conception, on the other, of the Divine Being who is the centre of their religion. They have two distinct ideas of God, and they keep them apart.

At one time their minds are devoutly fixed upon the God of the Bible, the God of salvation, the Being whom in their closet of devotion they sincerely worship; at another time they contemplate with reverent wonder the mighty Power which presides over the physical creation, who rules the sun and stars, and all the realms of space; but these two conceptions are kept apart.

Now, we want to combine them.

In the same field of vision we should embrace the Plough and the Cross, and intelligently identify the God of nature with the God of grace.

The Psalmist David always did so, and notably does so in the passage before us. What particularly strikes me here is the marvellous combination of Divine act. I find three statements, each of which commands our admiring thought, but the union of which—for they are closely bracketed together—is positively startling.

Slightly varying the order, for the sake of convenience, I would take the whole as a descending climax, a diminuendo bar, of which the three steps are these:

First, God in the heavens: "He telleth the number of the stars: He calleth them all by their names."

Secondly, God in the Church: "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem; He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel."

Thirdly, God in the home of the afflicted: "He healeth the broken in heart; He bindeth up their wounds."

Let our minds for a little pursue this threefold thought, and, first of all, think of God as presiding over the material universe throughout its vast immensity, and determining the number and nomenclature of the stars. Just let us look for a few moments at this inspiring subject.

We must, of course, touch the borders of Science; but we shall go no further than the text invites us. Indeed, the majority of otherwise intelligent Christians know far too little of God's glory in the heavens. A recent writer in a scientific paper asserts that the educated people of this country are discreditably ignorant of the firmament.

I hold that every thoughtful believer should be an astronomer: at least, in the sense in which the devout Psalmist was one, who said, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained"; and in the sense in which the Prophet Isaiah eloquently summons us to the study: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might," etc. Observe, we are to *consider* the heavens, not merely gaze at them in vacant wonder; we are to consider them thoughtfully, even as Christ also bids us "consider the lilies of the field;" for both the great and the little, the stars above our head and the flowers beneath our feet, demand our research. We are to think about the vastness of the heavenly bodies, their number, their order, their lustre, their security, and to draw many a wholesome lesson from the study.

From the earliest ages the stars to be seen in the canopy of night have been regarded as practically beyond the power of the human eye to number, or of human arithmetic to express.

Like the hairs upon our head, or the sand upon the sea-shore, they have been used proverbially to express a number beyond calculation.

"Look now toward heaven," said the Lord to Abraham, as He took him forth into the open plain, "and tell the stars if thou be able to number them;" and He added, "So shall thy seed be."

And yet, it may surprise you to be told how limited is the number which the naked eye can see: greatly less, probably, than most persons would imagine. In one of the most recent standard works upon astronomy it is stated that in Great Britain the figure does not exceed three thousand.

So accurate are the charts of the heavens that are now prepared, that every individual star is there; the disappearance of one or the arrival of another would be at once discovered and recorded. Three thousand probably strikes you as being a small figure,

and as almost detracting from the grandeur of the text; but stay a moment. If you make use of a common binocular field-glass, you will at once discern ten times as many as with the unaided eye; and if, laying aside the field-glass, you look through a good ordinary telescope, the tens will immediately become hundreds; while if you should have the rare privilege of beholding the celestial dome through one of the great astronomical instruments, the hundreds will become thousands, and you will be fairly bewildered at the sight. Our great telescopes can show at least fifty millions of stars; nor is this all: for through the recent wonderful development of celestial photography millions more are discovered which even through the strongest lenses the eye is unable to perceive, these remote points of light faithfully registering their existence upon the sensitive plate.

In fact, there are unquestionably within the range of human cognisance stars sufficient to provide a world apiece for every man, woman, and child upon the face of the globe; and these worlds, mark you, not mere planets, like our own earth, but every one of them a self-luminous and blazing sun, with possibly a planetary system of its own, and many of them vastly larger than our own bright orb of day. Many of the hazes which you see in the firmament on a clear winter's night are distinct universes, galaxies of suns; indeed, the stars in their countlessness can only be likened to luminous dust scattered at random over the whole heaven; and yet, there is little reason to doubt that, could you be transported to the most distant of them all which the most perfect lenses have revealed, there would only open up before you fresh fields of celestial grandeur; another starlit infinitude beyond. In the view of all this, how astounding the intimation, "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names"!

Do we not well, then, from time to time to turn away from the distractions of this lower world, from the petty interests of this mere grain of sand on which we dwell, and, lifting up our eyes in intelligent contemplation to the glorious canopy overhead, to muse on the magnificent empire of Him "who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth on the waves of the sea; who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; who doeth great things past finding out: yea, and wonders without number"? Oh! it will deepen our sense of the condescending love of God shown towards His Church and towards His afflicted people, when we behold His stately and majestic march over the fields of immensity, and see His own hand kindling and trimming every one of those innumerable lamps of heaven!

We now turn, secondly, to the next thought presented in the text. Let us come down from those material heights, and behold the same God on a somewhat different plane: *God in the Church.* "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem; He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel." I apprehend this is to be taken chiefly in a spiritual sense, though, even as literally read, it is a word which history has signally confirmed. Never was there a city upon the earth that has been so repeatedly built up as Jerusalem; never a people that, though "scattered and peeled," have been so hedged round as the House of Israel.

In spite of at least twenty sieges and destructions, and wars without number, the daughter of Zion still survives: hers the history of many cities, yet but one.

We can go back to the original Jerusalem of the Jebusites, the descendants of Canaan, and trace the successive cities that have occupied that noble site: the Jerusalem of David and Solomon, of Ezra and Nehemiah, of the Ptolemys, of the Maccabees, of Herod, of the Romans, of the Christian Emperors, of the Saracens, of the Crusaders, and of the Turks; and to-day the ancient city, ever being destroyed, and yet indestructible, bids fair to "arise, and shake herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments" once more.

Thus is she a type of the Church of Christ; and in this sense I shall interpret the words, "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem." *Doth* build, for from age to age the constructive work goes steadily on. The foes of Christianity have tried hard to tear down her walls and dismantle her towers, and lay her ruined in the dust; but vain have been their efforts. Generation after generation has seen the structure still advancing, still expanding; foot by foot it rises and extends, till by-and-bye the spiritual masonry shall be complete, and the vision of the seer of Patmos shall be realised in all its ineffable grandeur: the holy city, the New Jerusalem, lying yonder four-square upon her kingly mountains, bathed in the light of heaven, the metropolis of God.

The progress of the Church of Christ is indeed the greatest wonder which the world has witnessed; for whilst the mightiest empires have passed away, and kingdoms been broken in pieces, and proud dynasties swept into oblivion, God has still been preserving and building up His spiritual Jerusalem; and never was she so extensive and prevailing a power on the earth as she is to-day.

The foes of evangelical Christianity, I am well aware, are noisy and vauntful; an atheistic rationalism is insidiously working, and in certain quarters there is almost a rebound from the old doctrines of our holy faith; still, for all that, the empire of the blessed Jesus is surely and solidly extending in the earth. If there is defection in one place, there is unwonted revival in another, and the glorious Redeemer marches forward in triumph. Do not be carried away by the baseless notion that all the culture and brain of the age are on the side of scepticism, and that only weaklings and simpletons remain loyal to the Gospel.

Never was so much intellect consecrated to the service of Christ as there is to-day; never were the bulwarks of the faith so well manned or so impregnable.

These attacks upon the citadel of the truth remind us of the opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah of old, when Nehemiah was carrying forward the rebuilding of Jerusalem; they come of envy and of conscious helplessness. "Ah!" said Tobiah, with a laugh and a sneer (and no doubt chuckled at his own wit), "that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall"; but the city was built,

nevertheless, and the wall, even in troublous times. Even so let Infidelity sneer; God is most surely building up His spiritual Jerusalem in the earth. Yea, and moreover, He is "gathering together the outcasts of Israel."

There is, as we all know, a literal sense in which the scattered tribes of Abraham's family shall yet be gathered in. "He that scattered Israel shall gather him as a shepherd doth his flock." Not more certain is the fact of his dispersion than is the decree of his restoration. A day is coming when Jacob's captivity shall be turned.

> "Then shall Israel, long dispersed,
> Mourning, seek their Lord and God;
> Look on Him whom once they pierced,
> Own and kiss the chastening rod."

But the words have also a wider meaning. Blessed be God, He hath devised means whereby His banished of all nations may be brought back; and He is daily, by those means and in all lands where the Gospel is proclaimed, gathering in the outcasts to His fold; and let me say that never have we better evidence that God is in any particular locality building up His Jerusalem than when the outcasts are being gathered in. The surest token of a prosperous Church is zealous and unwearied effort on the part of its members to win the lost and the lapsed around it to Christ.

Oh! let us be stirred by the view of the Divine condescension, by the thought that He who sitteth on the circle of the universe, whose arm swings the solar system round yonder star Alcyone, and who holds in His hand the reins of all those stellar steeds that bound around the circuit of immensity, stoops down to this little planet on which we dwell, not only to build up upon it a Church of ransomed men, but even to go out after those who have been poor outcasts from His fold.

There is still a third plane on which Jehovah is presented in the text. We have beheld Him in the starry heavens, and in the Church upon the earth; view Him finally in *the chamber of the stricken heart:* "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

Oh! is it not a marvellous conception: away from the Bible, man never entertained the shadow of such a thought: the Mighty and Eternal One, from whose hand worlds upon worlds are sent forth like sparks from the blacksmith's anvil, or like chaff from the summer threshing-floor, bending to the humblest ministry of mercy, and putting liniments round the wounded heart!

Were the royal lady on whose head for more than fifty years the British crown has so gracefully sat to leave her luxurious palace, and hasten off to some far-distant field of battle where her troops had been engaged, to seek out a wounded soldier, and stoop over him, and bandage his wounds, and sit down beside him and comfort him, the nation would look on with admiration and wonder, and a ringing shout of applause would rise from one end of the land to the other; but what is that to the picture presented here? I am ashamed so much as to name it!

Ah! it is only the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that can make the text intelligible. Only in New Testament light can we interpret this mystery; but the person and the mission of the Divine Redeemer make all plain. His mediatorial arms stretch "from the highest throne in heaven to the place of deepest woe." In Him the majesty of Divine Omnipotence comes down to the door of human poverty and sorrow.

"The broken in heart." Is there such a thing as a broken heart? Yes, there is, literally. *Post-mortem* examinations have shown that in some instances death has resulted from actual rupture of the heart. That organ, which is so powerfully affected by joy or grief, has been found to have been rent by the violence of its own action. In his remarkable treatise on the physical cause of Christ's death, Dr. Stroud has gone far to prove that our blessed Saviour died of a broken heart. The late eminent Sir James Simpson, of Edinburgh, confirmed this view. "No other hypothesis," says he, "will account for the separate outflow of the blood and water when His side was punctured with the soldier's spear." And indeed, if we are to give a literal interpretation to those minute predictions of the Twenty-second Psalm, "They pierced My hands and My feet; they parted My garments among them, and for My vesture did they cast lots" (words which were fulfilled to the letter), there seems no reason why we are not also to read in the same sense the touching utterance of that Messianic Psalm: "Reproach hath broken my heart."

"He hath sent me," said the Divine Preacher at Nazareth, "to heal the broken-hearted," and that He might "heal the broken in heart" His own heart was broken. He gauged the lowest depth of human agony. The bitterest pangs of grief that mortal breast can know He endured for us.

> "Yes; for as if thou wouldst be God, even in Thy misery,
> There 's been no sorrow like Thine own, untouched by sympathy."

Ah! rich is indeed the consolation which Christians have in their sorrow; but at what an awful price has it been purchased!

Whatever be the nature of our distress, there is healing for us in Jehovah-rophi.

Does a burdened conscience make you unutterably miserable? Do the arrows of conviction stick fast in your heart? Are you wretched through a sense of unpardoned sin? There is no cure for you in any earthly pharmacy; the balm of Gilead alone can give you relief; none but Christ in His Gospel can give true peace to the troubled soul. Or are you well-nigh broken-hearted by reason of earthly trouble, wave after wave rolling over you? are you distracted with business anxieties, domestic cares, family infelicities, disappointed prospects, straitened means, or the like? Let this Psalm remind you that He to whom the mighty stars of heaven are but as the dust of the balance is not more tremendous in His power than He is tender in His sympathy; He has a comfort and an anodyne for you.

Perhaps there is nothing that so lacerates the heart as bereavement. Never does the future seem darker, or the world more cheerless, than on the day when we

return from the sepulchre where we have left under the sod that which we most loved on earth. Christ had very few friends when He was here in the flesh, and when one of them was taken away, He wept beside the grave.

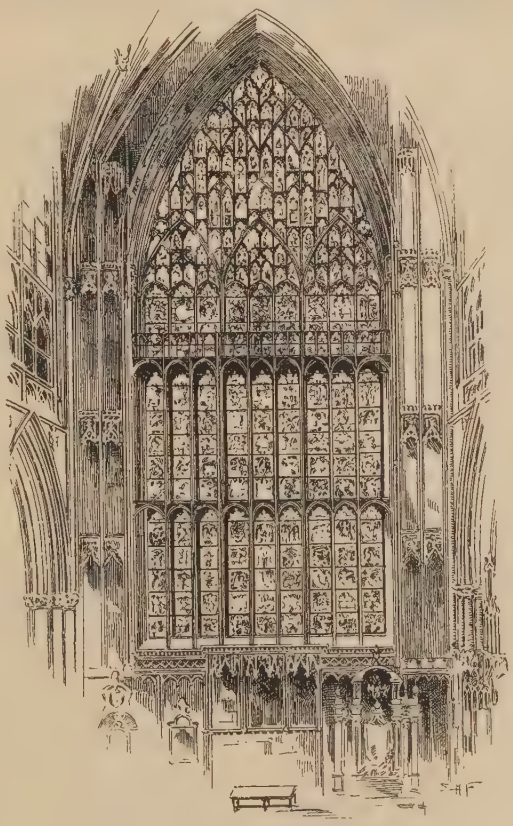
Ah! one cannot stroll through yonder cemetery or churchyard, and read two or three of the head-stones, without thinking what heavenly liniment must have been needed by those who laid this precious dust here—dust of husband, dust of parent, dust of little child. Oh! what loved ones have here in God's acre, amid gushing tears and bursting hearts, been laid down to the dreamless rest; and yet there is not one form of bereavement possible for which there is not provided in this Book, to the humble Christian, some express promise or consolation.

The thought we carry away with us from this sublime passage is the combined greatness and gentleness of God. Aye, and it is His gentleness that makes Him so great.

We learn that He who dwelleth among the stars, and is everywhere at home in a universe that stretches away far beyond the range of the most powerful telescope, is the same God who from age to age is building up upon this little planet a Church of redeemed men; the same also who, in loving and exquisite tenderness, stoops to listen to the sigh of a broken heart!

ABOUT STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS

THE gifted author of "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" has stated, in his emphatic way, in "The Lamp of Sacrifice," that "the peculiar manner of selfish or impious ostentation, provoked by the glass-makers for a stimulus to trade, of putting up painted windows to be records of private affection instead of universal religion, is one of the worst, because most plausible and proud, hypocrisies of our day." All the same, the use of stained glass for memorials has become more and more general; and now there is scarcely a church to be met with that is without an example of its adaptation to this purpose. In the beginning of the revival of the manufacture it was feared that the secret of the ingredients of some of the best colours in ancient glass was lost. Analyses carefully conducted, however, resulted in the discovery of the true constituent parts; and now the clever glass-makers can produce the richest tones known to mediæval workers. The late Mr. Winston was at the trouble and expense of these analyses; and he ascertained by their means how to produce all the colours used in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.



EAST WINDOW, YORK MINSTER.

It is easy to assign an approximate date to most ancient glass. It has been shown that only simple designs with strong black outlines were used in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and only one plane represented; the backgrounds were generally deep blue or red. In the rare instances where any landscape was introduced, positive colours were used for it. This simple flat treatment gave a window the character of a piece of transparent mosaic work. In the sixteenth century stained glass was made thinner and lighter, and the tints were also paler; landscape was freely used; groups of figures were introduced in foregrounds, and distances with atmospheric effects were shown as in pictures. Between these two styles there was a gradual transition that filled up the intervening centuries. By the middle of the fifteenth century perspective and light and shade were well defined, and a painted glass window approximated in its treatment to an oil painting, with the addition of brilliancy and transparency.

The excitement attending the Reformation directed public taste into other channels; and the troubled times of the Commonwealth were not conducive to the encouragement of the manufacture of stained glass. Here and there we

WINDOWS IN BERE FERRERS CHURCH, DEVONSHIRE.

read of instances where zealous admirers removed the painted windows and carefully concealed them, as in the case of the Jesse window taken out of Llanrhaiadr Church, in Denbighshire, and buried in a chest till it was safe to dig it up again and replace it as we now see it. But from the fragmental condition of much stained-glass work that is left to us, it was evidently more frequently destroyed.

In the days of James the First the sole privilege of making glass with pit-coal was bestowed upon a company of noblemen, who engaged a young Welshman, fresh from college, as steward of the glass-house in Broad Street, where they employed several Venetians. Sir Robert Mansell, acting for the Company, sent him to various places on the Continent to secure additional workers and purchase materials for the manufacture. From time to time this James Howel wrote to his father and friends many interesting particulars of his journeys, and mentioned various facts connected with his business. There is a monument to his memory in the Temple Church, but he is best remembered by these letters, which were published in his lifetime, and dedicated to Charles the First as the "best of princes." In some of them he mentions the despatch of various gentlemen workers, remarking that all of the glass-making profession are gentlemen *ipso facto*, inasmuch as they have a rare kind of knowledge and chemistry to be able to transmute dust and sand to such a pellucid diaphanous dainty body as crystal-glass. In one he mentions the purchase of a good round parcel of barellia for two thousand pounds; in another he describes Murano as about the same distance from Venice as Lambeth from London, with twenty furnaces together at work, and adds: "They say here that, although one should transplant a glass furnace from Murano to Venice herself, or to any other part of the earth, and use the same materials, the same workmen, the same fuel, the selfsame ingredients every way, yet they cannot make crystal-glass in that perfection for beauty and lustre as in Murano."

About half a century after the death of Howel, two glaziers, named Price, issued an advertisement dated from Hatton Garden, stating that the art of painting and staining glass had been much discouraged by reason of a general opinion that the red colour, which had not been made in Europe for many years, was lost, and that they gave notice they they could make it to as great a degree of curiosity and fineness as in former ages. Antiquaries have noticed the work of these men in various buildings, such as the painted glass in Denton Church, Norfolk, and in a chapel at Copthall, near Epping. After this the art began to come into general esteem again, and was practised in a still more pictorial manner. Benjamin West made various designs for painted glass windows. Especially, he was employed by George the Third to design new windows for St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle. In 1788, the east window, which gave a representation of the Resurrection of the Saviour, was executed from his designs by Jarvis and Forest, at a cost of four thousand pounds; and the west window, which was then filled with fragments of ancient glass collected from different parts of the building, was also proposed to be placed in his hands for a corresponding representation of the Crucifixion. At this time, as in the preceding century, pictorial treatment was considered of the first consequence. Since then a feeling has gained ground that on entering a church the eye should not be drawn to the glass as to a picture, but that the

glass should take a more subordinate and unobtrusive place, and become part of the general devotional aspect of the whole building. To this end some of the leading artists in stained glass have produced designs with features that do not force themselves immediately upon the attention, but remain, with their beautiful details and their meaning, for more minute examination after the first impression of the edifice as a whole has been made. So late as the date when Dyce designed the window placed to the memory of the Duke of Northumberland in St. Paul's Church, Alnwick, that was executed at the Munich manufactory, and represents St. Paul and St. Barnabas preaching at Athens, and turning from the Jews to the Gentiles, this treatment was not contemplated, and he presented his subject as pictorially as West would have done, with life-size figures as accessories. It is, however, not with either of these schools of thought, but with the work of those who have long since passed through the great gateway that leads to the hereafter to which we are all travelling, that we would now call attention.

Ancient stained glass has handed down to us very interesting and curious information concerning other things. For instance, one window shows us the whole process of bell-founding; others show us articles of church furniture in use that are now of rare occurrence; and in others we may see heraldic rebuses and merchants' marks; and in others, again, we may note particulars of costume, weapons, devices, and symbols. All the circumstances in the lives of various holy persons were brought within the scope of ordinary perceptions by their delineation on the windows, and in some instances gifts and grants were kept in mind by their means. Traditions, too, were sometimes perpetuated, as in the glass brought from Dale-Abbey, and placed in Morley Church, Derbyshire, where figures and inscriptions relate to an old dispute that was supposed to have existed between the Canons of Deepdale and the keepers of the Great Forest, to adjust which the king apportioned to the canons all the land that could be encircled by a plough drawn by stags captured in the forest, in a day, or between two suns, as it was phrased. One of the inscriptions reads: "Go whom and yowke them, and take ye ground that ye plooe"; and another, "Here Saynt Robert plooyeth wyth the . . . ." The identity of the founders of some churches is preserved by their portraits on the painted glass of the windows, occasionally. In Bere Ferrers Church, Devonshire, in the east window, are two figures, both kneeling, the one a knight clad in chain-mail, and the other his lady; close to the knight's face, and touching his folded hands, is a representation of a three-spired church with a central door, which is wide open, and over his head is spread a Latin inscription to the effect that Sir William Ferrers made it. His lady is robed in yellow, and on a band is a row of horse-shoes, the device of the Ferrers, which device is also worn by the knight. The background is a crimson trellis-work, with outlined leaves in each interstice. Whether this window was "provoked by the glass-makers" or not, it has handed down an interesting fact. Historical facts, too, have been delineated, as in Brereton Church, Cheshire, where the four knights who killed Thomas à Becket were once to be seen, with their names inscribed on scrolls.

We have all heard of the Five Sisters of York, the graceful window of five lights in the north transept of the cathedral, that is so inextricably associated with romantic traditions. Some of us, too, may have felt disappointed at the want of colour, except in the devices, compared with the hues in the great east window. The latter is seventy-five feet high and thirty-two feet broad. Tradition says it was filled with the stained glass we now see by John Thornton, a Coventry glazier, in 1405. There are about two hundred compartments in it, in which are delineated the leading events in sacred history, with figures about two feet in height. It may be claimed for John Thornton's work that it is the window of windows, even as the chapter-house close by is the house of houses.

The east window of Gloucester Cathedral is a superb rival to that of York. It is about seventy-two feet high and thirty-eight feet wide. The glass in it was taken out, and cleaned, and repaired, and put back again in 1862, when the silvery tone of its white pieces and the luminosity of its red and blue colours were particularly evident. Salisbury Cathedral has also some of the original ancient stained glass in its great west window, the beauty of which has led to a surmise that it may once also have competed with York. Carlisle has preserved the original glass placed in the tracery of the great east window, though the lower part is filled with modern work. Becket's crown, Canterbury, is jewelled with ancient glass. As a county, Cheshire was more favoured than most others in this matter in old times. Amongst the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum is a collection of drawings, some of which show the windows of the Cheshire churches, which contained many portraits of knights and ladies belonging to the chief families of the districts, which are no longer in existence. Cornwall has several interesting specimens. St. Neot's Church has many portraits of benefactors, with legends on labels. One window, divided into twelve compartments, gives the history of St. George. Another, divided into fifteen compartments, gives subjects from the Old Testament, beginning with the creation, and ending with the death of Noah. The history of St. Neot is set forth in twelve compartments in another light, and all have inscriptions under them, explaining their purport.

Mention has been made of the careful hiding of the Jesse window at Llanrhaiadr. The genealogical tree, showing the lineage of our Lord, was a favourite subject for stained glass in old times. It may be noticed alike in the windows of the grandest fanes and in those of the simplest little village churches. There is one in the great east window of Wells Cathedral, in which the stem rises from the lower lights, and terminates with a figure of our Saviour on the cross, which holds its own in its high place, even among the glories of the choir; and there was one placed in the east window of Bunbury Church, Cheshire, by a rector, David de Bonebury by name, in the year 1345; and another in St. Kew's Church, Cornwall, which was sold to those in charge of that

edifice by the authorities presiding over the rebuilding of Bodmin Church, in 1469, for the sum of twenty-six shillings and sevenpence, as set down in the accounts.

TWO KINGS.

(From the Jesse Window, Margaretting, Essex.)

And there is another in Margaretting Church, Essex. It is also approved by modern artists, as witnesses a three-light window in Beverley Minster. Another distinct subject consists of the Christian virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity. There is one example of it in Mesting Church, Essex, placed there by the patron of the living about the time of Charles the First. And there is another in All Saints' Church, York. The Day of Judgment was also frequently chosen for delineation. We may see an ancient version of this subject in a window in All Saints', York. Some other out-of-the-way subjects, instead of being frequently chosen, are of rare occurrence. There is one of this kind, for instance, in West Wickham Church, Kent, where a skeleton is delineated in a kneeling position.

Looking from county to county in this manner, we may see we have still left to us much of the work of the old glass-painters, though it is only an infinitesimal portion of the amount which formerly enriched our old churches. Gem-like in its rich colouring, it gives the same sort of tone that old jewels give in old settings—pathetic, appealing, and impressive. There is an air, too, of simplicity mixed with skill in it, and we get impressions of reality tempered with ideality from it. It tells us much of the old experiences of our forefathers, their griefs, their pride, their hopes, their fears.

Underlying all that was made apparent by figures, devices, and symbols, there was another language in these sparkling enrichments, to be read by those who knew, in the mystic system of symbolism that had grown in the course of centuries concerning colours. Every colour had its deep significance. Without going into this intricate subject, it might be mentioned by way of illustration that green was the symbol of regeneration, red of Divine love, white of Divine wisdom, yellow of faith, and grey, or a mixture of black and white, the emblem of terrestrial death and spiritual immortality. These colours, at different times and in different countries, had other meanings as well. Authorities on this subject point out that the colours chosen for depicting the robes of our Lord differ according to the period of His life that is meant to be represented. Thus, those who are ignorant of this language of colours miss much that was intended to be conveyed by their use. Just as the precious stones in Aaron's breastplate meant so much more than met the eye, so the jewelled aspect of our ancient church windows had its hidden meaning for the initiated that intensified the pleasure they receive from it. Perhaps this knowledge may have led to the destruction of some of it. Be that as it may, our ancient painted glass windows are part of the heritage the past has left the present; and, as may be said of every other feature in our ancient churches, every fragment of them should be carefully conserved in the interest of the future, so long as no superstitious regard or value is associated with them.

SARAH WILSON.

THE SPIES.

(From the Central Window of Becket's Crown, Canterbury Cathedral.)

THE FRAGRANCE OF GENTLE WAYS.

N an old "God's acre" belonging to a quiet country town there is a tombstone over someone long dead, and whose name has faded. But not all the inscription is gone. There remains enough to be a true title of honour for the forgotten sleeper and a lesson for the living. This epitaph is still decipherable—"She was such a pleasant woman."

Simple, but sufficient for the purest fame. Better have won that tribute of praise—quaint because of its place—of the generation that knew and must have loved her, and speak those words of implied counsel from her grave, than have been flattered by an empty-headed crowd for beauty, wit, or even learning. These things have their day, and perish, but love belongs to character, and outlasts death.

Gentle ways, a tireless patience, and an unselfish forbearance, make the best charm of home. No book that a man could write would be able to record a hundredth part of the rescue and salvage work done by tender smiles and winning talk of mothers, sisters, and wives. A kind act, with sacrifice shining like a star at the heart of it, has often snatched a tempted life from ruin. The lingering fragrance of some pleasant word or look—all its gentleness undeserved—has given power to better thoughts, and thus has steadied feet that were sliding. The boy who was beginning to go wrong has sickened at the knowledge that the sharpest pang his follies could inflict must come to the share of one who would yield up anything for him except honour, and so he has turned the leaf, and aimed at manliness and nobility of life. Heroism of many shades and sorts has had its inspiration in fireside examples, and courage for much of the world's work has been due to home sunshine. It was written indelibly on the memory of the famous painter Ary Scheffer, and became a message of help to his own grandchildren, how his mother had kept his boyish purpose from faltering while he was away from his native Dordrecht at Lille or Paris, studying. Her letters palpitated with self-denying affection. It was his solace to read them. She knew how to make admonition useful by showing what *she* had at stake in his welfare. "If you could but see me," the gentle pleader said, "kissing your picture, then, after a while, taking it up again, and, with a tear in my eye, calling you 'my beloved son,' you would comprehend what it costs me to use sometimes the stern language of authority, and to occasion to you moments of pain." The spirit to climb was imparted by such a correspondence; and is it too much to say that her gentleness kept young Ary Scheffer straight, and made him something better than a great artist—a true and upright man?

A wife's unobtrusive sympathy has often been a buttress to the industry of her husband. The fragrance of her gentle and uncomplaining acquiescence in hard conditions has cheered and revived him when he most needed encouragement. Nathaniel Bowditch, the self-educated natural philosopher and mathematician, who became President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, had this blessing of a helpmeet whose disposition was exceedingly sweet and calm, yet energising. When the burden of his work seemed too heavy for him to bear, her bright and genial words and her quiet faith in his success gave him fresh heart. Bowditch translated the "Mécanique Céleste" of Laplace, with an elaborate commentary, and gratefully acknowledged that the task would never have seen completion but for his wife's gentle ministries and the impulse of her hope.

The force of a courteous and loving bearing is immense. It conquers the most obdurate. The fern or grass that shoots up its tiny spire or blade and divides the sullen soil is its type in nature. The weak things confound those that seem strong. But the fact in daily life is so contrary to received ideas of where supreme power resides that the multitude scarcely care as yet for the graces of gentleness and attractive forbearance. They doubt if these are practical gifts.

There are few that are more so. The truth is illustrated in a story of an early mission to the Cherokee Indians. Three earnest men went out to preach the Gospel to this tribe. They soon made the Indians understand that their business was to explain and advocate the white man's religion. But it was difficult to get hearers until the chiefs had consulted, and decided if the missionaries were to have toleration shown them. In some anxiety they waited for the Council. They were called to preach before it. Then the grave judges weighed matters over. The Cherokee chiefs agreed that the speaker they had first heard was too stiff and harsh in manner, and that they could not suppose the Great Spirit addressed them through him. The second was imperious and vehement, and his claim as a messenger was in turn denied. But the last candidate had a gentle, winning way that did not want earnestness, and was proof of love. The braves were of opinion that it was at least possible that the Great Spirit spoke through him, and he received permission to labour amongst the tribe. It was the victory of gentleness.

Mr. Froude has a striking description of John Davis, the Elizabethan seaman, and says of him that the exquisite sweetness of his manner, his urbanity and gentleness, triumphed with his crews over disinclination. The magic of his personality was such that rough, hard sailors, for mere love of Davis, and with no hope of fame or prize-money, would leave all that was dear on shore, and venture at his bidding into remote Polar deserts. There was rich reserve of power in that pleasantness.

The complaint is often made that life is narrow; ambition is beaten back, and submission to the humdrum becomes inevitable. But simple callings have great opportunities, and there is no one who may not make the commonplace beautiful. All around us

there are lives to lift up nearer to God and heaven through the ministry of our unfailing gentleness. In our homes there are those with this claim upon us, and in the counting-house, the market-place, the shop, and the factory. To scatter the fragrance of pleasantness in the prosy by-ways of business, and in the routine of household duty, is work that in its real value will compare with any. It is not always easy work. The grain runs, perhaps, in temperament and disposition, against, and not with, forbearance, moderation, and love. But there is a great Exemplar who was tried by indifference and coldness, and summary rejection of just claims, and who through the long *via dolorosa* of His open ministry to men was gentleness incarnate. The Christian is called to follow Him.

We all recognise instinctively the nobility of the pleasant life. George Moore, the rich philanthropist, was struck by this when he came in contact with Mr. Moggridge—the "Old Humphrey" of many once popular juvenile books. "How I envied his mind and heart!" said the great merchant. "Yet he lived on only a scanty pittance. He called upon me once when I was in a desponding mood. How he comforted and supported me! He was one of the most lovable old men I ever knew. His mind was as pure as the snow-drop." This was the feature that stood out with effect beyond all others in the character, as it came to be summed up, of Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States. One of his grandchildren said, "Never in my life did I see his countenance distorted by a single bad passion or unworthy feeling. I have seen the expression of suffering, bodily and mental, of just indignation, disappointment, disagreeable surprise, and displeasure, but never of anger, impatience, peevishness, discontent, to say nothing of worse or more ignoble emotion. To the contrary, it was impossible to look on his face without being struck with its benevolent, intelligent, cheerful, and placid expression. It was at once intellectual, good, kind, and pleasant."

There are not many prettier glimpses of the real man in recent books of biography than that afforded by a witness to Longfellow's gentle kindness. The poet was—as all eminent people are—inundated by requests, reasonable and unreasonable, and oftener the latter than the former. His biographer states that when a refusal of one of these applications was necessary, it was wonderful to see how mildly the negative was put. A girl of a far Western city asked him for a special poem for a class of which she was the teacher. Longfellow only spoke of what was habitual to him when he told a friend, "I could not write it, but tried to say 'No' so softly that she would think it better than 'Yes.'"

Counsel and admonition gain immeasurably in their influence when the smile goes with them, and the word is spoken in a sweet voice wisely. A deep impression was made on the heart of a young girl visitor to a quaint old German village by a plain peasant, who had this gift of a gentle way. He was an aged man, who had mellowed under the discipline of life. One day he was picking up fallen fruit in his little orchard plot.

"Don't you get weary stooping so much?" asked the girl, watching his slow movements.

"No, miss," he said brightly, "I don't weary—I'm just waiting. I think I am about ripe now, and I must soon fall to the ground: and then, just think, the Lord will pick me up! Oh, miss, you're young yet, and perhaps just in blossom; turn well round to the Sun of Righteousness, that you may ripen sweet for His service."

That humble German peasant had learned in the school of love how to bring others to the Master. If sometimes we fail when we attempt it, is it because we have not the knack of pleasantness?

"SEA-LAVENDER."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

"I MUST say, Rachel, that it's a horrid bore! Whatever *do* we want with an invalid fine lady? We might as well turn the place into a hospital at once; she'll expect you to be at her beck and call for every silly fad and fancy! Why don't you telegraph to her fine London friends, and let *them* look after her? You know I never liked the idea of advertising the Hall Farm for summer visitors, and this is what comes of it!"

"Well, nothing very dreadful has come of it, at present," was the reply; "and *you* won't be at her beck and call, Jack. I told you at breakfast that I meant to drive round and see Miss Coverdale, and when I got to the farm, there was Mrs. Pudeney, wringing her hands, and declaring she saw death on the poor dear creature's face; you know, she hasn't the sense of a baby! Miss Coverdale confessed she felt very weak, and the journey had tired her; she had been ill with a low fever, and came into the country to recruit, it seems. Her friends—she has lost her parents—have gone abroad, but she was not strong enough to travel so far; a week's good nursing will set her up. I could *not* allow her to be poisoned by Dr. Jones, and Mrs. Pudeney declared she must send for him if Miss Coverdale stayed there, so what could I do but bring her home with me? And as to letting rooms at the Hall Farm, I still consider it a most sensible idea; a good house—Miss Coverdale thinks it a charming place—and Mrs. Pudeney has nothing to do but look after a little poultry and cry over her troubles; and you've lost so much by the lambs, you say."

"Oh, of course you are never in the wrong, Rachel!" grumbled her brother, "You must have

your own way, I suppose; and I'll fervently hope for your invalid's speedy recovery. I shall ride over to Burton's and spend the day with Ellen, and you can make water-gruel to your heart's content!" Rachel nodded a cheerful good-bye, and then, putting the finishing touches to the contents of the little tray, carried it into the next room. Miss Coverdale was lying on the sofa, her cheeks rather flushed.

"The door was not quite closed—I have the invalid's troublesome quickness of hearing," she began, "and I am sure, from what your brother has been saying, that I 'm very much in the way."

"That dreadful Hamilton voice again!" exclaimed Rachel, biting her lips with vexation. "I hope this will be a lesson to us. I'm sorry you heard what my brother was saying, Miss Coverdale; he will have given such a wrong idea of his character, silly boy! He is really the kindest-hearted fellow in the world, but, like men in general, he thinks he ought to grumble at our arrangements, or the women of the family wouldn't be kept in proper subjection. After all, we have our way in the end. He would regret his rudeness so heartily, that I shall not tell him you know of it. This cordial—please try and take it—is made from a recipe of my grandmother's; she was quite noted in the neighbourhood, and was more believed in than any doctor: I used to stay with her months together when I was a girl," she continued, taking up some knitting, and complacently observing her patient's evident enjoyment, "and she gave me some hints on nursing that I've found very useful. Jack is the youngest of a family of twelve; we are scattered about the world: two in Australia, three in Canada, and one in India, several married and settled in England; all strong and healthy, and earning our own living, I 'm thankful to say," concluded Rachel, with quiet satisfaction, as she took Miss Coverdale's empty cup.

"I suppose your grandmother lived in this beautiful old house," said Miss Coverdale, "and you have all those happy childish associations with it that make one's home the dearest spot in the world."

"Oh dear no!" replied Rachel, in a most matter-of-fact tone. "This house used to belong to the Stanborough family, quite great people in the county, but the present owner would be very glad to sell the place. We only rent it, but some day, perhaps, we shall be able to buy it. So I help Jack in all small household economies, and it struck me that it would be a good plan to let our off-hand farmhouse for summer visitors," continued Rachel frankly. "But you must not go back there for a few days—it is such a pleasure to have someone to nurse: all my nephews and nieces are sent to me to get up their strength after measles and whooping-cough, and they have been so tiresomely well lately! This air is very fine and bracing—our friends always say they get hungry and sleepy when they stay with us. But the sleepiness is the natural result of our society, Jack says, and my talk is having that effect on you, as I hoped it would. I will leave you for an hour or two; and may I take this book away? I can see you want complete rest for brain and body."

"And I can see that my kind nurse is a thorough autocrat, and I mean to be an abjectly submissive patient!" returned Miss Coverdale, smilingly giving up her little volume, which Rachel carried off.

"What a sweet, refined face it is!" she thought, "but so worn and thin. I liked her the very moment I saw her; and it is always right to trust one's first impressions, *I* find, whatever other people may say. Miss Coverdale's is not the sort of face that Jack would admire, of course; but men never see below the surface: to compare it with Daisy's, for instance—and they say that she is the prettiest girl in the village—conceited little creature!" And Rachel caught up a basket of early gooseberries, and began "topping and tailing" with an angry impatience quite alarming to the little maid from the Board school, who was being initiated into kitchen mysteries under Miss Hamilton's instructions.

"Olivia Coverdale!" exclaimed Jack Hamilton, in a tone of pretended disgust, as he examined the fly-leaf of a small volume he had found in the window-seat. "And poetry, of course—an Olivia could never be content with sober prose! Rachel, you practical, sensible woman, I believe you are bewitched!" Jack's voice had a gravity which did not agree with the amused twinkle in his grey eyes.

"Nonsense, Jack!" replied Rachel. "Bewitched, indeed! Women are much too clear-sighted to be imposed on. *We* can see through affectation and forwardness only too easily; I wish we could supply our brothers with a share of common sense in such matters. People don't choose their own names, or else I daresay Miss Coverdale would have preferred something else; though 'Olivia' is pretty, and at least as old as the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' that you are so fond of reading."

"Is she ever to be more than a name, or a breakfast-tray? Am I unworthy to be introduced? I once caught sight of a trailing garment, and that's all. It's rather a ghostly sensation, Rachel; and how do you know if it may not seriously affect my nerves?"

"Well, Jack, if you really wish to know Miss Coverdale, you shall see her this evening. She is certainly stronger, and I believe in a fortnight I shall have her comparatively well again."

"And she swallows all your camomile tea and salts-and-senna without a murmur, Rachel? Poor thing, she must be prostrate! What an ethereal creature!" as he watched his sister's arrangements. "You seem to expect her to breakfast on rosebuds."

"I don't say I *wish* it for you, Jack," said his sister, "but some day *you* may be taken ill away from your home and friends, and then you may be thankful to be nursed by an experienced person. Camomile tea, indeed! But I must not stay chattering here; Athaliah is *the* most stupid girl I ever had to teach; passed the sixth standard, she says, and not an idea about ordinary house-work. That's right, Jack: amuse yourself with Miss Coverdale's book for a few minutes; it's sure to be worth reading, even if it *is* poetry. She is the most clever, intellectual woman I ever met. You will find her conversation very different from Daisy Benson's tittle-tattle."

"My dear Rachel, you don't ask a lovely picture for conversation—you are perfectly happy in looking at

it," returned her brother mischievously. Miss Hamilton set about her household duties in very low spirits after this remark.

When Jack came back from Lyttleton Market that afternoon, he was met in the hall by Athaliah, her voice lowered to a stage-whisper—

"The new lady's asleep, please, sir; will you go to the drawing-room?"

A murmur of voices came through the half-open door, and Jack strode across the stone-paved hall, and by the great fireplace, above which were carved the Stanborough arms; the oak panels were black with age. His brother-in-law, William Burton, nodded to him as he came in, and pointedly vacated his chair; it happened to be near a dazzling vision of pink and white. Mrs. Hobson, with her husband, a thin prim personage, whose very existence was a constant protest against his wife's blunders (his mind a perfect library of facts, shelved, neatly labelled, and to be pounced upon at a moment's notice), were sitting near the tea-table, and by Miss Hamilton's side was Daisy's mother, a terrible warning—as Rachel had once told her brother—of what Daisy herself *might* become.

"So glad to hear," began that lady, when the usual greetings had been gone through, "that your boarder—visitor, I mean—has *not* had scarlet fever, as everybody in the village supposed. Of course, it was extremely kind of you to take her in——"

"But Rachel is *such* a clever nurse," interrupted Daisy. "I've often thought it would be almost nice to be ill here, do you know?"

"I wouldn't trust myself to Rachel's tender mercies if I were you, Miss Daisy," said Mr. Burton, laughingly.

"Miss Coverdale is exquisitely pretty, isn't she, Mr. Hamilton?" inquired Daisy, with engaging simplicity; "and *so* clever, we hear."

"I really haven't seen her yet," replied Jack, "but I believe she is a most fascinating woman, and——"

"Jack," said his sister severely, "*will* you make yourself some use in the world, and take this tea-cup?"

"Mr. Hamilton, can you spare me *one* of those lovely china-roses that grow by the garden gate? They exactly match my dress," said Daisy.

"They are so blighted with caterpillars," interposed Rachel. "You would not like to wear them, I'm sure."

"Then come round the garden, and we'll try to find something without a caterpillar," suggested Jack.

"There, Rachel, it's no use, my dear," said William Burton, as he lingered a moment behind the rest of the party. "Best give Jack his head. She's a very pretty young creature, and he might do worse. Make up your mind to it, and put a cheerful face on the matter. You can't find perfection—at least, not since I married Ellen—and if you did, Miss Perfection *might* object to Jack, you see."

When Jack came in from the garden—and it took Miss Benson quite twenty minutes to select just the right shade—he walked straight into the dining-room, whistling absently, and thinking—I must confess—of nothing more romantic than the price he had given for a colt at Lyttleton Market. The first thing he saw was a mass of golden hair, half-covering the sofa-cushion, and lying in waves on the floor. Its owner opened her eyes, and seeing Jack, said languidly—

"Mr. Hamilton, I think."

Jack bowed.

"I am giving your sister a great deal of trouble, but this sudden heat is rather trying."

"Rachel can never find nursing a trouble," said Jack; "especially if she sees her patient doing the nurse some credit. You must have been very ill."

"Yes; but now I am fairly on the road to convalescence. It is only a violent headache, and," she added, looking up at Rachel with a bright smile, "you are already charming it away."

"Your head is cooler with those thick braids unfastened.—Hold this bottle for me, Jack. Those tiresome people! I couldn't make them see how much I wanted them to go. The cups of tea they had! I hardly spoke a word to them at last, but it all made no difference. I was longing to be back with you. Your poor head is burning."

"Rachel is using her sovereign remedy for headache, I see," said Jack. "It is a great secret. When she mixes it, the doors are most carefully locked. She roams about by moonlight, getting herbs from all sorts of uncanny places—churchyard walls, and——"

"Nonsense, Jack! What I get from the churchyard is pellitory. This headache lotion is made from rosemary, elder-flowers, and several other cooling things."

"It has eased the pain already, or else the virtue must be in your fingers—they are so tender and strong."

To Jack's astonishment, his sister stooped and kissed the thin cheek. Rachel's kisses were rare and precious, seldom bestowed—except, perhaps, on babies or exceptionally pretty kittens. Turning to him—

"Go and have your tea now," she said; and he meekly obeyed.

"Rachel is clearly bewitched!" he thought.

And it really seemed that she was. The days passed by, and every slight improvement in Miss Coverdale's health was proudly remarked by her delighted nurse. The two women, such opposites in many respects, were strangely attracted to each other. How delicious it was to feel health and strength coming back on the warm June breezes, the sweet country air, touched with a breath of the not far distant sea and the newly mown hay in the meadows!

Olivia dreamed many an hour away in the garden, her book lying unheeded by her side. She had never seen such a garden. In the palmy Stanborough days its formal yew hedges had been carefully trimmed, and the turf walks were like velvet. But its present master was "too good a farmer to be a good gardener," as the people round would tell you, and just now, when everybody was wanted in the fields, there was certainly an air of sweet neglect—to put it mildly. Great bushes of York and Lancaster roses showered their petals on the grass, the scarlet lychnis looked down on the fluffy groundsel at its feet, and tall white lilies vied with their orange cousins and the Canterbury bells on the opposite border. The thrifty farmer, Jack's predecessor, had planted currant and gooseberry bushes close by, and thyme and sage were

fraternising with London Pride, white pinks, and hen-and-chicken daisies. There was a pleasant stir and bustle about the place: one could hear Rachel's clear, cheerful tones, and the distant chatter of the hay-fields, Martha scolding the much-enduring "boy," and Athaliah tripping down the walks with her great fruit-basket.

Mr. Hamilton had leisure moments—and, indeed, who could deserve them more? He would be up and in the fields at what seemed to Olivia's town ideas the middle of the night—him Olivia had mentally labelled and shelved as commonplace and countrified, decidedly inferior to his sister. She admitted that he was good-natured, for when, after a fortnight's stay, Olivia had suggested returning to Mrs. Pudeney and the Hall Farm, and heard that William Burton had installed a cousin's family there for the summer, Rachel warmly urged her to stay with them and allow her to complete the cure she was so much interested in, Jack had very heartily seconded his sister's request.

The Manor House was anything but dull. Neighbours were constantly dropping in—burly farmers and cattle-dealers, the latter so shabby and moneyed—to discuss farming prospects, or to haggle over the price of ewes. How puzzling some of their terms were to Olivia! She studied their visitors as she would have done Australian aborigines, as Jack laughingly told Rachel one day. Then the farmers' wives and daughters would drive over, and the conversation would turn to the ridiculous price Smith the grocer was giving for butter, the scarcity of eggs, or the pounds of strawberry jam made in a single morning. The clergyman's wife avoided these topics as far as possible in talking with Olivia, and Mrs. Benson had her girls to discuss. It was wonderful how often it was necessary for Daisy to run up to the Manor, and so odd that it should happen that Mr. Hamilton was able to walk back with her and stay for some tennis. Poor Rachel! Her annoyance was so evident on these occasions that Ellen Burton was obliged to try and comfort her a little; but what consolation was there in being told that Daisy was really charmingly blooming and pretty, and apparently extremely happy in Jack's society?

"Olivia dreamed many an hour away in the garden."—*p.* 508.

Mr. Hobson's nephew, Lynton, was accountable for much of the festivity going on in the village. He was paying a long farewell visit before leaving for Calcutta, and his kind-hearted aunt—with whom he was a special favourite—very sensibly, as he considered, showed her grief at his approaching departure by arranging a succession of picnics, tennis and boating parties. Of course Jack was in great requisition; but Rachel, who hated to be always meeting her pet aversion, generally declined these invitations, making Miss Coverdale her excuse for staying at home. Lynton had walked over to Stanborough Manor one afternoon, and joined the rest of the party, who were having tea under the great elm on the lawn.

"We have been discussing the strange customs that seem to linger on in this part of the country," said Miss Coverdale, as Lynton, supplied with a plate of strawberries and cream, stretched himself on the grass at her feet. "Mr. Hamilton's horse trod on a nail as he drove home from Lyttleton Market yesterday, and the groom came running from the stables to ask for the nail. 'To put it in grease,' he said, 'or the wound would not heal properly.' Mr. Hamilton must have had some faith in it, for the offending nail had been carefully kept in his pocket after it had been drawn out."

Jack laughed.

"Else my horse's lameness would have been considered a settled thing, Miss Coverdale. Not one of the men on the farm but would say it was no use bathing or dressing the place if that nail hadn't been put in grease."

"It seems incredible—within fifty miles or so of London!" exclaimed Olivia.

"Well, School Boards will not leave any superstition or originality either for the next generation," said Rachel. "Positively Athaliah was repeating something from the *Merchant of Venice* in the dairy this morning."

"Ah, of course: 'The quality of mercy is *not* strained,' alluding to the milk. I hope Sam Smith saw the point," remarked Jack drily.

* * * * * *

"I must call you Rachel, if you will let me," said Miss Coverdale one evening. "It is such a sweet-sounding name, and so unusual. My favourite heroine in fiction is a Rachel."

The rain was pouring in torrents; fine weather was badly wanted for the barley. Mr. Hamilton's sister was, therefore, careful in the choice of subjects for conversation, as Jack fidgeted about between the window and the bright fire which made the large old room so comfortable.

"You mean Rachel Esmond, of course?" he said, throwing himself into an arm-chair.

"You have read 'Esmond'?" said Miss Coverdale, opening large eyes of astonishment.

"Yes; I suppose my sister must have bartered a few score eggs for it with a higgler who had stolen a copy from a bookstall. Seeing it was print, she thought it would amuse me to spell it out in the long winter nights, when I couldn't do anything on the farm, Miss Coverdale," said Jack, frowning, and fiercely stirring the fire. "Why is it such a perfectly bewildering thing that I should be able to appreciate a book you like?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Jack!" interposed his sister. "Miss Coverdale could not know you were so fond of reading. You have been spending all your spare time at the Bensons', or with Lynton since she has been at the Manor.—Jack bought all Thackeray's works long ago with what he had saved from his pocket-money," she continued. "He read 'Esmond' aloud to me last autumn; I'm afraid I did not listen properly to the military parts; and *that* Rachel is just as unlike poor me as it is possible for two women to be," she said, laughing.

"My dear," said her brother, "you both have beautiful white arms and make excellent pastry."

"Silly boy!" said the delighted Rachel.

"Of course, *the* thing in which you are unlike Rachel Esmond is that she was so terribly jealous. You remember?" said Jack meditatively.

"Oh yes!" was the answer. "I'm thankful to say that never has been one of my faults. When one sees what misery it causes in families, one can't be too glad to be free from it."

"Miss Coverdale," said Jack, half-laughing, but rather cross, meeting Olivia's eyes, which were still fixed on him in too evident bewilderment, "I'm really glad to give you a little amusement, this hateful weather! You find the study of the wild Essex aborigines quite new and interesting, don't you? Have you never seen any before?"

"As you put the question so plainly, I *am* rather surprised," said Olivia. "Remember, I have always lived in town, with occasional visits to the sea or to my uncle's shooting-box in Scotland. For the last few years I have spent all the time I could spare in trying to help the poor—living two lives, in fact—in miserable homes, and the society I should meet in my aunt's drawing-room."

"And my sister and I hang like Mahomet's coffin—between heaven and earth!" said Jack. "It's a frightful position!"

Miss Coverdale slightly drew herself up; this young farmer was clearly forgetting himself.

"Jack has such democratic views," said Rachel, quite distressed.

"Very young men often hold them!" said Miss Coverdale crushingly; and her tone and manner suddenly showing Jack the ridiculous side of the matter, he smothered a violent inclination to laugh, and getting out the board, told his sister he would beat her at a game of chess. But this was not easy, and a determined fight, finished just as Lynton came in and announced that it had left off raining and that the wind had changed to the north, completely restored Mr. Hamilton's good temper.

"What a charming old room this is, Jack!" said Mr. Hobson; one of the great logs blazed up suddenly, shining on the ripples of Miss Coverdale's golden hair as she bent over her work. "But the wretch who put up that hideous mantel-piece ought to have been executed on the spot! It was that stupid old fellow who farmed the land before you took it, I suppose?"

"No; it was Philip Stanborough's doing," replied Jack; "and be careful what you say, for a very sensible young woman proposed covering the oak panels with a pretty light paper, to make the room more cheerful."

"Well, I didn't have my way, at all events," said Rachel.

Olivia positively shuddered. "Rachel," she said suddenly, her long white fingers holding up a most artistic piece of needlework, "I have been wondering what bazaar I should send this to. Will you let me finish it, and cover up that dreadfully vulgar marble thing? Look how well it accords with the general tone of the room."

"Thank you; it is lovely!" said Rachel warmly.

"Ah! I see traces of your fingers, Miss Coverdale, in the unearthing of those china bowls and the

arrangement of poppies in that quaint jar," said Lynton, who was on very good terms with Olivia.

Although Mrs. Hobson's nephew, he was a Cambridge man, and they had already discovered some mutual acquaintances.

"Miss Hamilton kindly lets me arrange the flowers for her. Everybody is so busy here, I often feel quite ashamed of my laziness! In spite of all the excuses you make for me, I shall not be able to play at being an invalid much longer," turning to Rachel with a very winning smile. "Miss Hamilton is the most clever and wonderful nurse I ever met. Mr. Hobson," she continued, "shouldn't you like to have been ill, and to fall asleep in a chamber draped with the purest white dimity, to be roused by clusters of white roses tapping on the lattice window, and to find the floor strewn with all sorts of sweet herbs with the morning dew on them, to be bruised and brushed up with imaginary dust by a bright, auburn-haired little maiden! Athaliah's first remark to me this morning, by the way, was—'Oh, if you please, 'm, would exit come from the same root as Exodus?'"

The young men laughed, but Rachel shook her head mournfully. "How dreadful! I can't think what will become of the poor girl," she said.

"I should like to take her back with me, and train her for my own maid," said Olivia, "if I only knew whether she would be happy away from country air and surroundings."

"I believe she would go anywhere with you. She is quite devoted, and told me once that when you talked it was just like the organ played low in church!" said Rachel, smiling.

"Could Athaliah have been reading Burke's description of his wife's voice?—do you remember it, Miss Coverdale? 'Her voice is a low, soft music, not formed to rule in public assemblies, but to charm those that can distinguish a company from a crowd; it has this advantage: you must come close to her to hear it," said Lynton, rather dreamily, gazing into the fire, and pulling his long moustache.

"Describes Miss Benson's voice exactly!" said Jack, in a tone of conviction.

"Daisy Benson's!" exclaimed Rachel. "You must be getting deaf, then, Jack! Her voice is dreadfully shrill and high-pitched. Mrs. Clarke once told me in confidence that it always gives her a nervous headache whenever Daisy comes to the Vicarage."

"But girls often speak in that quick, eager way, Rachel," said Olivia. "And little Daisy is so blooming and pretty; I noticed such a childlike quiver on her lips the other day when her mother had spoken rather sharply to her. She is very attractive; no wonder she gets rather more petting than is quite good for her. —Are you going, Mr. Hobson? Good-evening," said Olivia, receiving a grateful smile with his adieux. "He is evidently a great friend of your brother's. I said what I did about Miss Benson to try and make some amends, for, thinking it over, I have been rather rude this evening, I'm afraid, Rachel.—Oh, I thought you had gone, Mr. Hamilton."

"I came back for Lynton's stick—thank you, Miss Coverdale. I deserved all I got: I believe I was what the children call 'touchy;' but if you had fifty acres of fine barley—— Coming, Lynton!—Good-night, Rachel. Don't sit up for me."

Rachel took up her work with a mournful sigh as she heard the hall door close. "I know you meant it kindly, but it isn't right that Jack should be encouraged in such infatuation. I suppose Daisy is pretty, though I must confess *I* don't think her so; she has too much colour, and is sure to grow very stout, like her mother. Not that I am foolish enough to think only of beauty, but she is not suited to Jack in any one respect—a little superficial creature, with no ideas beyond tennis and new dresses, and just living for admiration. Jack is so far superior to all the young men about here; though I *am* his sister, I must say he is handsome; a first-rate farmer, and a dear, affectionate fellow, and yet ready to throw himself away on a conceited, affected little flirt. Men are incomprehensible!"

Olivia seemed to rouse herself after this conversation with Rachel, and to take an interest in some of the villagers who came up to the Manor, either for Miss Hamilton's famous remedies or to ask her advice in family difficulties. And one morning, when every feminine pair of hands was either picking or stringing red currants, Mr. Hamilton was amused to see Olivia resolutely fold up her mantel-cover, and draw a basket of fruit towards her. Rachel was quite disturbed. "The juice will stain your fingers so terribly," she said. "Look at mine!"

"But hadn't Aurora rosy finger-tips?" asked Jack, who, of course, was only tasting the currants.

"They don't keep *rosy*," said his sister. "They turn black.—No, I cannot let you touch them, Miss Coverdale."

"Athaliah, will you bring me a basin and cloth?" said Olivia heroically.

"Oh! and please, 'm, where I used to help before I came here, the lady always had a silver fork, and then she didn't get at all messy. She held the end of the stalk like this, miss," continued Athaliah, bringing a fork and illustrating her theory.

"Capital," said Olivia, looking relieved, and daintily picking out a bunch. "And now, Mr. Hamilton," she continued brightly, as Athaliah went off into the kitchen, "as you don't seem particularly busy, will you kindly look out the account of Aurora's fingers in Lemprière's Dictionary, and read it aloud to us? I'm certain Athaliah will be asking me all about her, and I must keep my character for infallibility as long as possible."

"Here come Mrs. Hobson and Lynton. He's better than any dictionary," said Jack lazily; and after the usual greetings—

"Now, Lynton, Miss Coverdale wants some information about Aurora."

"Miss Coverdale need only consult her mirror," said Lynton, making a grand bow.

"Is that the way you answered your examination papers, Mr. Hobson?" asked Olivia, with a pretty blush.

"Well, my aunt will know all about her," said Lynton mischievously.

"I never knew any *person* of that name, my dear, but your uncle used to call our old brown mare so. Her breath was very short going up-hill. That reminds

"'Uncle Jack, mother says I'm to stop with you.'"—*p.* 513.

me, Rachel: can you tell me how to make that drink for asthma? I couldn't remember how much laudanum—or was it peppermint?"

"Oh dear, Mrs. Hobson!" said Rachel, horrified. "Don't *attempt* to mix it yourself. I will give you any number of bottles; but it would be dreadful to put in the wrong ingredient!"

"Well then, dear, send me a bottle or two, please. John Clover's mother-in-law has either asthma or jaundice—I couldn't quite understand which—and he was quite satisfied when I said I would ask you about some stuff for her. You are much more believed in than any doctor, Rachel," said Mrs. Hobson.

"If I may have another fork, I could help Miss Coverdale," remarked Lynton. "But I shall want a lesson. Must I hold the fork or the bunch of currants in my right hand?"

"Miss Benson, if you please, 'm!" announced Athaliah.

Olivia's slender fingers were guiding Mr. Hobson's, which were unaccountably stiff and awkward, and Daisy decidedly refused to shake hands, as his were quite too awfully sticky, she was sure. She therefore joined Mr. Hamilton in the window-seat, and was soon deep in most confidential talk. I must confess that Rachel was trying to listen to this as well as to Mrs. Hobson's description of an improved threshing-machine that her husband intended to buy. Jack, of course, asked her a great many questions as soon as their visitors had left, and professed astonishment at his clear-headed sister's alarming confusion of ideas.

* * * * * *

"How very different it is to visit the country poor!" Olivia remarked one day, after a long afternoon spent with Rachel in driving through leafy lanes, where sprays of honeysuckle still lingered in the hedges, and delicate harebells peeped out of long grasses and brambles. "We have called at several cottages and small farm-houses, and there seemed such an air of substantial comfort and even beauty about some of the homes. I could not help contrasting them with my London poor."

"Then I wish you would go round and give lectures advising them to stay in the country," said Jack bluntly. "It is dreadful to see the empty cottages in some of the villages round."

"Not but what we have poverty and misery in the country; but at least they can have fresh air," said Miss Hamilton.

"Rachel has evidently shown you only the most picturesque cottages, and the pretty, well-behaved people. You saw nothing of the miserable hovels at Mill End and Punter's Row, did you, Miss Coverdale?"

"Of course I did not take Miss Coverdale into such bad air. You know there are several cases of diphtheria there, Jack! How could you think of such a thing?"

"I don't wish you to have a false impression, that's all," said Jack, turning to Olivia; "and it makes me so angry to hear of nothing but work among the London poor. People with no particular ties leave the small country towns and villages, and take up charitable work there; and it's considered very noble and beautiful of them, when their duty, as *I* consider

it, would be done much better if they rented some of the large farmhouses—I could show you a dozen in a morning's drive, standing empty—and live and work amongst our neglected villages. Why, the few farmers who do drag on have as much as they can do to keep their own heads above water. Stay for a winter amongst us, and see for yourself, Miss Coverdale. I 'm one of the guardians for this parish, and don't speak without book. Why should all the more cultivated people in the rural districts inevitably drift up to London, I wonder?"

"I had no idea things were so bad now," said Olivia.

"It's a blissful ignorance, no doubt, Miss Coverdale," said Jack grimly. "That 'voiceless misery' of our country poor makes my blood boil to think of! In London men will strike and agitate, and get their wrongs aired in the newspapers; but the poorer farmers here *cannot* keep on many of their labourers in the winter, and what is there for the poor fellows to do? I daresay my arguments are not logical. If they can't get enough work here they *must* go to the larger towns, you will say. Life hardly seems worth living for many of those half-starved mothers, with their large families of hungry children. Several of my brothers have emigrated, and keep asking me to join them, but I must stick to the old country, though it 's miserable work sometimes. I beg your pardon; I did not mean to give you a chapter of autobiography," said Jack, checking himself.

"I am very grateful to you for telling me," said Olivia, looking up with sad eyes. "And it is good to see anyone so thoroughly in earnest. You have given me a great deal to think over."

"Do you remember the old farmhouse with the Virginia creeper that you admired so much?" said Rachel suddenly. "No one lives there but a looker—bailiff, you would call him; why not take it for two or three years, and work amongst the people? There are so many to help in London!"

"Miss Coverdale would miss the society she has been used to all her life," said Jack, looking at her keenly.

"Yes, I am afraid I should. Forgive me, but in the country people discuss each other, don't you think? and take so little interest in the larger side of life—the mental atmosphere is apt to grow rather stifling.—Dear Rachel, I have never found *you* petty or gossiping. You don't mind my speaking so plainly?"

"As though I didn't know all that far better than you could tell me," said Jack hotly. "But settle down amongst us, you, and women like you, and give us some of your culture and larger views. Self-sacrifice is abnegation of what we like best, surely, all the world over——"

At that moment the door opened, and a little voice said—

"Uncle Jack, mother says I 'm to stop with you and Aunt Rachel a whole week!"

"If they will have you, Bessie!" exclaimed Mrs. Burton, laughing, as she followed her little daughter into the room. "How I've startled you all! The hall door stood open, and we came straight in. Why, Miss Coverdale, how well you are looking! We 'll make our fortunes by building a sanatorium. You are quite an advertisement for our bracing air!—Bertie is coming home for the holidays, and has had the mumps, Rachel, so I thought you would keep Bessie out of the way."

"Of course, Ellen," said Rachel. "It is such a long time since you have sent any of the children over."

"Oh, I did not want them to worry Miss Coverdale," was the answer; and Olivia knew in a moment, as any woman would, that Mrs. Burton didn't like her, and had plainly told Rachel that she did not approve of her boarding plans.

"Where is William?" asked Jack.

"Here he comes," said Ellen. "He was speaking to Sam about the cob.—William"—as Mr. Burton's large form appeared in the doorway—"did you ever see anyone so much improved as Miss Coverdale?"

Rachel flushed with annoyance.

"Glad to hear you are better," said Mr. Burton. "Rachel, my dear, you are more blooming than usual. Jack must have hard work to keep his housekeeper."

Miss Hamilton was used to this form of compliment, and passed it over with a slight laugh.

"Ellen has told you the news, of course. I allowed her three minutes' start on purpose."

Ellen gave him a significant and warning glance, and said—

"Oh! there are two or three things I wanted to speak to you about, Rachel. Shall we go in the garden? It 's a pity to stay in the house such a lovely evening."

When Miss Hamilton joined Olivia and Jack at supper, she looked much disturbed.

"Well, Rachel, and what was Ellen's wonderful piece of news?" he asked.

"I will tell you presently," was the embarrassed answer.

"No; let's have it at once."

"Oh, Jack! it just shows I was right, after all, and she wasn't worth caring for. But I 'm dreadfully sorry for you! That really wicked little flirt, Daisy Benson, was married yesterday afternoon, quite privately, to Lynton Hobson."

There was a moment's awful silence; then Jack pushed away his plate, and moaning, "Oh, Rachel! what is cold roast duck to me now?" buried his head in his hands.

Olivia broke into a merry, irrepressible laugh. She met Rachel's hurt and astonished "Miss Coverdale!" with—

"Oh! I am so sorry, Rachel. I couldn't help it; but, don't you see? Mr. Hamilton knew all about it before!"

Then Jack looked up, his eyes sparkling with fun.

"Yes, Rachel, I really hope to survive the blow," he said. "It was too bad to have worried you all this time, but you ought to have known I shouldn't fall in love with a Daisy Benson."

"You never cared for her, then, after all, Jack?" asked Rachel, forgiving him on the spot.

"Of course I didn't," said Jack; "but Lynton had

a bad attack. I never saw a fellow so far gone—over head and ears! And there was some complication about another affair—an elderly lady whom he fancied he admired years ago. So, till he could get free of that engagement, he implored me to see that nobody else 'pluckt his little spring flower,' as he called Miss Benson in one of his sonnets. The poems I have had to convey to her would fill a good-sized volume. About a fortnight ago the other lady discovered that she and Lynton were not congenial. She had a capital offer from a rich widower; and you know the rest of the story."

"But I don't at all like your cynical way of speaking of the other lady, Jack. She was very badly treated," insisted Rachel. "I only hope Lynton will make Daisy a good husband. Taking a sweet, affectionate child like that from her home and friends! Poor little thing! I should be very sorry to think of tears on that bright little face."

Jack could not help giving Rachel a comical glance as he resumed his supper, with the remark—

"Ah! I thought, when I told you that, you would be able to appreciate Mrs. Lynton Hobson."

(To be concluded.)

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

MAY 15TH. A SONG OF PRAISE.

To read—Ps. ciii. Golden Text—ver. 2.

INTRODUCTION. A Psalm of David, probably written in his old age. An outburst of praise, first for individual mercies, then for general ones. It speaks especially of God's tenderness and compassion to man's sin and weakness.

I. PERSONAL MERCIES. (1—5.) Bless the Lord.

Man's whole being must show forth praise. How?

His *body*—by living to God's glory. (1 Cor. x. 31.)

His *mind*—by using its powers for good.

His *soul*—by training it for eternity.

What has God done to call forth this praise?

He has healed bodily diseases—*e.g.*, when He raised up King Hezekiah. (2 Kings xx. 5.)

Has saved life—*e.g.*, David from Saul. (1 Sam. xviii. 11.)

Has forgiven sin—*e.g.*, David upon his repentance after killing Uriah and taking his wife. (2 Sam. xii. 13.)

Has given abundant blessings. (2 Sam. xii. 8.)

Result of all—satisfaction and contentment.

Renewal of youth—mounting up of the soul to heaven.

Seen in David's long life and dying words. (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—4.)

II. GENERAL MERCIES. (6—18.) How shown?

Deliverance to the oppressed—*e.g.*, to the Israelites groaning under Pharaoh's yoke. (Ex. iii. 7, 8.)

Revelation of Himself—*e.g.*, to Moses at Mount Sinai (Ex. xxxiii. 13); and to the Israelites by mighty deeds.

Slowness to anger. Numerous examples—

Pharaoh destroyed only after ten trials.

Israelites borne with in many murmurings—*e.g.*, for food (Ex. xvi. 3); for water (Ex. xvii. 3); making golden calf (Ex. xxxii. 10, 14).

Forgiving sins—*e.g.*, David's pride in numbering the people. (2 Sam. xxiv. 16.)

Pitying man's weakness. Why?

His body made of dust—of no account.

His moral nature weak, evil continually. (Gen. viii. 21.)

His life soon over, like withered grass.

But God's mercy endures for ever. (Ps. cxxxvi. 1.)

His Nature is altogether righteous.

LESSON. Blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God.

III. CALL TO PRAISE. (19—22.) God is a great King.

He rules in heaven and earth.

The higher order of angels must praise.

For their strength and knowledge are from Him.

The lesser angels must praise Him also.

For they minister to the wants of His saints.

All God's creatures, everywhere, must praise.

LESSON. Bless the Lord, O *my* soul.

MAY 22ND. DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS.

To read—Dan. i. 8—21. Golden Text—ver. 8.

INTRODUCTION. Going to have four lessons from Book of Daniel. The beginning of chap. i. tells how Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (606 B.C.), and the people and treasures of the Temple taken to Babylon. Daniel and other royal princes exiles with the other people. This the beginning of the seventy years' captivity foretold by Jeremiah.

I. PRINCES IN EXILE. (8—16.) What a miserable condition of things for them! The last Jewish king had perished miserably. (Jer. xxii. 19.) They themselves, members of royal family, prisoners in a strange land—their temple destroyed, their priests scattered. But all was not over for them. The king ordered such of them as were suitable to be brought up at his court, hoping to make them useful. What was done to them?

They were taught the Chaldæan language.
Food and wine provided for their maintenance.
Received three years' higher education.
New heathen names given to them.
But a difficulty arose about the food.
They must not eat meat connected with idols.
Nor may they drink much wine.
So Daniel, a boy of fourteen, makes a request.
(He had already gained favour with his keeper.)
May they simply have lentils (beans) for meat?
And fresh water only for drink?
They can trust God to keep them in health.
What was the result, after ten days' trial?
Their *bodies* had increased in health.
Their *minds* had grown in wisdom.
Their *faith* in God was strengthened.
For three years they lived on plain fare.

LESSON. I will keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.

II. PRINCES IN FAVOUR. (17—21.) Three years passed.

The young princes were brought before the king.
He talked with them and tested them.
All had gained vast stores of knowledge.
Daniel's special skill lay in interpreting visions and dreams.
But they take no merit to themselves.
God has given them this great wisdom.
The king finds them far wiser than all others.
So he assigns them places at court.
They prosper throughout his whole reign.
Remind of similar instances—
Joseph, taught by God, interprets Pharaoh's dreams. (Gen. xli. 28.)
Wisdom given to build the Tabernacle. (Ex. xxxvi. 1.)
Solomon receives wisdom to rule. (1 Kings iii. 12.)

LESSONS. 1. The Lord giveth wisdom.
2. God's blessing follows uprightness.
3. Man's favour rewards diligence.

MAY 29TH. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

To read—Dan. ii. 31—49. *Golden Text—Heb. iv.* 13.

INTRODUCTION. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, troubled by very vivid dreams, which, however, vanish from his memory on waking. (Ps. lxxiii. 20.) He calls together his wise men of all classes (ver. 2), and bids them tell him both his dream and its meaning, offering rewards for success and holding out threats for failure (ver. 4). They protest in vain that the king should tell his dream and then they could explain it. The king in cruel fury orders *all* the wise men of Babylon to be slain. Daniel and his three friends are sought for amongst the others. They betake themselves to prayer (ver. 18). Daniel in a vision is shown the king's dream.

I. THE DREAM. (31—35.) A great image.
Its *size*—colossal, as a mountain.
Its *form* (or look)—terrible in appearance.
Its *materials*—gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay.
A stone made without hands strikes the image.
It is broken to pieces and is blown away as dust.
The stone becomes a mountain, and fills the earth.

II. THE INTERPRETATION. (36—45.) Describes the future history of this great nation.

The image represents four great nations.
Head of gold. The kingdom of Babylon.
Nebuchadnezzar chief among earthly kings.
God has given him wisdom, power, and honour.
Mighty nations acknowledge his sovereignty.
Silver breast and arms—kingdom of Persia.
Second greatest kingdom of the world then.
(As silver is the next precious metal to gold.)
Darius, its king, conquered Babylon thirty-five years later. (Ver. 31.)
Belly and thighs of brass—kingdom of Greece.
Combination of strength and sluggishness.
Energetic Greeks combined with Asiatic feebleness.
Signifies conquest of Persia by Alexander. (xi. 2.)
Feet of iron and clay. Kingdom of Rome.
Twofold in its form; divided into East and West.
Mighty in power, yet joined with weakness.
Conquered Greece—became ruler of the world.
The new Kingdom—different from all the others.
It is God's own Kingdom—set up by Him.
Made without hands—of Divine origin. (Heb. ix. 11.)
Spreads wide from small beginnings. (St. Matt. xiii. 32.)
Shall destroy all other kingdoms. (1 Cor. xv. 25.)
Shall last for ever and ever. (St. Luke i. 33.)

III. THE HONOUR. King makes obeisance.
Does Daniel every possible honour.
Acknowledges his God as Lord of all.
Makes him ruler over all Babylon.
For his sake promotes his three friends.

LESSONS. 1. The omniscience of God. (Golden Text.)
2. The future triumph of Christ's Kingdom.
3. The honour given to God's servants.

JUNE 5TH. THE FIERY FURNACE.

To read—Dan. iii. 13—25. *Golden Text—Is. xliii.* 2.

INTRODUCTION. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, increased in power. Had acknowledged God in word, but not in deeds. Became proud and arrogant. Had been victorious in many lands. Returning

from conquests, set up huge golden image of himself (100 feet by 10 feet wide) in plains of Dura, and commanded all his subjects to worship under penalty of death for disobedience.

I. THE REFUSAL. (13—18.) Who alone refuse?

Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

(Daniel himself probably ill or away.)

Why did they refuse? Because—

They cannot serve Nebuchadnezzar's gods.

To do so would break first commandment.

Nor give divine homage to an image.

To do so would break the second commandment.

God can deliver them from death. But even if He does not, they are not afraid to die.

Contrast their language with the king's.

He, bold and arrogant, defies their God. (Ver. 15.)

They, calm and trustful, quietly await the issue.

Two marked characteristics to be noticed—

Their *strong faith*—like that of Abraham (Gen. xxii.)—must obey God's word, even if lose all things.

Their *calm courage*—fearing nothing, except to sin.

LESSON. Who is he that can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?

II. THE DELIVERANCE. (19—25.) End soon comes.

King loses his temper at being defied.

Orders furnace to be heated sevenfold.

The three men are cast bound into the fire.

They fall down bound amid the flames.

The flames reach and devour their guards.

The king and all his courtiers watch.

Suddenly the king calls out in amazement.

Three men were cast in *bound*—but lo! there are *four* men *loose* walking in the fire!

The fourth is like a son of the gods!

It is true—God has seen, noted, saved.

He has sent His angel to help and deliver.

The fire is His creation, and obeys His bidding.

Rest of the chapter tells how the men emerged from the fire safe—not a hair singed—how the king blessed God and owned His power.

LESSONS. 1. *The power of firmness.* Boldness in doing right—as the Apostles, when ordered to cease preaching Christ. (Acts v. 40.)

2. *The power of faith.* Firm trust in God's protecting power not misplaced—as St. Peter, when sinking in the waves. (St. Matt. xiv. 30.)

3. *The power of God.* Almighty power put forth to defend His people—as when Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea. (Ex. xv. 19.)

JUNE 12TH. THE DEN OF LIONS.

To read—Dan. vi. 16—28. *Golden Text—ver.* 23.

INTRODUCTION. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, now dead. His grandson, Belshazzar, had been slain and his kingdom taken by Darius the Median, on the night of his impious feast. Daniel had interpreted to Belshazzar the meaning of certain mysterious words which appeared on the wall of the banqueting-room, and foretold Belshazzar's fate. This gained him the favour of Darius, who made him his head Vizier or Prime Minister. This caused envious feelings against Daniel on the part of the other presidents and princes, and led them to seek his death. But they could find nothing to accuse him of, except that he worshipped the true God. So they persuaded the king to make a decree that for forty days no one should ask any favour of any God or man except of the king, under pain of being cast into a den of lions. Daniel, disregarding the decree, prayed openly three times a day as before. The king would have delivered him, but no law or decree once made could be altered.

I. THE KING'S SENTENCE. (16—24.) *Notice the prisoner.*

An old man, over eighty, led forth to death.

Cast into the den, or cave, of lions.

He is calm, peaceful, full of faith.

The princes are eagerly watching him.

They have triumphed over this rival.

He is now for ever put out of the way.

Notice the king's conduct—

He keeps his word, according to the law.

But he speaks cheering words to the prisoner.

God, whom He serves, will deliver him.

Then he and his lords seal up the den of lions.

All return home—the king to fast, they to exult.

Which is happier now—the king or Daniel?

The king is miserable, can neither eat nor sleep.

Early morning comes—the king goes out in haste.

Is it possible that Daniel can be still alive?

He breaks the seal and calls out to Daniel.

Oh, the relief of hearing him answer!

God *has* kept him safe and unhurt.

He has had an angel visitor at night. (Acts xxvii. 23.)

He has been comforted, cheered, preserved—because he had been void of offence both to God and man.

The king turns in wrath to Daniel's accusers.

They shall die the death they planned for Daniel.

Their whole families shall share their fate.

LESSONS. 1. Evil shall hunt the wicked to overthrow him.

2. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

II. THE KING'S DECREE. (25—28.)

Published in all parts of his vast empire.

All men are to fear the God of Daniel. Why?

He is the living and unchangeable God. (Ps. xc. 1.)

His Kingdom the greatest and most steadfast.

His power almighty in heaven and earth.

Results. 1. Prosperity of Daniel.

2. Spread of true religion.

LESSONS. 1. No weapon formed against thee shall prosper.

2. The righteous shall flourish as a palm-tree.

3. He shall reign for ever and ever.

A CORN-COLOURED KITTEN.

BY MARY HAMPDEN.

"Jake blacked boots by Mr. Verr's bedside."—*p.* 518.

JAKE was his name, and he was the child of the lodging-house. His mother had died under its roof when he was a baby, and he had been allowed to grow up there.

Mrs. Crisp's establishment was not of ambitious proportions, nor was it clean, comfortable, or in any way attractive; but as Jake had never known another abode, he had his pride in it, and would boast of "our 'ouse" to all small boys of his acquaintance. Large boys resented the superiority of his tone when he mentioned the select establishment in Border Street, Tottenham Court Road; so Jake, being of a peaceable disposition, reserved his descriptions of its elegancies for an undersized or strictly juvenile audience.

"Tell you wot it is," he would say, with voluble shrillness: "guess the Queen don't 'ave much better bacon for breakfast — an' there's meat *regler* on Sundays!"

The reputation of London House gained greatly by dint of Jake's testimonials—at least among citizens of ages varying from three to ten years.

Jake himself was twelve, as near as he knew, yet he looked no more than seven or eight, owing to his diminutive figure. He often surveyed his own small form in the parlour looking-glass, and wished he were bigger: it was his ambition to grow into a "great man wot can do enythin'!"

Every inmate of the lodging-house had some work to do, and Jake's place was no sinecure. He had to mind the babies, black the boots, wash the plates, knives and forks, and scrub the stairs down. But it

was in the evenings that he got his holiday-time, when the boarders were out and the babies in bed. He was not allowed to go into the rooms, but he might sit on which of the thirty-seven stairs, from top to basement, he chose: and this was luxury, thought appreciative Jake.

Poor little London waif! He was fortunate in this—that he had a home where he was tolerated, if not loved: it was not his lot to live shelterless; and though food was often scarce at Mrs. Crisp's, it was enough to keep body and soul together. But Jake had to bear hardships with all he could muster of heathen stoicism—when his little heart was very sore with the griefs of childhood, he had to learn to suffer in silence and alone, for no one had ever taught him to believe in the tender watchfulness of his Heavenly Father.

One year when many members of a family of his acquaintance had been going into the country "gleaning," Jake had been allowed to accompany them. That was the only occasion on which he had seen fields and flowers, and during those blissful three weeks he had found a treasure.

Other boys had been known to discover coins, penknives, shoe-buckles, buttons, or even pipes, in the dust-heaps, but Jake's treasure was far beyond the value of any of these things, being alive.

Among the wheat-sheaves he had caught a stray kitten of a golden colour: a tiny mewing creature, with white velvet nose and feet, and claws as smooth as ivory.

Jake had hidden the wee animal under his coat—keeping out of the way of his friends, for fear they should take it from him—feeding it on half his own scanty rations, and sleeping with it cuddled close to him.

No one near seemed to be searching for a lost kitten, so Jake concluded that this was just a waif like himself; though it is to be feared that his ideas of right and wrong were so hazy that a theft would not have weighed upon his conscience.

He preserved his secret long enough for the kitten to have taken such a liking to her new master that she could not be enticed away from him; and when he had returned to London House he had threatened to "strike" unless Mrs. Crisp accepted his pet as a boarder.

"I calls 'er Cornie, 'cause I found 'er atween the corn—an' if yer lets me keep 'er she 'll be a first-rate mouser, I knows she will; an' I 'll work twice as 'ard," he had added, finding that petitioning was likely to have more effect than threats.

Mrs. Crisp had yielded, giving a somewhat reluctant sanction to the presence of Jake's darling; and after that the boy had been happy.

Every night he would sit on the attic staircase, playing with Cornie. She soon grew into a fine cat, but not before he had found another friend.

The attic room was let to a "genelem" of refined appearance, who did not show the usual predilection of boarders for boxing the boy's ears. Jake was accordingly grateful.

Julian Verr was young—not above five-and-twenty: handsome, with a weak kind of good looks, fair-skinned, and softly spoken.

"Boy, I wish you would let me know when you see anyone coming up to my room," he asked on the first evening of his arrival; and Jake after that faithfully heralded the approach of numerous visitors who came at night. Two men were specially persistent: one a dark-faced ruffian, the other a little old man with a limp. Jake soon learned how to announce them—as "Big Ben" and "Toddling Tim."

Nicknames were plentiful in that region of the metropolis, yet Julian was always addressed as "Mister Verr."

"Guess 'e 's a swell in disguise," thought Jake, and mingled hero-worship with friendship.

"Mister Verr" often gave Jake money—"Mister Verr" threw his crusts on to the landing instead of out of window—"Mister Verr" capped the climax of his perfections in Jake's eyes by stroking Cornie, and saving a drain of milk from his tea for her consumption. The child's heart was won from the time he saw that action.

Months passed so, until a stronger tie drew the man and child together, for during the winter Julian fell ill, and there was no one to be relied upon to tend him but Jake. Mrs. Crisp was too busy.

Julian got well, but not until after a long struggle with death; then, in his weakness—he was never strong, mentally—he could not bear to be alone. Jake was willing to stay, so minded babies, blacked boots, and washed knives, plates, and forks by "Mister Verr's" bedside. The boarders were not "partikeler."

It was then, with Cornie sitting winking on the foot of the bed, that Julian took to telling Jake of his own past. The child was a believing listener, and drank-in the whole stream of truth and falsehood from his friend's lips. Julian had been "a real genelem," with horses, houses, servants of his own; the white beringed fingers on the counterpane told their part of the tale; and Julian had lost all through no fault of his own: misfortunes had overtaken him, so he said—irremediable misfortunes only.

When "Mister Verr" was well enough to go back to work—"law-copying," he called it, which he did in his own room—he soon grew richer. Once he gave Jake a shilling; but there were other times when work must have been slack, for Mrs. Crisp had to wait for her money.

One night, being in a hurry to announce "Big Ben," Jake entered his patron's room instead of telling his news from the doorway. Julian was at work, and Jake knew well the meaning of the machinery, plaster casts, and new half-crowns and florins which strewed the table.

That same night he had a long conversation with his friend and "Big Ben."

"I knows I *ought* ter tell on yer, but I *can't!*" the child cried, with tears in his eyes; for Jake's conscience hated secrecy which obliged the telling of untruths.

Then "Big Ben" had advised "thrashing" the boy into submission, but Julian was satisfied with Jake's renewed promise—

"No, I won't tell; for you 've been good to my cat, an' ter me. I 'd see Cornie killed sooner!"

Still, though evil doings seem to prosper largely in

the world for a time, they are attended by unwelcome possibilities; and one of those same possibilities approached "Mister Verr." Contrary to custom, he went out of town for a few days.

"This address will find me at Birmingham," he told Jake on the morning of departure; "and there is sixpence. You must send me a telegram if anything happens here. If you don't telegraph I shall know all is safe, and come back on Saturday evening."

For a whole three days Jake hoarded that sixpence; then, at seven o'clock on the Saturday morning, having been up for hours, temptation assailed him in the smell of a cook-shop over the way. The smell was of "hot sausages and mashed potatoes"—those delicacies dear to the juvenile palate.

Jake, like many a better creature, succumbed to temptation, and spent the sixpence.

Coming home by the time the boarders had left the house for daily toil, Jake went slowly up-stairs to fetch the babies. He could not help going softly, for he had no boots; and as he reached the attic staircase he heard voices in the room above—"Mister Verr's" room.

Some impulse made Jake draw back behind a cupboard door: from the dark corner he could watch and listen safely. Mrs. Crisp was vociferating in the choked tones of pathos, explaining that she could not be held in any way responsible for the avocations of her boarders.

"When did you say Mr. Verr is coming back?" a man's voice demanded.

"This very night. An' only ter think as——"

"Then I shall leave two of my men here to wait for him."

After more conversation, mingled with spasmodic sobs from Mrs. Crisp, she and the constable descended the stairs.

Jake drew back, shivering as the clothes of the officer of the law brushed his own rags.

Oh, that sixpence! It was gone past recalling, and miserable little Jake screwed his fingers into his eyes, where shone tears of bitter repentance.

What could he do for a sixpence? His clothes would not pawn, he knew, for he had tried to raise money on them once when food was scarce; he dared not beg, for the police were vigilant, and, once locked up, he would be utterly unable to repair the wrong he had done. Yet that telegram must be sent if his friend was to be saved. Jake knew the fate which threatens "coiners" who fall into the hands of the law.

And, beside the fact that Julian had been good to him, had he not solemnly sworn to be true?

"I won't tell on yer," he had said; "I'd see Cornie killed sooner!" and this was worse even than "telling."

Cornie?—Cornie was worth more than sixpence.

Jake's heart almost stood still as the awful thought occurred to him. He *could not* give up his pet.

Should he beg Mrs. Crisp for the money? No: that would be utterly useless, even if she did not guess the use for which he required it, and lock him indoors.

Jake crept out again into the street. There was no help for it—Cornie must go. There was, too, no time to be lost if "Mister Verr" was to get that telegram in time to prevent him from coming home in the evening.

Many a morning had Jake joyfully called Cornie to him from over the leads and chimney-pots. To-day he raised a wretched little face to the skies to watch for her. She might fail him; then he would not be to blame.

But no. The cat came and rubbed herself, purring softly, against her master's legs.

With a sob, Jake caught her in his arms, and set off at a run.

Half an hour later he emerged from Leadenhall Market without his cat, but with sixpence in his hand. Later still a telegram was sent to Julian Verr at Birmingham.

Jake hurried through the streets towards his home as soon as his errand was accomplished. His eyes were tear-blinded.

He had lost his one treasure: Cornie was gone for ever.

A beating was awaiting him at London House, he knew, but he was not frightened. He had deserted the babies, and his mind's eye could see the pile of dirty plates awaiting him on the stairs, so that the punishment would be deserved; and a little pain could not cause him the utter wretchedness which came with his sense of loss.

Still he hurried on, darting under horses, twisting in and out between the foot-passengers.

Reaching London House at last, he made a panting rush for the steps, but his feet tripped. Down he rolled, back to the roadway.

Big Ben, coming up half a minute later, found Jake lying in the gutter, the centre of attraction to a crowd of urchins. The child was unconscious.

Then Mrs. Crisp rushed out. She carried Jake off, and put him to bed in a cupboard.

Jake did not know anything of this, nor did he open his eyes until a horrible pain woke him, to find a doctor tying up his leg with splints.

"Guess I've done for myself," said Jake feebly. "Don't care, though. Don't want ter live wi'out Cornie."

Pain was constant; yet through all the weary hours he listened intently for any unusual sound. His friend might not have got the telegram in time; some mistake might have been made; and he could hear the tramp of the two policemen in the room above.

All through the evening the fear possessed him; then night came, telling Jake that Julian Verr was saved.

But Cornie was gone!

Oh, the utter misery of the little fellow lying there all alone with his suffering and his first bitter grief!

Sobbing, he moved, and in moving hurt himself anew. He felt faint—he must be going to die; and Jake knew nothing of death but that it meant "feelin' awful," and then a dark uncertainty.

"Reckon I'm a'most gone," he moaned to himself. "It 'urts dreffu1. I wish Cornie 'adn't got ter die; but maybe it don't feel as bad ter a cat as it do ter a boy."

He was cold, too, lying there, with scanty bedding, on the draughty floor. Cold—growing colder—until —what was that?

A warm breath, a hot tongue, smooth fur, and a little "miouw" of content.

It was Cornie come back! She had found her way home!

And even in that moment of joy the child's 'cute reasoning told him that no one would know where to look for her. She was his own again, and she was worth many sixpences, instead of the one which he had obtained for her. Yes, Jake felt he had been cheated, but Cornie had avenged him. She had helped him to save Julian Verr; now she had come to help him bear his pain.

He cried for joy as he cradled his cat to his cold little chest.

"Won't never 'ave no friend but yer, Cornie, that I won't," he whispered. "Ye're only a cat, but ye're better nor most folk, that yer be."

But when this resolution of Jake's was put to the test, it failed: he did make new friends.

Julian Verr did not escape justice, though he had baffled it for a time; and when his trial commenced, it was discovered that the notorious coiner was a young man with respectable relations. He was sentenced to the extreme penalty of the law for such cases; but a kind-hearted member of his family consented to rescue Jake from London House and the "care" (?) of Mrs. Crisp.

"Won't leave wi'out Cornie," was Jake's first remark upon hearing of the plan for his welfare.

But he was not asked to part with his corn-coloured cat.

THE RENDING OF THE HIGH PRIEST'S GARMENTS.

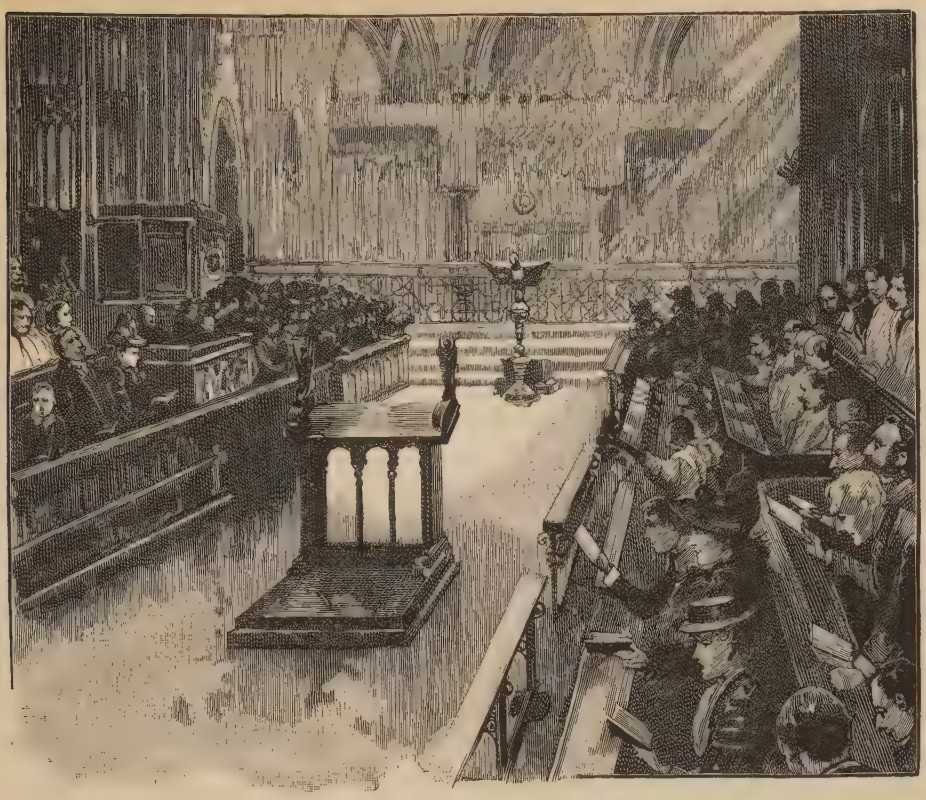
BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D.

"Then the high priest rent his clothes."—ST. MARK xiv. 63.

In Eastern lands the expression of grief, like that of every other emotion, is very violent and demonstrative. The mourner attests his sorrow by loud sobs, by beating his breast, tearing his hair, and casting dust upon his head. One of the commonest signs of affliction is rending the garments; and this act among the ancient Jews was carefully regulated by custom, according to the degree of relationship, just as convention has prescribed the mode in which mourning dress is to be worn among ourselves. According to the Mishna, or Jewish code of ritual, all the clothes in the case of a father or mother were to be rent from end to end, and after the expiry of thirty days to be sewn together in a loose hasty fashion, but never so completely mended as that the mark of the rending should be effaced. But for other relations it was sufficient if a handbreadth of the upper garment was torn, and this rent might be drawn together roughly after seven days, and closed so completely after thirty days as to entirely disappear.

This practice of rending garments in connection with mourning was universal among the ancient Jews. The only exception was in the case of the high priest. The rending of his clothes was forbidden by the Levitical law, on pain of death. "And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes, lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people." And as if to make this prohibition more emphatic, it was repeated on a later occasion: "The high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes." Provision was made expressly

"The mourner attests his sorrow by tearing his hair."



"Every worshipper a priest of God."—*p. 522.*

to prevent this rending; for not only was the robe of the ephod made of one piece throughout, but the hole for the head was bound round with woven work so strong that it was likened to the hole in a breastplate of armour. The reason why the rending of the high priest's clothes was so heinous an offence, and was so strictly forbidden, was that these clothes were the official robes, whose pattern was shown to Moses on the mount, which were consecrated for the most solemn purposes, and symbolised the most important spiritual truths. It was these garments that fitted the high priest for his high and holy duties. They dignified his person, covering him with a glory and a beauty which in himself he did not possess. When wearing them, he appeared in the presence of the Lord in a representative character, personating the whole nation of Israel, and upholding it in the beauty and glory required by God. To rend his clothes was, therefore, to destroy his representative character, and to abolish his priestly functions. The high priest who dared to appear in the holy place, or to engage in the ordinary services of the Tabernacle or Temple, with rent clothes, to enter into the presence of the holy God with what spoke so plainly of human passion, of imperfection, and deformity, would be guilty of as heinous a crime as the worshipper who dared to offer to the same infinitely pure Being a maimed and blemished sacrifice.

In the light of this explanation we see how very significant was the act of Caiaphas, which we are accustomed to read without taking any special notice of it. No sooner did the high priest hear Jesus, in reply to his own adjuration, confess that He was the Son of God, than he pronounced the judgment of blasphemy against Him, and in so doing rent his clothes. He thus broke the commandment of God, and exposed himself to the penalty of death. In the act of rending his clothes he showed how the law of God was made of none effect by the traditions of men. The prohibition was indeed made directly in connection with mourning for the dead; but we may be sure that if the rending of clothes was absolutely forbidden to a high priest on that most solemn of all occasions, it would not be allowed at any other time. God had, therefore, in the most solemn and emphatic manner, enjoined that on no account, in no circumstances whatever, was a high priest to rend his clothes, and that such an act was worthy of death. But so little was God's law esteemed, that it was set aside on this point, and an exception was made in the case of blasphemy. The traditionalists had made a rule for themselves that if any blasphemy were uttered in their presence, it was permissible to rend their clothes in order to show their extreme horror of it. They wished in this manner to make an ostentatious parade of their perfect orthodoxy, and their zeal for God's glory, that the applauding spectators might think how profound was their abhorrence of blasphemy when they thus showed

the very same outward sign of grief in regard to it as if they mourned for the dead. The robe which Caiaphas rent in affected and exaggerated horror at the so-called blasphemy of Christ, in order to gain the admiration of men, covered an unscrupulous Sadducee; one who did not even believe the fundamental truths which his office was instituted to proclaim, who swept away in his wholesale scepticism the entire spiritual world with its revelation of angels and spirits, and its facts of the resurrection and of the future life, and who confined his wishes and hopes exclusively to the realm of material and temporal things; and hence the sting of Christ's appropriate reply to his question. To the Sadducean high priest and his sycophants Jesus said, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." No wonder Caiaphas could not tolerate this avowal, which overturned all his cherished beliefs; and rending his linen robes in ill-omened horror, demanded of the assembly His instant condemnation.

We cannot help looking upon this rending of the high priest's clothes as a symbolical transaction, an acted parable, like Christ's blasting of the fruitless fig-tree. The literal and the figurative converged into one focus at the death of Christ. As that event drew near, each incident became significant, each act full of deeper meaning than appeared on the surface. As the new and heavenly things were about to be established, so the old things of the law were rapidly coming to their close in representative persons and things. You have seen in a very clear sky, when the old moon is in its last quarter, and there is but a mere rim, a narrow sickle of light, what is called the new moon, in its arms, in a dim phantom-like form. This spectral orb is in reality not moonshine, but earthshine — the light cast by our earth upon the surface of the moon; and you see there, as you can see nowhere else, the shadow of the whole of our own world changed from solid earth into a faint round orb in space. And so when the Jewish religion was waning fast in the spiritual sky, and becoming a mere crescent, the shadow of the grander religion of Christ was appearing more distinctly upon its disc; and the heavenly world, which Judaism had concealed even while it revealed it, was being manifested in its full-orbed completeness. We see how the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom in the hour that Jesus died upon the cross—signifying the termination of the age of shadows and symbols, and indicating that thenceforth substances and not shadows, realities and not mere types, were to be the possession of mankind: signifying also the opening of a direct way for every penitent worshipper into the very presence of God. We have a similar reason for supposing that the rending of the high priest's clothes was an equally significant act. Did it not indicate, in the parabolic way with which we are so familiar in Bible instruction, the abolition of all distinctions in the flesh, and the constituting of every worshipper a priest of God?

It is worthy of remark that the Jewish high-priesthood, in the person of Caiaphas, the last high priest, came to an end, not by the mere command of God, but by the act of man. It was the high priest's own hands that deprived him of the office. He rent his priestly garments, and thus figuratively condemned his office to death, and terminated its representative functions. And we see how sin was at the root of the divestiture. The Jewish high-priesthood ended, not because God had determined arbitrarily to supersede it by a more spiritual system, but because it had become entirely unworthy, because it had proved its utter incapacity to do what it was instituted to do. It could make nothing perfect. It was itself utterly corrupt. The men who assumed the office in its last expiring days were, one after another, aliens in blood, and feeling, and religion, and were mostly tyrannous, time-serving Sadducees. They were supported by the government, but detested by the people. The office was bought and sold, like any other merchandise. Caiaphas himself became titular high priest, not by the grace of God, but by the grace of the Roman procurator, whose tool and shadow he was. He had accepted the office for the sake of the splendour and emoluments connected with it. His religion was a cloak, worn not for the sake of the good that might be done in it, but for the sake of lording it over his fellows and making a worldly gain of his godliness. And when, as high priest, he could accuse the Holy One of Israel of blasphemy and condemn the Son of God to death, he put the crown on his guilt: he showed how unworthy he was to hold the office, and how corrupt and debased the office had become when it could be thus perverted to so wicked a purpose. And it is a very remarkable circumstance that Caiaphas uttered a last saying of far-reaching significance, "in which all the prophetic power of the Aaronic priesthood ceased for ever:" "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." "And this," adds the Evangelist, "spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Here the last official representative of the priestly order foretold the event that was to supersede the order by fulfilling the end of its appointment. And this was fitly done by one who knew not what he said, as the priesthood generally at the time had ceased to know the meaning and purpose of its own vocation.

We have thus seen how the Jewish high-priesthood came to an end in Caiaphas the last high priest, that the way might be prepared for the full disclosure of the great High Priest, who is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and who is made a priest for ever, after a new and eternal order. The type vanished when the reality appeared; the shadow disappeared when the substance stood forth. But Caiaphas was not in any sense a typical high priest. There was nothing of the true priesthood about him at all. He was a mere sham, a hollow mask from beginning to end, and therefore his office cost him no self-sacrifice. He had no yearning or travail of soul for the people to whom he ministered in holy things. He cared

nothing for their salvation; and he performed his duties in the most heartless and perfunctory way when he did not neglect them altogether. His high priesthood was a mere dress, which he could put off and on without any trouble. Even the rending of it, though it seemed to signify that he was sore pained and sorrow-stricken because of the supposed blasphemy that was uttered in his presence, did not cause any real pang to his heart. It was all a piece of acting, from first to last.

How vastly different was the true High Priest who came in the room of this false one! The character and conduct of Caiaphas presented a foil, a dark background, against which the character and conduct of Jesus stand out in brightest relief. Jesus glorified not Himself in being made an High Priest. He was appointed to the office by God. A body was prepared for Him, a garment of flesh, which He had to assume in order that He might qualify Himself to be our representative in the sight of Heaven. In that garment of flesh how many sinless infirmities did He endure; how many pains and sorrows did He experience! He took upon Him the form of a servant; He girded Himself with the linen towel to minister to man, to wash his feet, and to perform the most menial services. He was made under the law. What was free to Him as the Lord of all He was constrained to perform as a duty. He became bound by the obligations of the law, so that it could demand obedience of Him as its subject. And thus our Redeemer placed Himself in the condition of restraint which is so humbling to the human mind. But He was not only made under the law as to its commands; He was subjected to its penalty and curse. The sufferings He underwent were all endured as the penal consequences of sin. They were not the mere arrangements of Providence, but the expression of Divine displeasure. He identified Himself so thoroughly with us, that every pain He felt, every privation He endured, every sorrow He experienced, was part of the curse pronounced on man on account of transgression, and was suffered as its penalty. No wonder that He was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The garment of flesh which He assumed subjected Him to all the ills that flesh is heir to. The wearing of it cost Him dear. It was like the poisoned robe of Nessus, put upon Hercules, in the old fable, which entered his body and became part of his being, impossible to be cast off, and caused him fearful and increasing pain. His High Priest's robe was indeed a robe of dreadful self-sacrifice.

But something more was required than the endurance in the garment of flesh of all the sufferings that sin has brought into the world. That garment itself must be rent from end to end: and what that rending meant no tongue can tell. Of the death of the cross we can form no adequate conception. No freeman or Roman citizen could be condemned to suffer it. When any person had by the peculiar atrocity of his crime incurred this punishment, he was first deprived of his freedom and degraded from the rank he held as a citizen. It was regarded, therefore, as a punishment of the most ignominious character, and implied that the person who suffered it was suspended between heaven and earth as an object of abhorrence to both. Such was the sacrifice offered for our sins; such was the humiliation of Him who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He mourned truly for our transgressions by rending not His robe, but His very life. Contrast the rending of Christ's real garment of the flesh on the cross, on account of the laying on Him of the sins of the whole world, enduring our sorrow and death, and the mock rending of Caiaphas's hypocritical robe in over-acted mourning for a supposititious blasphemy; and what a vast difference separates the false high priest from the true! Caiaphas, without pain or toil or effort, without any real mourning, like the hired mourners who officiated at funerals for pay, rent his priestly clothes in the act of condemning Him who through that very death of pain and shame was to be raised up a High Priest for ever after the power of an endless life. Jesus, through the rent veil of His flesh, by the new and living way of His own expiatory death, entered into the Holy Place as our High Priest and Representative.

It behoved Christ to suffer in this way. It was necessary, in order that He should become our High Priest, that He should pass through the terribleness of death. We might have thought that the way of access to the Holiest was revealed at the beginning of Christ's life, when He whom we believe to be the God-man appeared in our world. When the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, we are apt to imagine that every barrier between God and man by that act of Divine condescension was removed, and that all that had to be done by Him as our Teacher, our Example, our Guide in the way of eternal life, was done. And yet we find that the mere sojourn of Christ on earth effected comparatively little. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. The world, in its blindness and sinfulness, recognised not its Lord. The human body of Jesus was emphatically a veil that obscured and hid His Divinity. So completely was He disguised in His human flesh, so perfectly did He become man and live our human life, that the disciples found it hard to believe in Him, and even Satan himself assailed and tempted Him in the wilderness and in the Garden of Gethsemane, only half knowing with whom he contended, and was thus made unwittingly the instrument, by bringing about the crucifixion of Christ, of his own great overthrow. It was necessary, therefore, that the veil of Christ's body should be rent by death, in order that He might be fully revealed to men. What wonderful disclosures of Heavenly wisdom and love were made by the crucifixion! Through the rent veil of Christ's flesh the Holy of Holies was revealed. Through the wounds of His body, as it were, the latent Godhead was revealed; the light of heaven shone through, as the sunlight shines through the chinks and crevices of a battered and ruined building. In the eclipse of the Sun of Righteousness we see His true character displayed; and just as the astronomer is enabled to examine the marvellous phenomena of the natural sun when the dark shadow of the earth seems to blot out its radiance, so all the Divine qualities of Jesus shine forth in brightest

glory through the appalling darkness of the crucifixion.

By being lifted up on the cross, Jesus fulfils His own words and draws all men to Him. Jesus could not have been our High Priest unless the garment of His flesh were rent. Clothed in His body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, while it remained intact and unimpaired, He would have been holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners. He would have been a star, and would have dwelt apart. Human beings would have felt themselves more rebuked than attracted by His presence, and would have exclaimed, like Peter in his hour of insight, "Depart from us, for we are sinful beings, O Lord!" They might have been dazzled by the glory which they beheld in Him, as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; but it would have shown the dark contrast between themselves and that glory so vividly that they would have grown to hate the very sight of it, as, in point of fact, they did hate Jesus for the silent reproach and condemnation of His presence. The standard of holiness which He exhibited seemed impossible of attainment by anyone else. As He was the ideal man—the pattern of perfection, man in the image of God as he was created—the very display of His perfection showed the impossibility of any communion with God without a similar perfection.

Through the intact veil of the Tabernacle of old the high priest alone once a year could pass into the inner shrine by pushing the veil aside, only to let it fall again when he had passed in, and so shut out all other worshippers. But when the veil of the Temple was rent from the top to the bottom, a way was opened for all who chose to enter. So through the intact veil of His perfect life Jesus Christ could have passed into heaven for Himself alone, leaving all His brethren of mankind outside. But through the rent veil of His flesh there is access for all to God and heaven. So long as Christ sits on the throne of glory, with the wounds of the cross upon His sacred body, so long is the way of access to the heavenly temple open to every one. Through the death of the Redeemer is the pathway to eternal life. That death removes every barrier between the sinner and God by atoning for human sin—renewing the lost spiritual life in man, and restoring his lost moral relation to God. Atonement leads to attunement. The title to the name is accompanied with the power to become the sons of God. The way to God is not only made, but the believer is fitted to approach by it. Clothed not in his own righteousness, which is as filthy rags, but in the pure linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints—the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Christ Jesus—he is made a priest unto God and the Father, and is fitted to draw near and yield himself a living sacrifice, which is his reasonable service.

Our Redeemer Himself when He became man could only return to heaven by the pathway of death. Only through the rending in pain and shame of the human body which He had assumed could He pass into His glory. His throne in heaven could be won only by His obedience and suffering. His life apart from His death would not have availed for our restoration. Had He come not as our Redeemer by His blood, but only as our teacher and guide by His precepts and example, His work would not have opened the way for any of us to the world from which He descended. It is not the purity of His robes that makes His intercession for us on the throne of glory so mighty to

"The guiltiest sinner has the right of entrance."—*p.* 525.

save, but the blood of His sacrifice. The ancient offerings had to be without blemish, else God would not have accepted them at His altar; but it was not their spotlessness, but their blood, that made them efficacious for the putting away of sin. And although Christ could not have made expiation for us without personal holiness, it was not His holiness, but His sufferings, which made the expiation. If His holiness had been sufficient, He might have passed to heaven without dying, and taken us with Him. And since it behoved the Son of God thus to suffer and die, it is not simply by imitating His holy example, that we can draw near to God, but by faith in His atoning death. The way to heaven for us, as it was for Himself, is through His crucified body. As priests unto God, the sacrifice which we present is the Lamb slain for us, through whose merits we are accepted, and by whose virtues we are made pure, as He is pure and perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect.

Caiaphas rent his clothes in order that the Jewish high priesthood might be abolished and the way prepared for a more spiritual, efficacious, and enduring high priesthood. Jesus Christ rent the garment of His flesh, laid down His life on the cross, in order that all who believe in Him might be washed from their sins in His blood and made priests unto God and the Father. If the way, then, of approach to God has been opened through the rent veil of Christ's flesh

freely for all, it is manifestly the duty, as it is the privilege, of all to take advantage of it. The worshippers under the law, however upright, might have been afraid to draw near to God, for the whole ritual of Jewish worship served to maintain the distinction between God and His creatures. But under the Gospel the guiltiest sinner has the right of entrance, for Christ's sake, into the holiest of all. Amid the burning glories of the throne, Jesus still wears the veil of our human flesh, with the marks of the rending still in it, as the mark of the tearing was still shown after thirty days in the mourning robes of the Jews when stitched up. He preserves not the fleeting sign of mourning for distant relatives, but the permanent sign of mourning for beloved members of the family. He is ever seen as a Lamb as it had been slain. And thus wearing our nature, He is pleading with our Father for our pardon and acceptance by showing the wounds with which He was wounded for our sakes. Thus wearing our nature, He sympathises with us in all our sorrows as no other can, and is a very present help in our time of need. Having died for us, having made the last, greatest, uttermost sacrifice for us, it is not possible that He can withhold from us any good thing. Let us draw near, then, to God with boldness; for the blood of Christ will deliver us from the fear and dread connected with the consciousness of sin. Let us draw near with the full assurance of faith, trusting confidently in the Divine mercy and love. Let us array ourselves in the garb of true mourning for our sins, rending our hearts and not our garments, looking on Him whom we have pierced, and mourning with the godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto life. And so doing, God will give us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

THE MARVEL OF THE MORROW.

TICK, tick, with solemn yet cheerful stroke, went the clock on the mantelpiece. The sound seemed only to reveal the stillness. It was no offence to the ears of the earnest student of great life-problems who sat at his desk. The timepiece was old-fashioned, but he loved its gentle challenge to thrift of the flying moments, and desired no change. Its voice was in subtle harmony with his thoughts as he leaned his brow upon clasped hands and recalled what the day has shown him as so many panels of a picture with one *motif*. He bore upon his heart the cares of the preacher and the philanthropist, and the burden often bent his courage and shadowed the gladness of his mission.

"Tick-*now*, tick-*now*," said the clock. And the minister remembered two bright-faced schoolboys whom he had come upon suddenly in an hour when lessons should have been to the fore, and who, instead of working, were exchanging dreams of what they would be and do when the years had placed within their own grasp the reins of conduct. He thought of his sweet little daughter tripping in the accompaniment of the morning hymn of praise, and saying afterwards, with a rosy flush on her face and contrition in her tones, "I am so sorry, papa; I couldn't help wondering just then if you would let me have a birthday party next week." In fancy he went again his round of visits. And here he was in converse with a hard-featured artisan, who by the look of his house and family despised the duties of the present while he prophesied a coming era of plenty for all as the sequel of revolution. Next, he had met a rich man, whose property was in a wretched state, and to whom he had addressed repeated appeals not for favour, but for simple equity to the tenants. The answer was still the same: "In a little while I shall be able to see to it; they must wait." And later he had stood by the bedside of a girl whose strength was weakened in the way, and for whom the last halt would be called while yet her face was set to the hill of life. Once more he had spoken of a present possession of God's own peace to be had through the merged will and the childlike trust. And even yet the response revealed a treacherous hope. "I think I shall be better in a week or two, and perhaps grow strong when the summer comes," the sufferer had said.

Everyone seemed beguiled by "to-morrow" into forgetfulness or contempt of "to-day." A strange, daring petition, surely, blended with the ticking of the timepiece. The worn worker's lips said, to his own astonishment, "Save the people, O our Father in heaven, save the people from this mistake! Blot the vanity of dwelling on the future from their minds."

And the night had passed, and he found himself in company with the tutor of his lads. This gentleman was exceedingly grave.

"Nothing is amiss with my boys?" asked the father, moved to fear he knew not what.

"All is not as I could wish," said the teacher. "Your sons used to take an interest in their studies; they were ambitious, and looked forward to careers of usefulness. Now, a change that I confess I don't understand has come over them. What I make them do is of course done, but the fashion is ill-pleasing. They are listless; every particle of energy has fled. If I remind them that their future is at stake, it seems as though I am talking in a strange tongue. The thing is a riddle."

But the parent sighed, and said "Good-day," with a curious doubt dawning in his mind. Before he had mastered his problem, he was tracking the uncertain steps of a young fellow who had reeled out of an ale-

house, morning though it was. This sight moved him to compassion, for the victim of reckless habits was the only son of a widowed mother. He stepped up briskly and touched the young man's shoulder, and walked slowly at his side and spoke of the perils that loomed ahead. The effort was vain.

"Future—what is that? I'm merry now, and I'm going to be," laughed the prodigal; and he wrenched his arm free and slipped into the open door of a gin-palace.

The minister shivered as the memory of his last night's prayer came to him. What if it had been heard and granted?

It was a fair and peaceful Sabbath morning. The great congregation had knelt in worship and sent their voices aloft in a rich volume of praise. The preacher had for his theme the glories of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein righteousness and unsullied purity should dwell. He sought to show that really to save society a deathless hope of this great consummation must animate the reformer, and that the Kingdom must spring into power in individual lives. But he was conscious of failure to affect his hearers; a blight of indifference was upon the throng. The matters of which he discoursed were remote from their interests; for them, as for the ne'er-do-well of the yesterday, there was *no future*. Striving in an agony to accomplish the impossible and dispel this dreary sloth, the minister bent forward. There was the clatter of a shade upon the glass globe of a reading-lamp, and the dreamer was awake and beginning softly to smile. One clear idea had come back with him from the land of phantasy and vain visions. To live in the future now, to trust to what may be, to build castles in Spain persistently—this is foolish, and conducts to trouble. But to forget or despise the future and live for the present alone, and be shut up within its lines: this is a plan of life and action not a whit to be preferred.

As a rule, the young chiefly err in the one direction, and their elders in the other. There is at the first a happy certainty of conquest; the ideal is more than the actual; dreams are more than truth. If the determination is steadfastly trained upon the task of translating fancies into facts, the most sanguine hopes may be more than justified.

"What can you do?" was asked of the lad who has become Henry M. Stanley, hero and explorer. "Anything that a boy can do," was the characteristic reply. The spirit of prompt preparedness warrants great expectations. Confidence in these cases is the note of genius, and it will infallibly crop out. A youth once went to Mozart and asked him for advice. He wished to compose: when and how should he begin? Mozart suggested that he should wait. "But you composed much earlier," objected the visitor. "So I did," was the quiet reply, "but I asked nobody about it."

But those who apply every power and aptitude in rising to the lofty level appropriated in advance by a daring imagination, and who by perseverance succeed, are relatively few. Longfellow does not libel the fresh young band of pilgrims in singing—

> "A boy's will is the wind's will,
> And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

All too soon the glamour fades, a growing realism sways the nature; even ambition becomes grovelling, and can only peer into what lies beyond the bounds of common sight and touch. The transformation is not all gain. A man may wonder at what he once was and hoped to attain to, but let him never despise his bright and ingenuous past. The marvel of the morrow was a fact to his youth: it is a fact still. The Greathearts amongst us are not pessimists either for themselves or their race. They know, and rejoice to know, that every honest task of to-day which is honestly fulfilled helps forward the Golden Age.

What have we to do with despair? "To-morrow is a new day," and who shall tell us what is hidden over the unturned leaf?

John Knox lay, as men supposed, dying on a grey summer dawn, between Dundee and St. Andrews. A companion pointed him to the land, and asked him if he recognised it. The Reformer answered, "I know it well, for I see the steeple of that place where God first opened my mouth in public to His glory, and I am fully persuaded, how weak that ever I now appear, I shall not depart this life till my tongue shall glorify His holy name in the same place." And, to the surprise of many, the prediction was fulfilled, and Knox lived and worked for his Master a quarter of a century after this.

When blindness came upon John Milton in the midst of his busy pamphleteering, surely all was over. The stranger and the weakling might have held that a woe so great—accompanied, too, with domestic anxieties and unhappiness—must make an end of all music in the life. But the marvel of Milton's morrow was "Paradise Lost."

David Livingstone had battled on through the weary marches, the countless disappointments and perils of his return journey from the great lakes to Ujiji. In all his experience of African hardships there was nothing to parallel the miseries of these anxious days. War and pillage were abroad, and on several occasions he was face to face with a violent death, and scarcely knew how he escaped. Worn down to a skeleton, and reduced to beggary, he confesses in his diary that his spirits "were at their lowest ebb." What was before him now but resignation to the worst? This: Livingstone's servant came to seek his master one October morning, and he brought strange and joyful tidings. "An Englishman!" he gasped out; "I see him!" The glorious news was true. The expedition sent by James Gordon Bennett, to solve the mystery of Livingstone's prolonged silence, had reached its goal in the nick of time, and the great missionary was saved.

The wish to read the inscrutable is in all hearts. By one or other occult device men have put the question to the Sphinx in every age—men of all tribes, and conditions, and habits. There is no response. The marvel of the morrow will not be broached prematurely. But its reality flashes on the page of every newspaper, is taught in our books of biography, comes home to ourselves sometimes in the letter that announces changed prospects, or the unexpected coming to pass of a fair dream.

Then, let the waiting life hold faith fast. The

wonder of events is ever new, and any hour or day the decisive turn may come in the long lane that has seemed so dull. Is the dark cloud overhead? Do the winds of adversity blow? Does keen pain of either mind or body bear even the stubborn pride of manhood? The marvel of the morrow may be—of some morrow must be—a clearing of the sky, the hushing of the storm-wind, peace after sorrow, ease after suffering. Let the trial work the sweet gain of a patient surrender to the will of the Best Friend, and joy will blossom as the sequel of the discipline.

There is another side to the subject. Montaigne has an essay on the old Greek proverb which has been quoted—"To-morrow is a new day"—and he reports from Plutarch the story of its origin. Archias of Thebes was in danger of his life from a cruel plot. Archias of Athens sent him privately a note of warning, which was delivered as the tyrant sat at supper. He put it by unheeded, using in levity the phrase which his fate was to stamp into men's minds as a word henceforth inculcating a politic prudence. And, shortly, the meaning of this is that the marvel of the morrow may need much preparation *now*. There must be present cares to authorise future hopes. The two can never be divorced if any man's career is to be one of true honour and of genuine success. The world talks of lucky strokes of fortune, of hits in the bull's-eye by arrows shot at a venture. Few and doubtful are these cases. Most of the startling triumphs which kindle envy in ill-conditioned hearts are the outcome of long years of labour and thought. Edison's discovery of the carbon button which was to perfect his telephone might be considered by some a happy accident. The great inventor scraped some soot off the blackened chimney of his laboratory lamp, and in a spirit of curiosity tested its properties. It proved to be the very article of which he was in search—stumbled upon by a friendly chance. But behind was a record of exhausting and exhaustive experiments with all kinds of likely materials, absorbing the energies of many months. The casual came to the aid of the unwavering will of a patient workman. Sir William Siemens "struck ile," as our cousins in the West say, when he invented the gas regenerator; but he had continued experimenting to this end for fourteen years before success crowned his efforts.

And positive peril, as in the example of the careless lord of Thebes, may lurk in a refusal to think to-day of what the morrow may bring. This was the grief of the minister's dream. Either to-morrow was all in all, and the plain duty of the hour slipped from sight, with risk of ruinous consequences, or the conditions of the fleeting moment absorbed every care and sealed every sense to a surely approaching future. Shall we not remember that the word of wisdom is threefold—trust, hope, watch? Then will every step be firm in an upward path, and every act be simple, sincere, and loyal to lofty principle.

FELIX FERRY.

MR. FLIDGIT'S SEEDS, AND HOW HE GREW THEM.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," ETC. ETC.

YOU will no doubt be surprised when I tell you that it was a peculiarity of Mr. Flidgit's garden, that no person had ever seen it; no, not excepting Mr. Flidgit himself.

True! he cultivated it, he took a great deal of pains with it, but he never saw it, although he did see, and so did others too, the good fruit which came out of it.

Mr. Flidgit's garden was inside himself—where exactly I cannot tell, but somewhere; he took wonderful trouble with it; and hence no doubt the beautiful fruit which came out of it.

Mr. Benjamin Flidgit was a firm believer in *cultivation*. "That's the word, sir," he used to say, when he spoke at all of his garden operations—"Cultivation," not things come by chance, but good hard work. Providence will give a blessing, I know well enough, and unless it comes through Him it cannot come at all; but we must do our part, and 'tis no use calling on Providence unless we do.

"Cultivation" might have been almost said to be Mr. Flidgit's ruling idea in life. He was always thinking, as he himself said, of what things might be grown to, and he was trying to grow them; and that was how he became what he was in himself, and towards others too.

If it had been put to the vote in the village of Blanby which must go, Benjamin Flidgit or the town pump, even if it were a hot and dry summer, I think the Blanby people would have parted with the town pump; they would have filled all their buckets, given the dear old thing's handle a farewell friendly shake, and said to it a tearful good-bye—but Mr. Benjamin Flidgit, even at this great cost, they would have kept.

For Benjamin was the friend of all, and the village sunshine, and if he went Blanby might almost as well go too.

Now John Short, of Blanby aforesaid, was a very different kind of man. Not even the knob on the end of the town pump handle would the Blanby people have given to keep John Short amongst them. If John Short had announced that he would leave on a given morning for the North Pole, there to take up his residence and never to return to Blanby again, not a creature would have gone to the door to say "good-bye" to him, to take any notice of him whatever.

Now, John Short could not but take notice of the difference between our friend Ben and himself. Here was Ben, resident in the village only a couple of years; and here was he, born in it, bred in it, almost

"'Are we quite alone, neighbour?'"

as much a part of it as that very town pump of which we have been speaking, and yet everyone was speaking well of Ben, and no one speaking well of *him*.

John Short at last became so riled at this, that he determined to interview Mr. Flidgit, and have a conversation with him on the subject.

Mr. John Short accordingly betook himself to Mr. Benjamin Flidgit's house, and found his popular neighbour sitting in the little arbour at the bottom of his garden.

The ordinary little commencements of conversation having ended, Mr. Short addressed himself at once to the object of his visit.

"Are we quite alone, neighbour?" And Mr. Short peered all around. "I 'm a bit suspicious in my temper; perhaps you won't mind my looking round the summer-house to see there 's nobody about; I want to have a talk with you, and I don't want anyone else to hear."

"Oh, with pleasure, and you can look into the currant-bushes as well. . . .

"Well, have you seen anyone?" asked Mr. Flidgit, when his neighbour returned after a good pry all round.

"Only a cat."

"And you aren't afraid of her, I hope. I 'm afraid we couldn't catch her; but it doesn't much matter, for she never blabs—I never knew her let out a secret yet."

"Yes, we 're safe. Now, I want to know something from you, and it is this: I see that all the neighbours like you, and I can't but see that they don't like me, and I just want to come at the bottom of this. You 're different from me—well, I can't help seeing that; but I want to know, how you come to be what you are, and whether, if other folk had the secret, they could not work it out as well as you."

"Well," said Mr. Flidgit, "a great deal of it comes by cultivating, by gardening, if you like to call it so—by the grace of God first, and by cultivation afterwards. You believe that without God's gift you wouldn't have any harvest at all, but you believe also that you won't have any unless you cultivate the ground. That 's how the crops come—'Cultivation' that 's the word."

"Cultivation—gardening," muttered John Short: "what can your looking after these potatoes, and onions, and bits of flowers, do towards making a man like what you are, towards making him liked as well as you are—towards making himself happy in himself,

as you always seem to be. I have cultivated enough, I can tell you. I reared the biggest turnip last year ever seen on this country-side. I was in the papers for it. Folk said that the big gooseberry which appears every year in the paper was nothing of a wonder to it."

"And you took great pains with the field in which that turnip grew, didn't you?"

"Ay, you may say that—and with that particular turnip too. I saw that it had got likelihood in it, and I looked well after it."

"Just so, neighbour, and that I call 'cultivation.' Now, if you want to be a different man in yourself, and to be looked upon as a different one by your neighbours, you must cultivate another kind of crop besides turnips; and you must cultivate another kind of field than the one in which the big turnip grew."

"There 's no more land to be had in the parish," said John Short; "and if there were, I 'm so bothered with what I have, that I declare I don't know that I'd take a present of it."

"You needn't go far for what you have to cultivate," said Mr. Flidgit; "you carry it about with you: 't is your own self, inside—there 's where the cultivation is to go on; there 's where I've been carrying it on for many a long year, and there I hope to cultivate until I die. Mind you, I tell you plainly, the grace of God is the first thing—without that you can't do anything—but you must do your part. I've tried to do mine, and I've found good come out of it."

"And what 's *your* turnip?" asked Mr. John Short.

"Oh, turnip! if you're going in for your turnip, please say turnips in the plural number, so far as I'm concerned, for I've got far more than one good by my cultivation.

"Now one thing that I've cultivated is a thankful spirit—unless a man has that, he's always more or less sour and discontented; and when he's so in himself, he's generally so with others too; and I think, if I may say it without offence, Mr. Short, that you've been a little bit in that line."

"Well, I haven't much to be thankful for."

"Perhaps I could show you that you have a great deal, but I shan't go into that, at any rate at present; but you have a little. Now, this prize turnip, for instance. It isn't everyone that has had a prize turnip, and I want to ask you whence the prize turnip came."

"It came from a seed, of course."

"And I suppose it was a very large seed; now, I should say a seed as big as a full-grown gooseberry, or a French bean, or a walnut."

"No, it was a little seed, about as big as a pin's head."

"And how did you ever get it to such a size?"

"Well, you see, I determined to get this prize, if I could; and I grew the turnips with that view; and I paid as much attention to them as if they had been greenhouse flowers; they had the best of manure and——"

"And you just cultivated them; that's the long and the short of the matter; so you understand what comes of cultivation. If you had let that turnip alone, it might have been like all other turnips; but you see, you spent pains on it, and so you had the big turnip, and the prize. Those huge roses of your neighbour Grothe—he too got a prize—how did they come into existence? why were they such a size? why had they such a scent? why had they such a colour? Why, by cultivation, of course. You may see the selfsame roses, quite dwarfed little things some of them are, scarce worth the pulling; it was education, cultivation, neighbour, that got Grothe his prize for his rose, and you yours for your turnip. Everything good in me has come to what it is by cultivation, all from little seeds; and if my neighbours like me, as you tell me they do, then 't is for the sake of what those seeds have come to."

"I suppose you were born with all your seeds, as you call them," said John Short.

"I don't know that," answered Mr. Flidgit; "if I were, all I know is that they were precious small seeds, and that I have had a deal of work in growing them to what they have come to—a lot of cultivation, neighbour, a lot of cultivation! But tell me, what is it that folk like me for that you haven't got?"

"Well, now, there 's thankfulness. A man says to me the other day, 'Now, Short, you 're an ungrateful dog,' and all because I grumbled at having the bough of an apple-tree broken off."

"And what broke it, neighbour?"

"Well, the weight of the fruit; and that made it all the more provoking, you know. And he said to me, 'There, now; you go and take a lesson of little Ben Flidgit down there. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you ought, considering what a crop you have in your orchard.' But I wasn't, though, and am not; and as things look at present, I 'm not likely to be."

"Oh, don't say that. You may come on. I've known lots of things come on in the world, that you 'd never have expected to, and lots of people too. Your big turnip came on from being a very small seed, and you yourself have come on from being a very small boy. I assure you I was once one of the most unthankful people in the world, though now I am thankful; and that, for every good thing that comes my way, no matter how small.

"Now, we 'll look for a moment at this matter of thankfulness. When I look back on the past, I wonder what kind of a life I used to lead when I hadn't any.

"It was an illness that first made me a bit thankful. I got rheumatic fever awful bad—awful bad. I was for weeks so ill that I couldn't turn myself in bed, or put a spoon to my mouth, and as I lay there on my bed I had plenty of time to think. All sorts of thoughts used to come into my mind, and amongst them I used to think of what I could do before I took ill—how I could walk and run, and do this and that, feed myself amongst the rest, and all the common things of daily life. I didn't think of any very extraordinary things, but just what you and I are doing every day we live. At last I came to the idea that it was a much more beautiful thing than people think anything about, to be able just to put one leg before the other in a common walk—not to take prizes for jumping, or wrestling, or putting weights, or anything of that kind, but just to put one leg before the other, the way

that ordinary folk do going along the road. And I thought the same by my hands. I couldn't stir a finger, much less the whole hand; and I thought of all the things those hands used to do, and how I could cut my meat, and lift my cup to my mouth, and shave, and move my joints about in every direction. And now, said I to myself, I'd give a sovereign—ay, ten—if I could just lift a cup of tea to my mouth, instead of having it run down my throat out of a spout. That spouting business is a queer affair," said Mr. Flidgit, "and if the nurse makes a mistake, and lets down too much, and it goes the wrong way, 'tis an unpleasant affair too. If it goes wrong outside, why, then you're all of a mess; and if it goes wrong inside, why, then you choke.

"Well, time passed on—weary days and weary nights—and at last, one morning when I awoke, I felt a little stir in my big toe. 'T was the smallest little stir you can imagine, but it was a stir, and I shouted out to the nurse as loud as I could.

"The poor woman ran to the bed as fast as her legs would carry her. She thought something dreadful had happened, or was going to happen, when I said to her, 'Nurse, I've stirred my toe.'

"'Good gracious!' says she, 'is that all? I thought you'd burst a blood-vessel somewhere about you, at the least.'

"'That's because *you* haven't *my* toe; and if you had, you'd have halloaed as loud as I did when I found I could stir it. You see, it makes all the difference whose toe it is; and I can't but make much of mine stirring, after its being stiff so long.'

"'Now if you could walk, or dance, or hop, or do anything with it like other people, and that all of a sudden, 't would be all very well to make a noise; but you've not stirred that toe, I'll be bound, as much as the eighth of an inch.'

"'That's a big eighth to me,' said I; 'and perhaps 't is only the beginning of it's getting all right again. I'll practise that toe all the day.' And so I did. I came at last to making half a dozen little waggles one after the other, and then I began to get hopeful of getting well.

"It was then, neighbour, that I began *cultivation*—the thankfulness that I had for the first little waggle of that toe might have died out; like a barren seed, it might have come to nothing, but you see I cultivated it then in the bed, and afterwards when I got up. I thought of all that I had had in former times, and for which I had never been grateful, no, not a bit, and how precious was even the little I have now, and then I thought, 'Well, perhaps you 'll be able to walk again, and then how shall you feel?—thankful, I hope, for if you're grateful for just being able to waggle your great toe, how much more ought you to be if you are able to move your whole foot, and knee, and leg, and all complete!'

"There was the seed, and, as I told you, I cultivated it; and this is the way I did it:—The first time I stood up on my crutches I talked to myself, and said, 'Flidgit, Benjamin Flidgit, are you attending? for if you're not, I'll just wait until you are. You are?—well, then, look at yourself now upright, and a little while ago you were on the flat of your back; isn't that something to be thankful for?'—Didn't I admire myself!" said Mr. Flidgit—"didn't I think it was a lovely sight to see myself upright, though I was a trifle bent in the shoulders owing to the crutches. I might have grumbled, neighbour, and said, 'Here's a miserable business, to be on these two sticks when others are on just their two legs!' But no, I took the thankful and not the unthankful view of matters; and the consequence was, I was a happy instead of a miserable man.'

"The doctor came that day and said, 'Why, Flidgit, there was nothing in the medicine I gave you to make you in such good spirits to-day—why, man, if you go on like that, you'll soon be well. Your very spirits will do you good. And so I think they did. Well, I got on then to one crutch and one stick. My word! I admired myself again. 'Flidgit,' said I, 'if you looked well on two crutches, you look still better on a crutch and a stick; there's many a one would be glad if he could get rid of one of his crutches as you have done.' You see, friend, I was cultivating—cultivating that thankful spirit, and the more I thought with gratitude, the more I felt I had to be grateful for. Well, when I came to one stick I hardly knew myself; and at last, when I came to be able to do without one at all, I felt so light and airy, I felt almost as if I could fly instead of walk.

"And, mind you, this wasn't entirely because of what was outside—the two legs all right—the inside, the thankful spirit, had a deal to do with it too; and now I'm thankful for the use of my limbs all day long; in a way, I might say my thankful spirit is a big as your prize turnip. And this makes me cheerful and chirpy, and perhaps that's one reason why the neighbours are good enough to like me. Now I call that cultivation."

"But I want to know how you did it," said John Short. "A man can't work without tools, and I don't see the tools you used. What had you for a spade or a rake, or a trowel, or a Dutch hoe? Now, say I were to try and cultivate something in this line as big as my prize turnip—how should I set about it?"

"Tools!" answered Mr. Flidgit; "when a man comes into the world he generally brings his tools with him—his two eyes and his ears, if nothing else. And he can do a lot of cultivation with these tools. And he has a brain to think with, I should say he could do a lot with that. These were my tools. I thought of how many a poor fellow there was still on his back, and likely to be there, no one knew how long. And I thought of how it might have been with myself. And if only a man wishes to think, and sets about it, it is astonishing what a number of thoughts will come into his mind; and thinking is cultivating, you know. You may cultivate bad thoughts by thinking, until you bring them out into bad acts; or good ones until you are good, and do good.

"And then I used my eyes and ears. I said to myself, 'Look about you, Flidgit, and see what you have to be thankful for.' And I did see it, and saw it everywhere around, when I wanted to do a bit of cultivating, and when I felt I was getting a bit slack, that my turnip, neighbour, wasn't growing (you understand), then I used to say to myself, 'Now how should

you feel, Flidgit, if you were deprived of this or that?' I used to shut my eyes for a moment and imagine myself blind. Then I would open them and say, 'Ah, Flidgit, what a grand thing it is to see; now, what would you give for your sight again if you lost it?' and that helped to grow my turnip, neighbour. Why, even the very toasting-fork helped me along. Many 's the morning that I've said at breakfast, 'Flidgit, 't is something to be thankful for to have anything to toast, and then to have anything to toast it with; you never could have held that bread near such a fire without a toasting-fork. Be thankful for small mercies; and, cutting off the two first letters—sm—for ALL mercies. And that 's the way I work along. When I 'm cultivating, I use every tool that comes to hand; and 't is a rare one indeed that doesn't prove handy."

"Ah, well! you haven't met with the hindrances that we poor farmers have to meet. Too much wet one time, and too much drought another; fly, blight, rust, bunt, smut, mildew, frost, nobody knows what."

"You mistake, Mr. Short, if you think that I've done my cultivating without something to stop me. There 's fly, and blight, and mist, and smut, and all the rest of it, to stop everything good from coming up in the heart, just as well as in the field. There 's that inside us that 's always going wrong, and that that won't 'come on,' and that that 's always taking the wrong turn. Never, hardly, did the thought of being thankful come into my mind, but that there came with it ever so many reasons why I should be unthankful. When I was thankful for that first waggle of my great toe, and said so within myself, why, there was something inside me ready with no end of reasons why I should not be thankful at all. I used to hear a voice inside me saying, 'Why, lots of people can move all their toes, and their fingers too'; and when I got to stand upright, then it said, 'Why, there are millions of people who can walk and jump and run; you haven't got what they have, and why should you make a greater fuss than they do?' And so on, and so on, neighbour, not only with that matter of the toe, but with everything. I can tell you I had to go through a good deal before I became what I now am, and that is a thankful man. I had to grow the spirit within me; and now that it is grown, and is, in a manner of speaking, like your prize turnip, I wouldn't part with it on any account. for it does me good, and keeps me bright and fresh all the day long."

"So that 's how 't is done!" said Mr. John Short. "And had you a try at anything else?"

"Certainly. I wasn't by nature of a loving spirit at all, but I took to cultivating, and I hope it 's got on a bit. One can do a deal, neighbour, in this direction; if one tries. I wanted to have the feeling ever so much more than I felt I had, and so I thought I 'd get myself on a bit with old Joe Harris. Joe was a crusty kind of customer to have anything to do with, and Joe wasn't fond of me, and I wasn't fond of Joe. 'Now,' thought I, 'all the more reason why I should practise a bit on Joe. The harder he is to get on with, the more is done, even when it is only a little. Joe was stony soil out of which to grow anything; but as you know, neighbour, there 's many a field with plenty of stones in it that yields, when 't is properly cultivated, a good crop. Ay, Joe was stony ground, I warrant you, but I raised a crop out of him for all that. And 't was all cultivation—keeping on at it. Sometimes I laugh now, when I think of it all—when I grip Joe by the hand and say, 'How are you, old fellow?' and remember that at one time I wouldn't have touched him with the tongs. When I help him to a wing with a good slice of the breast when he has his bit of dinner with me on a Sunday, as he does ever since his wife died; and when I think that at one time I wouldn't have given him a feather out of that fowl's tail, much less one of his drumsticks roasted, to say nothing of a wing and as much of the breast as I can make go with it, I think, 'Well, cultivation is a wonderful thing.' I 'm glad when Joe comes for a second help. Why, I've cultivated to that extent, neighbour, that, if Joe were awfully hungry and said, 'Ben, my boy, I 'd like the *whole* fowl to-day, the two legs, and the two wings, and the back and breast, and the bacon and greens too,' I declare I 'd give them to him without feeling a bit queer that I had none left for myself. That 's getting on very far, you 'll say, neighbour. Well, so it is; but, you see, that 's the very thing I 've done. I have got on very far: just as far as you 've got with your big turnip."

"And I hope you'll get some kind of a prize,' said John Short.

"Why, I've got it already," answered Mr. Flidgit, "a first prize, too—Joe Harris is my fast friend—'t is owing to Joe that I got the field in which I keep my cow—Joe carts my apples to market with his own; and, putting all together, I call him a very big turnip indeed."

"Well, neighbour, I 'd like to know exactly how you did it; perhaps you have some knack, some out-of-the-way dodge, which other folk can't use."

"Not a bit of it; the whole thing was done in common daily life, and I 'll tell you a bit of it.

"When Joe Harris came first to these parts, I didn't like him at all. I wasn't myself much in the love way then, and so I wasn't particularly likely to care much about him; and I kept away from him, and he kept away from me. You see, neighbour, there 's a kind of law in these things, a kind of tit-for-tat like, that 's always going on; if you keep away from folk, folk will keep away from you. Well, when I turned to growing this love, I had first a very small kind of feeling for Joe. I just thought, 'Well, he 's a man the same as myself; I 'll just say good-morning, to him.'

"A day or two after, I met Joe in a narrow lane, and, when I saw him coming up, I was just getting ready to say 'good-morning,' when something within me says—'He 's a surly brute; don't you take any notice of him at all.'

Then something else says, 'No, he 's not a brute, he 's a man.'

"'And like as not he won't answer you.'

"'Well, and if he doesn't to-day, perhaps he will another day.'

"I had two voices keeping on arguing in this way, until I came bolt up to Joe.

"'Good-morning,' I flopped out."

"And what did he say, Mr. Flidgit?"

"He said nothing, but he grunted—well, I won't try

to soften it down—like a pig, like two pigs if you like, and he passed on."

"'I told you so,' said something inside. "I knew how 't would be. There 's all you 've got for your trouble. Much good may it do you,' and so forth. Well, this bad voice—for I know now it was a bad voice—didn't have it all its own way; the other one had its say too. And this is what it said—

"'Did you hear him grunt, Ben? There 's something in that grunt. There 's more in it than if he hadn't made any sound at all. Something may come out of that grunt. That grunt 's a seed, Ben. You cultivate it, and see what can be got out of it, what you can grow it to. Something good may come out of a cultivated grunt. Now, if he had passed by you without saying anything, it might have been a bad business, but that grunt was as much as to say, "I hear you, even though I don't choose to answer you." He heard you, Ben, and he 'll think over it. If he hadn't heard it, he couldn't have thought about it. Now, you let things be until you meet him again, and then say, "Good-morning, neighbour."

"It was a week after this that I met Joe Harris again—the same Joe that now eats a wing and a large slice of the breast of a good Dorking fowl with me of a Sunday, with bacon and greens—and it was not in a narrow lane this time, but on the wide road.

"'This is a bad chance,' said I to myself; "for he can cross over to the other side, and get out of earshot; and sure as a gun he will.'

"Now I just tell you I had had a good bit of work with myself to get ready to say this word 'neighbour.' But ever since I spoke to him first, I had more of a friendly feeling than I had before, and so I was encouraged to salute him again and call him 'neighbour;' and the worst that he could do would be to grunt, and that couldn't do me any great harm, after all.

"'Now,' said I to myself, as he was about fifty yards off, 'he 'll be away to the other side when he comes within ten yards of me.' But nothing of the kind: he walks along on the path, and comes right up to where I was.

"I felt the 'neighbour' sticking in my throat, and didn't know whether I could get it out at the right moment when it came to the point, but I sent it out with a jerk. A field-piece couldn't have shot it out stronger nor, apparently, with better aim.

"This time he didn't grunt, but he didn't say anything, however—he made a kind of hum.

"'That 's better,' said I, as I passed on—'he didn't cross over to the other side, and the hum reminds me of a bee; perhaps there 's some honey in him—who knows? I 'll have at him again.' It was all cultivating, friend. I was cultivating him, and cultivating myself too. I mean the feeling of love; for I felt a little more drawn to the man after I had spoken a bit kindly. 'Now,' said I to myself, 'next time I see him I 'll go a step farther—I 'll speak to him by name. I 'll say, "Good-morning, neighbour Harris," and I 'll say, "Fine day, neighbour," if the weather gives me a chance.'

"And it did.

"This time, as he came up, I fancied he looked a little bit sweeter; perhaps he had some honey in him, after all, and it was coming out of him: and this is what I intended, 'Good-morning, neighbour Harris—fine day.' If I hadn't said 'neighbour' the last day, I don't think I could have said 'fine day' now; but you see, one thing helps on to another in good as well as evil, and I suppose I said it in a nice voice, for the man nodded his head—in a stiffish kind of way, I own, but still, nodded it, and said 'Fine day' and passed on.

"Now, as Joe Harris owned to me afterwards over one of those Sunday chicken wings and bacon and greens, he was melting all that time; he had begun to melt only in a very small way the first time I spoke to him, but he didn't quite know it then, though he sees it now. He told me that the first time I spoke to him he said within himself, 'Bother the fellow; can't he let me alone? can't he pass on and mind his own business? The lane is narrow, 't is true; but isn't it wide enough for him to pass on without meddling with other people?' But then something kept saying within him, 'Well, there 's no harm done; 't was only a little bit of civility, after all.' 'Neighbour' touched him up a bit. He thought he had finished me off with that grunt; but when he found he hadn't, he says to himself, 'Well, there 's no need to be uncivil, at any rate.' He told me that there was something inside him saying that I was a decent sort of fellow, and when I spoke to him by name he was a bit friendly disposed to me: not much, but a little; enough to make him say, 'Fine day,' in return, instead of grunt.

"'T was all cultivating, you see," said Mr. Fldgit; "and 't was getting on, slow and sure—that 's the way. You see, we were both of us getting along. I didn't know at the time how far he was getting, but I knew how I was getting along myself, for every time I met the man I felt the more kindly to him.

"As I've just told, I was cultivating all this time—trying to improve and grow this little seed of love that was very small in him at first, but that I wanted to be larger. As I have said to you before, so say I now again—there must be help from Heaven, or we can do little, just as there must be dew or showers, or seeds will come to nothing; but said I to myself, 'I must do my part, and I will.'

"And a part of this I did by thinking, and I kept thinking about Joe Harris. I thought, 'Well, there 's some good in everybody, if only you can find it out. It mayn't be much, but, so long as 't is there at all, something can come of it; now, there must be something in Joe Harris. I 'll just try. So one day I sent in to him, and asked the loan of a pint of milk, for my maid had upset what the milkman had left, and there was no more to be had until the evening.

"Not that I cared about the milk—I could have drunk my tea all the week without it—but I thought, 'I 'll give Mr. Harris a chance, for I know he has three cows.' If you want to make a man feel kindly towards you, 't is always a good plan to give him a chance of doing a kindness to you; 't is one of the ways of cultivating—d'ye see, and you keep it well in your mind—cultivating—that 's the point, and I was cultivating myself and Joe Harris too. I knew that I ran a chance of being snubbed, and that wasn't pleasant; but you see, we must run the chance of this; and something more than this, very often, if we are to cultivate at all. Well

what do you think happened? Back comes my little jug and two inches of cream on the top of the milk in it.

"'Why, Betsy,' said I, 'what 's this? do Mr. Harris's cows give cream instead of milk? I hope, my girl, that you didn't make a mistake, and ask for cream instead of milk.'

"'I did what you told me,' said the girl.

"'Well, and what happened?'

"'He says, "Come, my girl, with me into the dairy," —then he goes to a can, and says, "This is this morning's milk," and half-filled the jug with it; "and this will improve it;" and he goes to one of the pans set for the cream, and fills the jug from the thick cream that stood in it. "There," said he, "tell Mr. Flidgit I 've sent him the best milk I had; and if he ever runs short, tell him to send to me."'

"'T was but a step, neighbour, from that to be able to send him one of my Dorkings, and I picked out the biggest I had—a good wing of that bird would be enough for most men's dinner; and then in comes Mr. Harris himself, and thanks me for the bird—the best bird, he did believe, in the whole country; and then I offered him a setting from the eggs, and a short time after, when he killed a pig, he would have me accept a piece of fresh pork. Then it came to my hearing a part of his life; and the poor man had many troubles —so many that I pitied him from the bottom of my heart, enough, as we say, to sour any man's temper. Folk wouldn't have been so hard on him if they knew what he had had to go through in life; maybe 't would have turned them into lemons, or perhaps vinegar, if they had had to go through as much

"Well, I softened very much to him, as he told me of all he had gone through; and the more I took to him, the more he took to me, until at last it came to this—almost every Sunday he comes in here, and the Sunday Dorking is a regular dish.

"There isn't a man in the parish I 'd do more for than Joe Harris. As to grunting, he's given that up for ever. If I had stood off from Joe Harris, most likely he 'd never have had a bit of a kindly feeling to me, nor should I have had to him. I know, from what Harris has told me himself, that if I hadn't kept on—yes, and egging on a little bit more each time—he 'd never have come on on his part. Indeed, he told me that he strove against me, or something inside him did; and he had to keep on at himself to do something better than grunt. But if a man really takes to cultivating, if he wants to grow what 's good, and sticks to it, he 'll succeed in the end. I don't mean to say that he won't have his ups and downs in this, as well as everything else; but the good effects of sticking to it will come out there or elsewhere.

"But remember what I said. Just as the flowers and the wheat, and whatever it may be that comes up from the little seed, cannot grow, or come to anything without the rain and the sunshine and the dew, without what comes from above, so it is with all good within us, *we* must be helped from heaven, or we shan't thrive."

"And so that's how you get on," said John Short, "and that 's how Joe Harris became what he is. But I don't think all this is much good to me; and I don't feel that I have the seeds to cultivate."

"'I felt the "neighbour" sticking in my throat.'"—*p.* 532.

"What," said Benjamin Flidgit, "you—the man who has grown the biggest turnip in the country. I wouldn't believe that you hadn't a seed or two of something else besides turnips; and that, if you took to cultivating, you couldn't do something with them. Think now of any kind thing you ever did in your life."

"Well," said John Short, after he had mused a while, "about twenty years ago——"

"Why, you may as well go back, man, to the Flood at once. Try the last month—the last week—perhaps the last twenty-four hours."

"Let's see," said Mr. Short, stroking his chin and rubbing his finger down his nose. "You know old Mother Plews. Well, half a dozen apples from her tree fell over my wall, and I sent them in to her."

"Good," said Mr. Flidgit, "good—you didn't throw them over the wall to her, or throw them at her head?"

"No, but I was near doing so."

"And now you're glad you didn't."

"Yes."

"Well, even that's a seed. Now, if you want to cultivate it, you go in to old Mother Plews and offer to lend her your ladder to pick that tree, and follow it up with offering to buy half-a-crown's-worth of the apples, and if you will keep on, you'll cultivate Mother Plews herself into something as good in her way as your prize turnip. You'll find the loving spirit grow in you more and more; everything you do will be a help on; and you'll find that good seeds in the heart, when cultivated as they ought to be, will, by the blessing of God, produce richer prizes than even the best which can be sown in the ground."

THE MISGIVINGS OF THE BAPTIST.

BY THE VERY REV. G. A. CHADWICK, D.D., DEAN OF ARMAGH.

"Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?"—ST. MATT. xi. 3.

THE secret anguish of a tried soul, partially revealed to us in this question, is very natural and pathetic.

We must not evade the lesson, because it is a humbling one, which is taught by the weakness of the greatest born of woman—the more than prophet, who not only foretold the coming of the Messiah, but actually pointed Him out, and gave to Him His first disciples. Men have tried to escape the unwelcome belief that the faith of John was shaken, by urging that perhaps he sent his disciples with this question, only to have doubts of theirs removed. and meant to say, Convince these weak ones, Thou, for my assurances are vain. But this ingenious theory breaks down on all sides. The emphasis does not suit it. "Thou," he says (from whom we hoped so much, but who art yet so passive), "art *Thou* after all a wandering and misleading light?" This is the startled cry of a faith which remembers that it once was strong, but is now grown well-nigh despairing; and Jesus felt that the respect of His followers for the Baptist was impaired: therefore He reminded them of that noble past, neither luxurious, as of them whose place was in kings' palaces, not their dungeons, nor unstable as a quivering reed. Above all, He does not bid the messengers look, and learn for themselves, but return to their master, and show him what they have seen, and give him the means by which to judge.

What had happened is plain enough, and sad. The Baptist was full of those burning Messianic hopes which led the Jewish nation at last to its death in a fever of fanatical excitement. What shape they took in his austere and lonely bosom during his long seclusion in the desert we cannot tell, except that it was high and righteous, that he expected all fruitless trees to be hewn down, all chaff to be burned, and the barn to be thoroughly purged. Fearless in the certainty that such a work was just beginning, he preached repentance, and shook the nation to its foundation-stone. He called the rulers of the Church a generation of vipers, and warned them that Gentiles, dead to their covenant as these stones of the wilderness, might become the children of Abraham in their place. In the glow of his generous devotion he was well pleased to decrease, that the coming One might increase; he was the Bridegroom's friend, and it fulfilled his joy when the Bridegroom's voice was glad.

Compared with his expected king and hero, how poor and base was the voluptuous Herod, upon whom he feared not to break in with a stern and abrupt cry: "It is not lawful for thee to have her"—that woman at thy side, whom one does not condescend to notice, or even to name!

But yet, what was the issue of it all? And how much harder it was to languish idly in a cell than gallantly to dare the worst, when fresh from the pure air and the agitated multitudes beside the Jordan! Why was not the expected Kingdom a reality? Herodias was all too real and too powerful, by whom his life was being wasted, who would surely destroy him in some vile intrigue. Where was the Kingdom of righteousness? Where was He in whose reign the righteous should flourish? He would appeal to Him. He would sting Him into action. "Thou—art

Thou He that cometh?" For John does not, even in this hour of weakness, doubt the reality of a Messiah, and of the appointed hour which he foretold. "Do we look for another? Arouse thyself: the time is wasting, our hopes are dying. It has come to this: that we could almost believe some other is the predestined One."

To this Jesus is content to answer, "Go and show John what is actually being done. Let him judge whether works of mercy and of wonder, and the conversion of the poor to God, are poorer things than his own rescue and the revolution for which he longs."

And he adds the noteworthy caution for us all: that however sacred His own appointed work, His method is, and always must be, such an offence to flesh and blood that it is a blessed thing simply not to be offended in Him. The danger of the Baptist was not in his desire for the reign of righteousness, but in the impatience which doubted and distrusted ways that were not our ways.

Now, this incident has its plain lesson for us all, the lesson of lowliness and submission to the Divine wisdom, even when it disappoints and paralyses our own schemes, and overclouds our own spiritual ambitions and ideals.

But there is something further. The phrase here used by the Baptist is applied again to that great revelation of Christian history—that final and crowning victory of the Church which is called the second coming.

"Art Thou He that cometh?" asks the Baptist. "Grace to you, and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which cometh," says the greater John of the Apocalypse. He applies the word to the second advent of our Lord, as may be seen by this, that in the eleventh chapter, when "the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ," the phrase is changed (ver. 17), and our revised Bible rightly reads, "We give thee Thanks, O Lord God, which art and which wast." That is all. The plan has now unfolded itself; no further coming is expected: the coming One has finally come.

We need not ask in what manner the King shall reign in righteousness. It suffices that all are agreed that in some way this world of ours, now red with slaughter, salt with tears, and dark with sin and the shadow of death spread over all faces—this poor world shall be restored: death shall be swallowed up in victory, and

> "For evermore
> The reign of violence be o'er."

Think what this means. At the present moment the labouring men of Europe toil many hours longer than their own needs require, for the sake of maintaining five millions of soldiers, who contribute nothing to the common store, but only mount guard over it. To these add all those other guardians, the police. Next reckon thousands who do nothing, because they can afford to be idle, and have no wish to become the "servants of all"; and tens of thousands who do worse than nothing—living by fraud, violence, or vice. Some day this burden will be rolled away.

Middle-aged men can remember six great wars between civilised Powers, and three French Revolutions, with fighting in the streets; and most of them will confess—what is really too horrible to think of,—that they cannot exactly reckon up how many smaller wars we ourselves, as British citizens, have, justly or unjustly, waged. Some day there will be an end of war.

Then we think of Whitechapel murders, terrible atrocities, a Chief Secretary hacked to death, a Russian Emperor blown to pieces with bombs, and we force in upon the dull brain the amazing thought—Some day there shall be a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. O God! that we might live to see it.

> "Amid wrong and rapine, and deathful tyrannous powers,
> We sigh for its coming, another empire than ours;
> When the trumpet shall sound, the sway of the strong shall cease,
> And the palm and the sceptre be Thine, O Prince of Peace."

No wonder that men grow impatient. Exact predictions of the day and hour which the Father holds in His own power are strangely popular, because they meet a craving of earnest hearts, tortured with suspense, and asking, "When shall He come?"

Side by side with the danger of hysterical fancies and baseless prophecies is the danger of the Baptist, that of gradual disheartenment, well-nigh rising up into unbelief. The sceptic demands, "Where is the promise of His coming?" and even the faithful begin to ask, "Is Christ indeed the appointed healer of all our woes? Is it indeed He that shall slay fraud and violence, and crush the serpent's head?" May it not be some new discovery, some grand invention, or culture, art, political reform, social change, that will make the world happy, ushering in the golden age? "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" But Christ can make the same answer to-day as when His weary servant put the same question long ago. Look around; see what is already being achieved; ask what power on earth has actually done most for the reform of grievances, for the healing of broken hearts, for the brightening of homes, for the taming of the wild and furious passions which convulse the world.

He does not say that all is done, but He bids us judge by what is accomplished whether any other hand is better fitted to achieve the rest. Christ does more to-day for the beauty of life than all art: more for peace than the police forces of the world: more for the prosperity of nations than all the schemes of all the politicians.

Nor is this all. Every heart has its own secret wish, its ideal, perhaps its day-dream: something which to attain would make (it believes) its reign of peace. And what is best within us confesses that what we sigh for is a clearer revelation of Christ, and a more vigorous power to follow Him. He—He it is that should come, if ever we should be blessed. Nor is there any real bliss, except blessedness. Yet, though Christ offers Himself as freely as sacramental bread to all who ask, though we sometimes dream that whatever religion can bestow may be had at one stroke, yet experience teaches us the need of patience. Sometimes we have to wrestle against wicked spirits; sometimes we are ourselves in heaviness through manifold temptations; sometimes it is only through suffering and weakness that the strength of Christ can be made perfect.

Then we are tempted to grow impatient, and to either turn aside or else to ask, "Art Thou He that cometh?"

But what else is there for us to expect or to desire? Ease? To eat richer food and sleep in softer beds cannot be the true need of a man created in the image of God. Fame? Probably the greatest men have missed it; certainly the greatest have despised it, knowing well that the opinion of others who might applaud them is far less precious than their own; whose self-applause is ever hesitating, qualified, and shaded. Service? To serve mankind is a noble ideal, if man is redeemed and dear to God; it is not so great if he is only the topmost foam on the billow of life, flashing and breaking and swallowed up for ever. Love? But all true love is sacramental of some higher mystery: it is degraded if its object is but the creature of an hour; it grows cold (if it knows nothing better than itself) at the thought of the grave into which it must so soon go down, or else lower down its beloved one, alone.

O dark and chilly lives of men! unless the Sun of Righteousness arise on them, with healing in His wings.

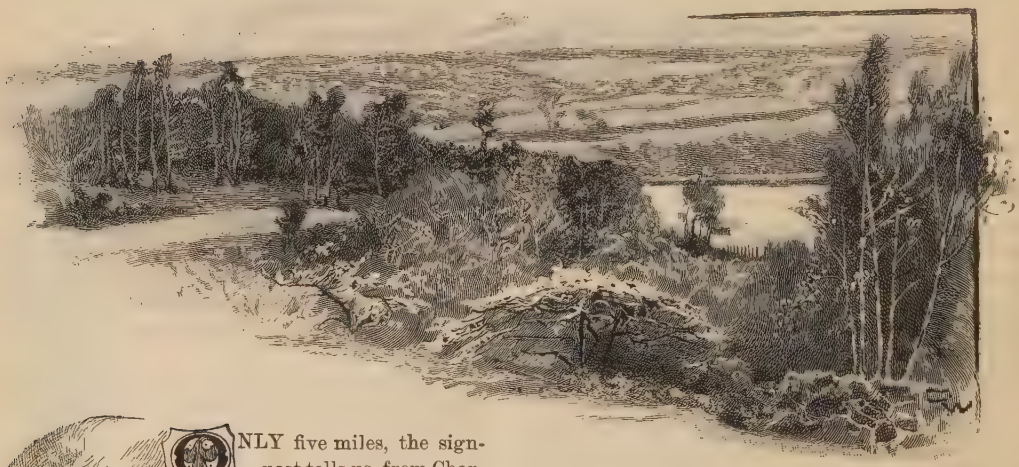
O hungry souls of men! unless Jesus Himself has come in to sup with them, and they with Him.

And O bitterness of bereavement and loneliness of all hearts! unless in Him we are still united with those who have gone before, to whom He shall even visibly re-unite us,

> "And, with the morn, those angel faces smile,
> Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

"Do we look for another?" one said long since. "Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and we know, that Thou art the Holy One of God."

ABOUT A SURREY HEATH.



"The wide expanse of the heath."

ONLY five miles, the sign-post tells us, from Charing Cross; and yet, as we stand here on this wild, breezy common, we might well imagine ourselves far away in the very heart of the country. Only a few miles in reality, still, how immense a distance it seems to us from the great city, with its ceaseless noise and strife! *There*, men are waging the great battle of life, the hard struggle for daily bread, which repeats itself from one year's end to another; new combatants ever rushing into the fray, eager hands outstretched to seize the sword which nerveless fingers have let fall, a hundred ready to fill the place of one tired warrior at rest for ever.

Here, our town-wearied eyes rest contentedly upon the fair scene, the wide expanse of the heath, stretching away into the distant woods, the silvery glimmer of water, and the windmill standing out like a landmark in the foreground.

The verdant grass contrasts with the withered fronds of last year's bracken; the yellow gorse is lifting up its head triumphantly to the breeze, as if confident that its prickles will serve to protect its blossoms from the fate of the neighbouring willows, which marauding hands have robbed of nearly all their downy catkins, which country children call "pussies," or "goslings."

As we look upon the yellow glory of the gorse, we cannot wonder that Linnæus, on first beholding it,

knelt down and thanked God for its beauty; its golden bloom just now seems better worth our contemplation than all that other gold for which men are working and toiling in the great city down yonder.

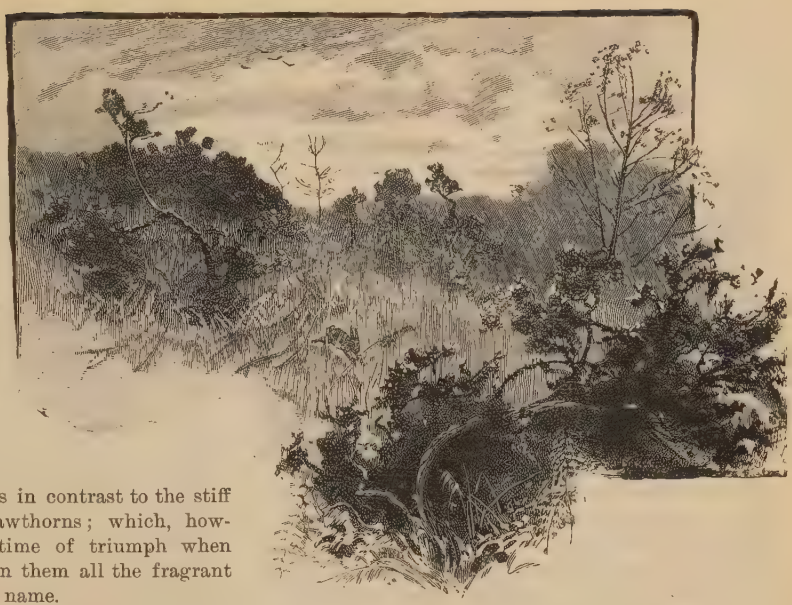
The trees are not yet in full summer foliage, but the tender green of the young shoots is more restful to the eye than it will be later on, when dust and burning sunshine have done their work upon them.

There a group of birches —"the ladies of the woods" —hang their graceful boughs in contrast to the stiff gnarled branches of the hawthorns; which, however, will have their own time of triumph when May has showered down upon them all the fragrant snowy blossoms that bear her name.

Here is an avenue of "immemorial elms." In one of them a robin sits, and sings a happy song of love and springtime, which makes an echo in the listener's heart.

There is a tangle of wild rose briars and blackberry brambles under the elms, into which a little brown rabbit hurries for shelter as we pass, peering out at us with bright affrighted eyes.

Up into the cloudless blue sky a lark goes singing, "as if its cup of happiness were o'erflowing;" higher and higher yet, until it appears a mere speck above our heads, although its song floats back to earth, like some sweet memory of the loved and lost.



"The yellow glory of the gorse."—*p.* 536.

The heather will by-and-bye be a carpet of purple and crimson, fit for kingly feet; but it is still dry and withered, and crackles under our tread as we move onward rejoicing in the sunshine of this perfect day. The earth seems awakening at the gentle touch of spring upon her face, all things uniting to praise the Lord, Who has made the world so fair, and created so many pleasant spots to gladden the aching hearts and rest the weary brains of the toilers in our modern Babylon.

As we leave the heath and turn townwards, we feel that life, hard and toil-worn though it be, has yet many "Elims" where tired wayfarers may rest, refreshed by the sweet calm of Nature, "which never did betray the heart that loved her."

Other great cities are brought into closer touch with the life of the open country, with its broad fields, its open sky, its fresher hues; and for their citizens, on that account, the contrast between the life of the town and that of the country may be less clear. But Londoners must traverse a yearly widening belt of suburbs to reach the open country, when there comes a breathing space amid their toil.

A few hours spent in purer air and brighter surroundings will do much to strengthen and restore those whose lot is cast amidst city din and strife; and even if the *real* country is unattainable, there are yet many pleasant resting-places to be found near London, like our Surrey heath.

"The trees are not yet in full summer foliage."

MISS TABITHA'S VERDICT.

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER.

IN most quiet homes there is a certain amount of excitement attendant upon the arrival of a new inmate, and in Miss Tabitha Allen's usually sober little domain at Forest Hill it not only made itself felt, but possessed the strange quality of leaving it undecided whether it was pleasurable or not. For a young girl that day was coming to be companion to the old lady who for so many years had led a well-nigh solitary existence, and the old lady in question was not at all sure that the prospect was an agreeable one. This being so, it may seem rather odd that she had advertised for a companion in the first place; but Miss Tabitha had grown to that age when the aid of younger footsteps than her own to run on errands, and younger eyes to set right the more delicate points in her needlework where her own sight was beginning to fail, had become a necessity. It was only when all preliminaries had been arranged, and the actual day of the girl's arrival had been reached, that her employer became suddenly awake to the reverse side of the picture, and doubted if she had been over-wise. It would be delightful to have little offices performed for her without being obliged to depend upon the thought of the servants; but, on the other hand, to have anyone constantly with her would be a sore tax; and that not so much that she might be in her way, as that she feared her power of keeping a young thing happy.

Would she prove to have resources in herself, or would it be necessary to invent them for her? Could she be allowed to go out for walks alone, or must a maid be spared to go with her? These and a hundred similar questions presented themselves to her as possible difficulties, for a great deal of what seems ordinary knowledge only falls to the lot of those who are blessed with homes and home-belongings, and an isolated life leaves even an elderly woman as ignorant as a child on many matters. It said much for Miss Tabitha's natural kindness of heart that she was capable of considering such possible rocks ahead; and, indeed, was almost pitiable as a proof that there was much good in her nature which circumstances had never yet brought out.

It was evening when Miss Wynn was expected to arrive, and the maids, who had lived too long with their mistress not to have caught something of the kindliness which rarely failed except in verbal expression, made up a roasting fire in the pretty sitting-room, and prepared a late tea, in which certain home-made muffins played a prominent part. So it looked altogether cheery and welcoming, after the dark snow-laden streets, when the traveller arrived; and the little old lady who advanced to meet her, with a shawl over her broad shoulders and an old-fashioned white cap upon her silvered hair, was not the least pleasing part of the picture.

Miss Tabitha, on her side, saw a tall, dark-haired girl, whose black eyes and full red lips struck her with an uneasy sense of being familiar. But the impression wore off, and by the time they had settled to their tea the first stiffness had vanished, and the newcomer had found plenty to say.

Her name was Cora; and it appeared that this, as Miss Tabitha had already guessed, was her first venture from home. Was she sorry to quit it? No, not particularly, for there were too many of them there, and such a scarcity of money, that it was a positive relief to come away to a house where—she said this with a pleased little smile on her pretty face—she could absolutely revel in a bedroom fire.

"But you will miss them, I am afraid," persisted Miss Tabitha.

"Only Norman. But I shall miss Norman," responded Cora, with a sudden softening in her hard, clear tones. "He is just thirteen, and he is delicate, poor little man!"

Miss Tabitha beamed at her over the tea-cups. Years before, in her youth, she had made a certain hard decision, which was just, but very merciless, and so had alienated her lover. The result had been these long years of living alone, during which she had bitterly repented her own lack of charity, and had grown greatly distrustful of her own judgment. So when she had decided to try a companion, she had also resolved in her own mind that she would be gentle and lenient with whatever might at first jar upon her. She would remember that she had had no touch with youth for many years, and if Miss Wynn's character proved other than the simple grateful one of her own dimly recalled girlish friends, she would look upon it as the outcome of things modern, of which she knew nothing. She would not judge her; she had judged Alec Fraser, and fifty years of loneliness had been her punishment.

So when the girl frankly owned that she cared little for leaving her own people, Miss Tabitha merely pitied her the more for not knowing what the full beauty of home meant; and when she spoke of her invalid brother, the old lady smiled at her in the endeavour to show her sympathy. She wished she could have put the thought into words, but habit was strong, and they did not come readily.

"Shall I wash up these cups for you? They are beautiful china. I suppose you would not trust them to a servant's hands?" Cora said presently; and Miss Tabitha hesitated in her reply.

"It is very good of you, but I think—I fear—it would hurt Mary's feelings," she said nervously. "She is a careful woman, and has been with me long."

She was touched at the girl's offer, and refused to see the distinct look of surprise with which she was laughingly answered.

"I don't think it matters much about her feelings one way or the other. I was thinking of your pretty blue."

Evidently a perplexing young lady. She refused point-blank to follow Miss Tabitha's suggestion to write her mother word of her safe arrival. "I don't think she cares much how I travel," she said carelessly; "and, besides, I 'm tired;" but a minute later she was full of concern that the parrot had no wrapper for its cage on such a cold night, and volunteered to sit up and make one. These and many other inconsistencies formed food for Miss Tabitha's meditations that night; but though the girl puzzled her, she was possibly more interested in her *protégée* than if her character had been nearer akin to her own. And the interest deepened as time went on, and Cora Wynn became so much a recognised part of the house, that even the old servants, who had predicted ill of her coming, grew reconciled to her presence.

She was a girl of naturally good instincts, but her training, at the caprices of a weak, frivolous mother, had been bad; the worse point of it, perhaps, being its general lack of uprightness and backbone. Another great miss was that, in the rough-and-tumble overgrown household, there was neither time nor care for those little kindnesses and loving courtesies which are the sunny haze of a home atmosphere; and Cora, who was more sensitive than her brothers and sisters, had unconsciously hardened on account of it. A sudden frost will nip up and kill many buds of promise upon the plants, and a want of moral sunshine will often blight qualities in our children's hearts which might blossom to rare beauty under more congenial treatment. The serenity of her new surroundings was marvellous to Cora, and the consideration with which she was invariably met awoke in her by turns a sense of what was almost devotion to her employer, and a worrying suspicion that the old lady must be trying to get something out of her in some way. No one her short life had yet shown her would have taken such trouble about a stranger.

This meaner side of her reflections owed itself principally to misery, for the poor child was receiving bad accounts of Norman, who, it appeared, had had a support suggested for his spine, which, if he could get ten pounds immediately, meant making him—as the lad himself put it—"like other fellows." The man who was to obtain it sailed for Australia in a fortnight, so it was now or never, wrote Norman.

She had been with Miss Tabitha some six weeks when the necessity of procuring this money began to haunt her dreams, but she was extremely reluctant to beg an advance on her quarter's salary. "Dad warned me against doing such a thing," she thought, "for the attempt lost him a situation once;" and the hopelessness of it nearly drove her wild.

Now, Miss Tabitha was the most unsuspicious of mortals. Nothing in the house was locked up, and the little ready money she kept was lodged in an open drawer in her bedroom. Cora had the arrangement of such matters, and often when she was putting away linen she would gaze wistfully at a thin packet of envelopes, where there was an especial blue one, which she knew contained notes. If only she could take ten pounds and put it back when her salary fell due, it might make all the difference in her brother's cure. It seemed so small a thing to borrow the money when so much hung in the balance; and the temptation grew sharper and sharper, until at last one evening she yielded.

She had been sent up to fetch something from that very drawer, and Miss Tabitha having for some reason moved the packet of papers from their usual place, the girl's fingers came into contact with their crispness. It was long after the tea-hour, and she had omitted to take with her a candle, but with the touch her face flamed hotly in the dark, and in another moment Norman's hopes bid fair to be realised, and Norman's sister was a thief!

Every other night—those innocent, happy nights—she had lingered longer, but now, as she slipped the envelope into the folds of her bodice, a hundred accusing, cautioning voices seemed to cry to her from each nook and cranny of the darkness, "*Go down at once! Go at once! You'll be missed.*"

A gas-lamp in the road opposite threw an unsteady gleam upon the marble mantelpiece, and flashed and winked at her grotesquely: "*You'll be missed!*" it jeered. A loose board creaked under her foot; the paper lying on her heart crackled loudly with her gasping breaths. Scared at her own shadow, as it cut the stairs' light which fell athwart the threshold, Cora almost rushed from the room, and, arriving down-stairs panting, stood for a full minute on the mat before she could summon courage to turn the door-handle, and go in to face Miss Tabitha.

As usual, the old lady's surroundings were very calm and restful: the parrot dozing in its cage; the fire glowing in the serene consciousness of fulfilling its duty, but too sober-minded to spring into flame; Miss Tabitha herself sitting quietly awaiting her return.

"What are you doing?" asked Cora abruptly, almost rudely. The silence frightened her.

"Conjuring up old memories; thinking of when I was as young as you, and life was full of golden possibilities."

The old lady spoke dreamily, and held out a kindly wrinkled hand to the girl, who first held aloof, and then dropped on her knees beside her. Caresses were rare in her own home, and the accusing paper seemed to burn her.

"I must think of Norman," she thought resolutely; "and it is only borrowed."

"Child," went on Miss Tabitha softly, "it was your talk last night of New South Wales, and of your mother's enjoyment there as a girl, which brought these musings. Have you a lover, Cora?"

"No, Miss Tabitha."

"Nor ever thought of one, eh? No need for blushing, child. Old maids are privileged; and it was thinking of my own youth that set me wondering if you would be as bent as I on spoiling your life."

"I?" The girl was startled. Did she guess? Could she know?

"Yes, you, Cora. Shall I tell you a very old story—a story of fifty years ago?"

What moved Miss Tabitha to these confidences it

"Then it all came out."

would be hard to tell. What is it that suddenly melts up the ice of a reserved nature? Perhaps it was the slight trembling of the girl's mouth, for the speaker knew now of whom it reminded her.

So she told of the far-away days when "Tabitha" had been "Tabby" or "Puss," and of how she had driven away her lover for a fault, a failing—she was still too loyal to the past to be more explicit—which a gentler-natured girl could have coaxed from him without any breach in their affections. Then he had gone to Australia, married and settled there, and she never heard further of him until news came to her in a roundabout fashion of Alec Fraser's death.

As the name slipped from her, Miss Tabitha's thin cheeks flushed, and she drew away from Cora, but the girl raised her head wonderingly.

"Why, that was grandpapa," she said; and then, springing hastily to her feet in the impulsive way her elder found so oddly attractive, she rushed out of the room, muttering she knew not what.

She had not taken much heed of the recital, nor felt much concern at what to Miss Tabitha was a grand discovery, but the misery of her theft was too heavy to be longer borne. Slipping back the envelope into its place, she returned with a lighter heart, and the next half-hour was spent in explanations and mutual pleasure. For Cora was glad to find herself of such unusual importance; and no miner coming unexpectedly upon gold could have conceived himself richer than did Miss Tabitha. Alec's grand-daughter—someone of his own flesh and blood on whom she could lavish her pent-up affection! An old love-phrase, stiffened with disuse, came slowly to her.

"I am so thankful for this, my—my darling," she said.

Presently she told her that for some days she had had a couple of bank-notes lying by her which she had intended for Cora.

"We used to keep St. Valentine's Day once upon a time, my—my dear," she added, with a smile, "and I did not know enough of you to offer them at Christmas. Why, what is this, Cora?" For the girl had pillowed her face in her hands, and was sobbing helplessly.

"You are so good, and I am so wicked."

"My dearest child! What do you mean?"

And then it all came out—the taking of the envelope, and the reason. Miss Tabitha looked perplexed.

"But it isn't there," she objected. "I moved it

last night to seal up for you, and mark with your name."

Cora's sobs did not cease. This was the first piece of rare kindness she had ever encountered; and while Miss Tabitha, this dear old lady whom grandpapa Fraser had loved, had been plotting her own happiness and Norman's, she had repaid her with the basest ingratitude. What mattered it that after all her purpose had been frustrated, for the intention had been the same.

Her absolute self-scorn, her silent vows to do better for the future, were broken by Miss Tabitha's gentle touch upon her bowed head.

"You must not cry," she said simply. "We will make Norman stronger, please God, and we will both try to help each other. You do not want to leave me, do you, little one? I will try to make you happy."

And Cora's answer was an earnest of the happiness they were yet both to find, for she caught at the kindly hand and kissed it.

"Please help me to be good," she whispered.

MABEL E. WOTTON.

SLEEPING AND WAKING.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL PASCOE.

"I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me."—PSALM iii. 5.
"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."—PSALM iv. 8.

WHAT a wonderful life is this with which God has gifted us, and how full it is of mystery! How strange it is that we think so little about it and its mystery! No machine ever made is half so complicated and so delicate as the human body; none needs such constant repair and renewal. Yet it works on moment by moment, year by year, until He who created it and gave it life calls that life away. Men linger to look upon some cleverly constructed curious toy, and praise the skill of its maker; men pause in their work, fascinated by the sight of the great locomotive thundering along, spouting out smoke and steam, shaking the solid ground, drawing its heavy freight of ponderous carriages and precious lives behind it, and admire the wonders of man's hand. How few there are who pause to think upon themselves—a far more wondrous handiwork—the handiwork of God! How few there are who cry, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well"! Great is the mystery of the human frame: greater the mystery of the soul that lodges in it for a while, as in a tent.

One of the mysteries of life of which men hardly think at all is spoken of in the verses which head this paper—the mystery of Sleep. What a strange thing it is! "Death's twin sister" it has been called. Into its secrets the cleverest man cannot pierce, though all men share its blessings. See your little child in its bed: the tired limbs resting, a smile perhaps on its face, one round arm carelessly flung across the coverlet, its breath coming and going so gently—what a pretty picture! What a mystery, too! The little creature is living, is full of life, but it knows nothing of what is going on around it. It is quite unconscious of your presence. It cannot speak to you, or return your kiss, or your loving smile. You draw the rumpled clothes over its little form, and tuck it in to keep it warm. The light of your lamp fills the room—perhaps falls on its face; at most it only moves for a second, or murmurs a broken word. It does not know you, or see the world, or remember yesterday, or look forward to to-morrow.

See the tired man, worn out after a heavy day's work, or perhaps burdened with care. He flings himself on his bed, his day's work or his day's trouble his foremost, ever-present thought. Kind sleep touches his eyes. His fatigue is forgotten, his cares have gone; he is utterly unconscious, or else he is wandering in Dreamland. He is a thousand miles away. He is rich and happy. He is in a strange bright land, sorrow and care quenched. The sailor feels not the roll of the ship, nor hears the swish of the water at the keel, nor the whistling of the wind in the shrouds. The soldier by the camp fire forgets the foe, and his hardships, and the roar of battle, and the long campaign. Each is far away—in sunny England, perhaps: in some quiet country place where the days are lengthening, and the sunshine is growing stronger, and the snowdrop and the crocus are peeping above the ground, and the cattle are lowing in the fields, and the sweet church bells are ringing as he dreams he is again in the village street on the calm, happy Sunday morning. Alive, and yet unconscious; conscious, and yet unconscious. There, and half a world away. What a mystery!

What thought strikes us most forcibly as we look upon the picture? Surely the thought of helplessness. The strongest man, asleep, cannot defend himself or help himself. He is completely at the mercy of those around him. He is utterly unguarded. He is like some citadel whose gates are wide open, its drawbridge down, its sentinels withdrawn. The roof may be tottering to its fall, the gale may be swooping

down to wreck his home. the murderer may stand over him, knife in hand—he neither knows, nor sees, nor cares. And yet the millions of mankind daily lie down to sleep, and daily rise again, safely and in peace.

Why? We know why, though we so often carelessly forget it. Because God is with us always, never leaving us for an instant to ourselves: about our path and about our bed: the Almighty Father, with more than a mother's love and tenderness. David knew this. He says as much in these Psalms. He not only knew it as we do: he kept the truth before him, as we do not. These two Psalms were composed by him when he was driven from his throne, his son a traitor to him, his people turned against him. He had to hasten across the Jordan for his life. No palace bed was his that night. The sentinels at the palace gate guarded not David, but his rebellious son. David's bed was the ground, and the sky was his canopy, and the stars lighted him to his couch, and the murmur of the wind soothed him to rest. Yes, he did rest. In the midst of pressing danger, the terror and unrest of his position, he slept. Why? Because he knew God was with him. Listen again to his words: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." And when the morning light came, and he faced again the dark future with its awful chances, with stout heart he cried, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about."

Brave words from a brave man!—brave because he believed in God and served Him. True words—truer words were never spoken. Ought we not to be able to use them too? Ought we not to have, at least, David's faith? I say "at least" because we know so much more of God's truth than he did—have so much more light upon our path than he had. We know our weakness and helplessness, but we know our Helper: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." If we will only love and serve God in Christ, and consecrate our lives to Him, we are safe. Many indeed are our cares and troubles, frequent our worries; dark sometimes seems our future, fierce are the assaults of sin. But what says our Master?—"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Every earthly want shall be supplied, every burden lightened, every assault of sin beaten back, strength given for the journey. He says more—"Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God—believe also in Me. In My Father's House are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Sleeping or waking, the man who so trusts and lives is safe.

Yes: sleeping or waking. Sleep is a type of death; and some day you and I will close our tired eyes upon this restless world and fall asleep. God give us grace so to live that when the last sleep comes His arm may be our pillow. No sleep then so sweet as that, none so restful, none so refreshing, none so absolutely safe; for He will not only be about our bed: He will hold us to His breast as a mother holds her little child. "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep."

And then the waking. How different from our earthly waking! Now renewed toil, renewed care, frequent anxieties, perplexities, sorrows: that is our lot. We speak of the fever of life, the storm of life, the voyage of life, the battle of life, and the like, and the similes we know are true. But with *that* waking we shall have left all this behind. The battle will have been fought, the pain endured, the storm pressed through, the darkness spent, the night gone. Bright and happy, strong and pure, our minds and wills in perfect union with God's mind and will, eager for nobler work, we shall welcome the dawn of that never-ending day; and this shall be the thought of our thankful hearts, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me."

A SONG OF MAYTIME.

HOW wonderful and strangely fair
The year is in its childhood!
There comes a crying through the air,
A murmur from the wildwood.
The cloudlets gather in the sky
Like children gone a-maying;
On daisied banks and meadows nigh
The happy lambs are playing.

No longer with a gush of tears
The fragrant skies are weeping
For joy to see that earth appears
More lovely after sleeping;
No longer morning sends its glow
Across a land of showers:
The April storms have passed, and lo!
They leave us Maytime flowers.

And shall not gladder thoughts arise
With early summer daisies?
And shall not winter sobs and sighs
Be changed to skylark praises?
Oh! cast thy doubts and fears away,
All shade of sadness clinging!
Thy life may, too, be glad with May,
Thy heart be filled with singing.

ARTHUR L. SALMON.

An Evening Hymn.

Words and Music by the Rev. W. J. Foxell, B.A., B.Mus. (Lond.).
(*Minor Canon of Canterbury Cathedral*).

1. Sa - viour, to Thee we raise our hymn of glad - ness;
2. May this day's sins, we pray Thee, all be par - doned;

Once more at ev - 'ning's hour we look to Heaven a - bove:
Grant us Thy ab - so - lu - tion, give Thy grace to cheer:

Far, far be - hind to leave earth's toil and sad - ness— So
Oh, nev - er let our hearts by sin be har - dened; But

rest - ing on - ly on Thy great re - deem - - ing love.
keep our con - science ten - der, give us ho - - - ly fear.

3. Now day is done, and all its labours ended,
   Close Thou, O Lord, our weary eyes in gentle sleep;
   So may we ever be by Thee defended—
   Oh, may Thy guardian angels round us vigil keep!

4. Our souls restore, renew our powers, and make us
   Strong in Thy strength to rise and greet the morning light;
   And at the last, O Blessèd Saviour, take us
   To dwell with Thee in that glad land which knows no night!

A LINCOLNSHIRE LASS.

BY C. E. C. WEIGALL, AUTHOR OF "THE TEMPTATION OF DULCE CARRUTHERS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"There is no friend like a sister,
In calm or stormy weather,
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."

SITUATED in the heart of North Lincolnshire, just under the long stretch of low hills immortalised by Tennyson, and which we call the Wolds, there is a small village. It was glorious August weather, and the long stretch of corn-fields that formed the whole of the upland slope of the plain were yellowing under the fierce sunshine into sheets of liquid gold.

To the east and west of Dalton lay a wooded ridge of land, below which a flat—in some places slightly undulating—plain stretched away into the sky-line, threaded with streaks of glittering silver, where the Trent wove its way along. The ridge itself was a sandy gorse-grown reach, green with fir-trees, and set here and there with the delicate silver birch and the ruddy copper beech.

Where the trees were thickest the black-headed gulls had, for some unaccountable reason, chosen to make their settlement; and although at this season of the year most of the birds had departed, still here and there, above the deep green of the tree-line, flashed a white leisurely wing, and the sharp cry of a gull every now and then broke the intense stillness of the day.

The village was more or less clustered round the little grey stone church, with its curious unfinished tower; and though it did not boast of many interesting houses, yet the two or three that it possessed were more than commonly picturesque.

The fine Elizabethan mansion that went by the name of Dalton Court, the red brick vicarage, with its sweet garden and sheltering hedge of trees, and the doctor's grey house, set back from the road in its neatly kept orchard and green lawn, afforded quite as much interest and speculation in the minds of the two hundred inhabitants of Dalton as the doings of the Court can possibly afford to the townspeople of Windsor. Thus, when the squire—poor soul!—went bankrupt from the effect of bad season after bad season, and sold the Court to Miss Dempster, you might have thought, from the commotion it caused, first, that the sky had fallen, and, secondly, that Lavinia Dempster was the most extraordinary phenomenon on the face of the earth, instead of a plain-featured, middle-aged, disagreeable woman, as she really was.

Dr. Fawcett's house was looking particularly restful that afternoon, bowered in pink monthly roses and twining trumpet-shaped honeysuckle. The flat deep-set windows, level with the walls, were shadowed by the luxuriant leafage which no one had the heart or the time to cut away in that busy household, and the porch, with its brass-knockered door, was trellised with white and purple clematis.

The few flower-beds and ridges of mignonette under the windows were alive with the hum of innumerable bees, and a desultory cock and hen had strayed from the field at the side of the house, and were ambling over the green turf, with an occasional interrogatory cluck as an impertinent sparrow snatched away a juicy worm from under their very beaks.

Mary Fawcett was sitting in the porch, shelling peas into a large old-fashioned bowl, and ever and again glancing at a book on her knee, which she had propped open with a fresh green pod, where the tiny peas like green pearls lay in their fragrant cradle.

The sunlight filtered through the ivy-leaves on to her bended head, and touched with glittering fingers the soft masses of her fair hair, coiled so neatly away on the top of her shapely head.

Although she was so young—for two-and-twenty cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be deemed elderly—she had that sedate air about her which responsibility brings in its train. For ever since her mother's death—ten long years ago—Mary Fawcett had been her father's right hand, and at twelve years old had developed into a capable little woman, and had assumed the reins of the household government.

She was very tall, with a well-developed figure and graceful hands and feet, and her plain, tight-fitting dress, with its touch of severity in cut and style, suited her to perfection.

She wore no ornament save a simple little pearl hoop on the third finger of her left hand, which told its own story—a story that might be verified by the happy smile that hovered upon her lips, and if by any chance, in the intervals of her work, her eyes fell upon that little circlet.

She had first met Basil Wyndham at the Vicarage a year ago, when he had just come to take the management of a bank in the neighbouring town of Gainford.

He was a good-looking man of about five-and-twenty, and his keen grey eyes had looked Mary Fawcett through and through, and had recognised in her sweet nature the ideal woman he had spent his life in trying to find. The wooing had been short and sweet, but the engagement was likely to prove a long one, for Wyndham was rich in everything save worldly goods, and Mary Fawcett had not a penny to bless herself with. And besides—as she said—she could not leave her father and the children for years and years.

By the children she meant Cyril, a schoolboy of seventeen, Nan, the beauty of the family, and little Gloire, the baby whose birth had cost their mother's life ten years ago, and whose quaint name had been

given her partly in remembrance of the roses that had lain on that dead mother's breast, and partly, as Dr. Fawcett said, in his bitter anguish, that some glory might be left to them now that the light and glory of their home had gone out for ever.

Mary lifted her head quickly as the latch of the garden gate clicked, and a light footstep was heard on the gravel path.

A little look of anxiety crossed her face as she put down her basin of peas, and went forward to greet the new-comer.

"Nan, my sweet," she said, "where have you been all this long time?"

Then, as her eyes fell upon the bunch of hot-house flowers in her sister's hand, she added anxiously—

"Not all the time at the Court, I hope, darling?"

The two sisters, as they stood together in the sunlight, were such an utter contrast, that they made their near relationship seem almost extraordinary. Nan, with her pale clear skin and full red lips, and dark hair and eyes, was as brilliant and bewitching a beauty as you might see in any London drawing-room. And Mary, with her sweet serene face and flower-like bloom, was overshadowed into pale obscurity by the vivacity of her younger sister, who seemed to be positively overflowing with the joy of existence.

Nan's gown, too, although it was only a simple cotton frock, was put on coquettishly, and the jaunty little sailor hat, with its scarlet ribbon, was set rather on the back of her pretty head.

"And why shouldn't I go to the Court if I like?" she answered, with a little pout. "Miss Dempster is always so glad to see me, and it really is rather a relief, after the awful monotony of our life!"

"Monotony?" said Mary, aghast. She never found the sweet country life, with the cares of the children and the garden, anything but an intense pleasure.

"Yes, dear," said Nan, rather quickly, and as if the words that she uttered were some lesson learned by rote. "Of course it is very nice for you, but when a girl has ambition like I have, and is—well, not bad-looking, she naturally yearns for something more highly exciting."

"They strolled along under the trees, and at last sat down beside the stream."—*p.* 549.

"Oh, Nan! have you learned those ideas from Mr. Reginald Dempster?" said her sister gravely.

"Well, and what if I have? Why do you and papa always regard the Dempsters as the incarnation of all wickedness? They are delightful people, really—and more than kind to me."

"I don't think that Mr. Dempster is a good companion for you, Nan," said Mary, turning away to examine a rose-tree with great diligence—for it was always difficult to her to "preach" to any of the younger ones. "I think that if father knew you were so much at the Court, he would be annoyed."

Nan flushed scarlet, and glanced anxiously at her sister, but Mary failed to see the look.

"What a horrid old croaker you are!" she said energetically. "Do you suppose that I see much of Mr. Dempster? All my time is taken up with reading to the old lady; and it is a positive charity in me to go and see her, for she hates all the neighbours, and often tells me that she should die of dulness if it were not for me."

"I suppose," said Mary, with a little sigh of relief, "that Mr. Dempster is much too busy to spend his time indoors. Of course he must look after the estate whenever he is down here."

"Oh dear yes!—the whole time," cried Nan, trying to ignore the hour she had spent by the fountain in the Court garden, with Mr. Dempster at her feet, that afternoon.

Mary linked her arm in her sister's.

"I don't want to preach to you, darling," she said, "but remember, discontent is a flower that brings forth very bitter fruit. And, Nan, if you have anything to confide in me—any trouble or any joy—remember, Nan, I love you; and how sweet it is to me to help all 'my children'!"

"You dear old ancient thing of twenty-two, come along and hunt the chickens back into their den!" cried the girl, with a loving kiss and a bear's hug.

And in another moment both the girls were flying over the lawn, chasing the indignant fowls back to their proper abode—all troubles and anxieties forgotten in the merry race.

It was only when Mary was alone in her room that night, and the house was quiet, that she sat down to think over her sister's words.

Beautiful Nan was sometimes a great anxiety to the family. Her nature was so utterly different from theirs that it seemed to have a strain of something like Bohemianism in it, which made her discontented with the quiet flow of domestic life. Three years ago, when Miss Dempster came to Dalton, she had met and taken a fancy to the headstrong little girl, and had encouraged her to be much at the Court.

At first Dr. Fawcett was passively amused at the intimacy, but later on, when he heard strange reports of his daughter's friend, and little whispers of past misdeeds that crept into the village air, he did his best to discourage Nan in her constant visits.

But the girl, used to getting her own way in everything, would not be discouraged, and went and came in such direct disobedience to her father's will, that he, in despair, gave way to her, as he always did; and now her visits were tacitly allowed, although Miss Dempster's name was not often mentioned by the family.

But Mary was in dire perplexity just now as to the existence of a certain Reginald—Miss Dempster's nephew and heir—who was, from all accounts, an idle young man, with a handsome face and a flattering tongue. Still, as Nan declared that she seldom if ever saw him, there could be no harm done in the way of idle flirtation. And Mary, with a sigh, tried to dismiss her anxious elder sister's thoughts, and fell asleep at last, with a smile on her lips as she dreamed of the love that was hers, and the faithful heart that beat but for her alone.

CHAPTER II.

BREAKFAST-TIME was the only hour when all the Fawcett family were sure of meeting together, for at all other times of the day Dr. Fawcett was liable to be called away on some of his long drives; for, as with all country doctors, his practice was exceedingly scattered, and extended over a large area.

So at eight o'clock next day they were all seated round the table—Cyril, whose holidays had begun; Alec, who had come on a flying visit from Edinburgh, where he was studying medicine; Mary, Nan, and little Gloire, fair and pale as her namesake, with a mane of yellow hair that stood out like a soft halo round her head.

Mary was busy with the urn, and Dr. Fawcett engrossed with a long story that Alec, a bright-faced boy of twenty, was telling him. It was about some professor who had been at Edinburgh in his old medical student days, and he was living over again his own experiences in every word of his son's story.

"I say, Nan," said Cyril at last, looking straight across the table at her, "what a jolly bracelet that is!"

Every eye was immediately turned in Nan's direction, and she strove hard to appear unconcerned, as with burning cheeks she glanced down at the little gold padlocked bangle that had slipped into sight beyond her sleeve, and lay conspicuously on her pretty white wrist.

"Why, Nan, that is a new toy!" said Dr. Fawcett in a kindly tone, "and a pretty one, too. Given you by Miss Dempster, I suppose? Well, well! But I don't know that I like her giving you such handsome presents."

"Oh, father!" said Nan, with a little pout, "I do so love pretty things; and I don't get many of them."

"Well, well, lassie," said her father good-humouredly, one of his rare smiles lighting up the grave face as he looked at his beautiful daughter, who was the living image of her dead mother. She was the only one of the family whom he spoiled in the smallest degree, and it was well known in the home circle that Nan could do nothing wrong.

Meanwhile Cyril, with boylike persistence, had come round, and was leaning over his sister's chair.

"I thought that Miss Dempster's name was Lavinia," he said; "and the initials on your bracelet are R. D."

Nan gave a quick glance at her father, but he was deep in Alec's story once more.

"Silly boy!" she said. "Miss Dempster's name is Rose Lavinia, and to her intimate friends she is always known as Rose, for she hates her second name."

Then she tossed her bangle impatiently backwards under her frill of lace, and went on imperturbably eating her toast.

"Well, I always thought that Miss Dempster was a queer old cove," said Cyril, taking a huge slice of cake on his way back to his seat, "but really, if she takes to giving you bangles of gold and jewels, she is some use as a friend. Only I think you might suggest that there are four bangleless and repining souls at home, to whom presents would also not come amiss."

"Are you studying oratory at school?" said Nan, laughing, satisfied with the result of her explanation, and in thorough good-humour with herself and the world in general.

"And what are we going to do in the way of amusement to-day? Mary, of course, will have to collect the hens' eggs, and to calculate the results of poultry-keeping—if twenty hens lay one egg a day, and grain is a shilling a peck——! And Gloire will have to be drilled through her scales and alphabet, and——"

"Alphabet!" shrieked Gloire. "Why, I 'm long past 'my hedgehog's name is Artemidorus,' and I can read 'Je suis une fille très aimable' quite well."

"Dear me!" said Cyril, with mock humility. "I *wish* I was as clever as you are. But I don't think, if I tried for a whole week of Sundays, that I could even *spell* Artemidorus."

"I am very proud of my little pupil," said Mary, smiling down at the flushed face beside her, and the little roundabout figure, with its big white pinafore and blue sash.

"I 'll tell you what *I* am going to do, children," put in Dr. Fawcett: "I am going to take the wagonette to Gainford at eleven o'clock this morning, and you can all come with me if you like. I have some sort of notion that banks generally close early on Saturdays, and that a certain manager, who shall be nameless, would not be sorry to see one at least of the members of this family. I have got some business to do and a patient or two to see, so I shall be in the town for two or three hours."

There was a shriek of delight from the family—for they were none of them above the pleasures of a twelve-mile drive and an *al fresco* luncheon—and Mary, blushing with pleasure, went round to her father's side, and put two warm, grateful arms round his neck.

"You darling old dad!" she cried. "Basil *will* be surprised and delighted."

"I don't know about the surprise part of the business," said Dr. Fawcett, laughing. "I rather fancy he got a letter from me this morning to explain our movements, and that he may join us at the 'White Hart' when we arrive."

Nan's was the only face that wore a faint cloud. She was by no means anxious to make one of the party that morning, having already a little engagement of her own; but she did not like to proclaim the fact, for fear of awkward questionings that might arise on the subject.

So she joined her voice with the others, and if it had a ring of dissatisfaction in its accents, no one noticed it, in the hurly-burly of delight that ensued.

"Come along, Queen," said Alec, when breakfast was over, tossing Gloire up to his shoulder, where she sat in trembling ecstasy, looking down on the world from a height of six feet odd. "Let 's inspect the live-stock, and see which of the guinea-pigs and the white rats we will take in to Basil. I believe he has a great affection for cavy curry and rat soup."

And they whirled away in the midst of a storm of exclamations from Gloire, to whom every guinea-pig was as a well-beloved brother, and each rat dear to the very tip of its pink tail.

Mary began to clear away the breakfast things, humming a low, happy song as she laid each teaspoon in its appointed place.

The house boasted of only two servants—a cook and the old nurse who had cared for them all as babies, and had now developed into the general factotum of the busy household.

Nan was usually very willing to help in these domestic duties, but this morning there was a languor and listlessness about her figure which filled Mary's heart with a touch of anxiety.

"What is it, Nan?" she said, pausing in her song, with the jam-spoon still raised in the air.

"I have got a headache," said the girl, a little sullenly, turning away her face from those clear eyes, with a gesture of shame that her sister took for a spasm of suffering.

"Oh dear, how distracting! If you can't go to Gainford I shall certainly stay with you and nurse you," said Mary bravely. "You look quite ill, and——"

"I insist upon your going with them, Mary," said Nan, with feverish energy. "It is very good of you to think of it, but I never care to have anyone, not even nurse, about me when I have a headache. I shall just go to my room and lie down, and see if I am better by twelve o'clock; and if not, why, I shall just stay at home, and be ready to greet you on your return."

And with a decided gesture of her head, Nan walked out of the room, up-stairs to her own private sanctum; and when twelve o'clock came, and the wagonette drove up to the door, the closely drawn blind that veiled her bedroom window showed that her head was still too bad to allow her to join the merry party.

But as soon as the rattle of the wheels had died away in the distance on the hard road, Nan opened her fast-shut eyes, and peered out at the sunshine that lay upon the green turf in a haze of golden light.

How perfect the Court woods would be in their dewy freshness! and the mere thought of the lover she had promised to meet at two o'clock under the beech-trees set her heart wildly beating.

The young people had chosen an hour when Miss Dempster would be indulging in a nap after her luncheon, and when the Fawcett family, had they been at home, would have been scattered to the four winds, amusing themselves in various fashions.

Looking at her watch, Nan discovered that it was little more than one o'clock; and taking up a book,

"'Basil, I command, I entreat you to tell me the worst.'"—*p.* 552.

she sat down to read, until a tap at the door roused her once more to consciousness.

It was nurse, come to look after the afflicted one of her brood, and bearing a delicate plate of soup and a fascinating biscuit to tempt the jaded appetite.

"And how is my lamb?" she said, creaking into the room on shoes that *would* not be repressed.

Nurse Alison was just one of those comfortable, motherly women—with cheeks like rosy apples, smooth grey hair, and a capacious bosom for weary heads to be pillowed on—whom one can imagine never out of temper, never for an instant rising above the routine of domestic life.

Nan lifted her head with a gesture of weariness.

"Rather better, nurse," she said. "I shall go out now, I think, for a while, and try what fresh air will do. This room is so hot."

"Very well, my dearie. But eat this bite and this sup first: it'll bring a splash of colour into your white cheeks."

She fidgeted a little with the blind and the books on the table, setting the knick-knacks tidy, till at last she drifted out of the room—still creaking, but motherly to the last.

Nan, with the eagerness of a healthy appetite, devoured her lunch and longed for more. Then she rose, and went over to the mirror.

It was a small, old-fashioned glass, not half large enough to reflect more than her face and dainty throat, but she propped it up with a book to a convenient angle, and sat down to contemplate, with a grave intentness that was scarcely girl-like, her face and figure.

She weighed each point, each feature, with quiet deliberation, and ended by unpinning the masses of her dark hair, and letting it roll down to her waist. Then she gathered it up and fastened it in a newer and more becoming fashion, and arranged the soft curls on her forehead, under her shady hat. Then pinning a rose at her throat and another at her belt, she drew on her gauntleted gloves, and left the room, secure in the consciousness that never had her mirror reflected so fair a face.

Although she moved languidly until she was out of sight of the house, the quick, eager blood was surging through her veins, and her pulses were beating and throbbing with the delight and expectation of the *rendezvous* in the wood, and she had great difficulty in restraining her footsteps to the quiet pace of demure invalidism.

Her way led her over a meadow, lush with green grass and rushes, and yellow, in patches of higher land, with buttercups. At the end of the field, a five-barred stile led into a deep-rutted lane, which ended in the wood.

There was a clear rippling brook to cross, where silver minnows darted in among the watercress and kingcups, and Nan picked her way daintily across

the stepping-stones, wondering why no one had thought the little lane of importance enough to throw a rustic bridge across the beck.

The wood was deliciously cool when Nan scrambled through the short cut in the hedge, and pulled herself up the bank, clinging to the tufts of bracken, and crushing the sweetness out of the woodruff as she went. The little beck was trickling its happy way on through the trees, and the rooks, from their colony overhead, made the air ring with their cawing, as they flapped lazily from branch to branch.

The appointed place of meeting was in a thick glade, by the side of a huge oak-tree that had fallen in a gale of wind the winter before, and, as it was rotten at the core, had been left as it had fallen, and served for many a lover's seat and many a child's amusement.

Nan was evidently before her time, for the glade was deserted, and no manly figure, as she had fully expected to see, was impatiently looking out for her. She frowned, and then sighed faintly, and sat herself down on one of the lower branches of the oak-tree, and resigned herself to waiting, swinging herself backwards and forwards with the toe of her pretty shoe.

It was very hard, certainly, that she should have to wait; but though she felt a little annoyed with Mr. Dempster, the thought never flashed across her mind that it was just as undignified for her to be waiting for her dilatory lover as it was wrong for her to be planning stolen interviews, without the knowledge of her father or her sister.

But Nan was one of those easy-going people who, by a twist and turn of conscience, can make everything seem expedient in their own eyes, and as long as the thing desired is agreeable to their own inner and outer man, it must of necessity be right.

So she sat in her woodland solitude, and persuaded herself that Reginald Dempster loved her, and that it was perfectly proper to meet him by stealth, as of course both her own father and Miss Dempster were such unreasonable, disagreeable people, that if they knew of their young people's affection, they would with chilling cruelty take pains to separate them.

At least, these were the sentiments that Mr. Dempster had drilled into her empty little head, and she, of course, had adopted them as her own at once.

Presently a step was heard crushing through the undergrowth and fallen twigs, and a voice humming softly "Queen of my heart" stole up from the direction of the Court garden, and in a moment a man came into sight, walking somewhat leisurely, it is true, towards the fallen tree.

Nan rose from her seat, and ran forward to meet him with glad outstretched hands.

"Oh, Mr. Dempster, how late you are!" she said reproachfully.

"Is it late?" he said, taking her hand carelessly, and pulling out his watch with the other hand. "No, I think not. I make it just two o'clock."

Nan pouted a little, and the tears flashed into her eyes.

"Why, you don't seem at all glad to see me," she said, half turning away from him. "And I gave up a drive to Gainford, and pretended to have a headache, and went without my luncheon, on purpose to come."

"Dear me, what a sacrifice! Why, I must bring you at least half a dozen boxes of chocolate next time I go up to town, to make up for it," he answered lightly. "Why, my pretty Nan, of course I am glad to see you! and you are looking such a blooming little witch, too!"

Reginald Dempster was one of those men who seem created for the express purpose of doing nothing with as much grace as possible.

He was rather tall, and slightly built, with a fair moustache and hair, and delicately small hands and feet. He wore an eyeglass, and was exquisitely attired in a suit that could only have been built in Bond Street, and his voice, rather monotonously pitched, was embellished with a slight lisp.

They strolled along under the trees, and at last sat down beside the stream, and he took up a big plantain-leaf to fan her pretty, flushed cheeks.

"I had to read the paper, you know, before I came out," said Reginald, looking down into the dark eyes below him, and thinking how beautiful they were, and what a thousand pities it was that their owner was only a country doctor's daughter, without a halfpenny to call her own; "and it's really astonishing what a lot of trouble there is in the world. There's a horrid railway accident in to-day's news, and the breaking of a big bank—Baxter's—which will mean ruin to more than a few people. But I can't say I pay much attention to anything that does not touch myself; and as long as the breaking of the bank does not make me a penny the worse off, they may all break, for aught I care!"

It did not seem to strike Nan that this sentiment was a brutally selfish one, and she laughed merrily at Mr. Dempster's sally of wit.

"Oh, by-the-bye," she said at last, blushing a little guiltily, "Cyril found out my bangle this morning, and there was quite a fuss over it. However, fortunately, they quite thought that your aunt had given it to me, and of course I did not undeceive them."

"Clever little girl!" said Dempster, coolly lighting a cigar, and puffing away at it, without the least thought of Nan's likes and dislikes.

"I wonder when we shall be able to announce our engagement openly?" said Nan, becoming suddenly interested in a clump of kingcups at her feet. "I do so hate all this underhand work! I should so like to tell Mary, at least, about it."

"Our *what?*" said Mr. Dempster, growing rather red. "Did you say our *engagement*, Nan?"

"Yes," she answered, looking up at him with a slightly startled air.

"Oh well, you know," he said coolly, "you can't be regularly engaged without everybody's consent all round—parents and guardians, and everyone; and as for my people and my aunt, they'd give me the chuck soon enough if they heard about our affair."

"I don't quite understand," said Nan, putting her hand to her head confusedly. The very world seemed to be going round with her as he spoke.

"Don't you think we might wait and be patient for a little while longer?" he said more kindly, pitying

her evident trouble, and willing to let her down easily for the sake of her pretty, wistful face; for after all, this young man *had* a drop or two of the milk of human nature in his veins. "If we wait for a few months we might see our way clearer; and you know you promised me, Nan, that you would not even breathe a word to any of your people."

He laid his hand caressingly on hers, but she drew it away with an impatient gesture, and rose to her feet. Her pride for the first time had woke into life, and she felt keenly the want of dignity about the whole situation.

She regretted having come there that afternoon, but she could not lose faith at once in the man who had sworn that he loved her.

True, she remembered bitterly at that instant that he had never once in so many words asked her to be his wife, but she had taken that for granted. Of course, marriage was the real outcome of every love affair; she knew nothing of idle flirtation to pass the weary time of a country visit. She had no experience of admiration that could not ripen into true love.

She only thought herself a very injured, ill-used damsel, and the world a very hard one.

"I must go," she said, choking down a sob, "for *my* people will be returning home before very long."

She turned away, but Reginald Dempster sprang to his feet.

"Oh, Nan! sweetest, fairest Nan, give me one kiss before we part," he said, in a half-mocking tone, trying to slip one arm round her slender waist.

"No, thank you, Mr. Dempster. I only kiss the man who is to be my husband," she answered, with a proud motion of her head. "I was under a mistake before."

Then she turned towards him swiftly, and cast one searching, passionate glance at his face, hoping to read there some denial of his heartless words; but Reginald Dempster's face was turned away, and he was nervously and shamefacedly cutting off the heads of the kingcups with his cane. And Nan, knowing that her dream was over, crept away, sick at heart, feeling that the sunshine and the birds' song were a mockery, and that if it were not for her promise, she would now willingly lay down her head on her sister's breast and sob out all her sorrow and her wounded pride, and be scolded and comforted once again.

CHAPTER III.

It was a very merry party of young people that drove off from Dalton that sunny morning; and when they had left the village behind them, and were speeding along the low-lying road that led to Gainford, they made the echoes ring with their glees and catches.

The road wound in and out, among trees that met and laced above their heads, through whose bushy depths they caught sight of deep green glades gemmed with ferns and wild flowers, where rabbits and squirrels luxuriated in their "happy hunting-ground."

The small town of a few thousand inhabitants, lying low on the river-bank, looked picturesque, with its old-fashioned sunlit-red roofs and outjutting wharves above the busy tide, as they drove up the street.

The town boasted, among other historic legends, of an old hall, partly ruined, standing three-square in a paved courtyard, and still haunted by the restless ghost of one of King Hal's maligned wives.

And it was towards this building that the young Fawcetts bent their steps when they had left their father at the door of one of the straight grey houses fronting the main street.

He had smiled back at his little flock as they wound their way sedately up the pavement: Gloire, in all the ecstasy of delight, with a whole shilling to spend, which was already burning a hole in her pocket, and which she had spent in imagination a hundred times over already, supplying the whole of her family with presents.

They had left him in the shadow—a dark upright figure—and they themselves had drifted away into the sunlight, full of life and joy. And Dr. Fawcett, as he watched them from the doorsteps, heaved a sigh.

"Poor souls!—poor children!" he said, "happy in their ignorance. God grant that I may be spared to them until at least my two boys are out in the world."

Then the door opened, and he entered the house, and went straight into his friend Dr. Hancock's consulting-room.

"I say, Gloire," said Cyril, looking back to wave a farewell at his father, "what do you think of taking home a pony for yourself to ride? I saw a jolly one at the inn as we came through. Would you like me to ask if they would let you have him for a shilling?"

Gloire annihilated him with a glance, and marched disdainfully on, with her blonde head very much in the air, and the shilling pressed very tightly in her small warm hand. She knew that Mary would help her to lay it out to the utmost advantage, and until the right moment arrived she had far too much to do with admiring the new sights and sounds around her to make any ridiculous speculations as to her purchases.

Dr. Fawcett went straight into his friend's room, with an anxious line of care on his forehead—a line which had been more often there of late than usual, and which made him look at least ten years older than his fifty-five years warranted.

Dr. Hancock was standing by the window when his friend entered, and came forward with a smile to greet him.

He was a grey-headed, elderly man, with a face set in lines hard as steel, and eyes which, although they seemed keen enough to pierce through a stone wall, softened with absolute affection as he grasped Dr. Fawcett's hand.

"Well, Fawcett, old fellow, how are you?" he said. "Any fresh trouble in the most tiresome of all regions?"

Dr. Fawcett shook his head.

"I am much worse, Hancock," he said quietly,

"and I fear that I cannot much longer disguise my condition from my children."

A look of keen anxiety flitted for a moment over Dr. Hancock's face; then he said—

"Well, look here: are you in any hurry this morning?"

"No," said the other, with a faint smile. "I have two or three hours to spare. I brought all my little family with me to meet young Wyndham, on the plea of having a patient or two to see in Gainford."

"All right, then. Just go into the waiting-room for half an hour, and sit quietly down and amuse yourself with the paper, and my man will bring you in a snack. I have an important patient waiting to see me."

Dr. Fawcett moved wearily away, into the little room that faced the town garden at the back of the house.

Now that the excitement and pleasure consequent on having his children around him had faded away from his face, he looked strangely worn and tired, and he sat down by the open window with a sense of languid collapse which made thought impossible—everything impossible, save dreamy repose.

At last he roused himself with an effort, and picked up the paper that lay beside him. It was a London daily, and he turned the pages with the interest of a man who as a rule sees nothing more than the local paper which is necessary to keep him *en train* with local affairs.

There was something printed in large type at the corner of the centre sheet, and he paused in his listless perusal to take in this evidently important item of news.

As he read, a great and wonderful change came over the man. It was neither fear nor horror, but a rigid blending of both, in a face grey with an awful shadow.

Then the paper rustled to the ground unheeded, and Dr. Fawcett, still silent, still motionless, fell forward across the table beside him, with his face hidden, his rigidly stiff fingers still grasping the fatal sheet.

A little breeze that had arisen, and was rustling the leaves in the tiny garden, floated joyously in through the open window, and played with the brown hair that shaded his white forehead, and which was turning so grey on the temples that Mary had laughingly told him that morning that he was getting to look as if he powdered his head every day.

A robin, emboldened by the quiet of the room, perched pertly on the window-sill, and took up his song.

But the motionless figure never stirred; for Eternity had begun for Dr. Fawcett, and the robin's song had merged into the chant of the angels across the silver sea.

* * * * * *

"Really, of all tiresome things, the most annoying is to play 'Gooseberry' on a very hot day," said Cyril, sitting down on a large stone in the courtyard of the old hall, and fanning himself with his sailor hat.

"Alec, attend to me for one instant, and just consider how many times we have chased Basil and Mary at a discreet distance round the old hall, and into the orchard at the back, and through each separate room that is open to the public; and as we have finally landed them in the library, with Gloire in attendance, we may be safely said to have done our duty, and deserved a 'go' of sherbet or some such luxury; so come on, and let us make ourselves scarce for five minutes."

Basil and Mary had taken up their position in the reading-room.

It was quite empty that afternoon—for a wonder; and they sat side by side on the low window-seat, while Gloire wandered away to look at the papers on the table. The window, with its quaintly latticed panes, was fastened open, and the bushes of rosemary and lavender were nodding their heads into the room, filling it with an old-world fragrance that somehow suited the oak wainscoting of the walls, and the bits of frayed tapestry so carefully preserved in the panels.

"What an unexpected pleasure to-day has been!" Basil was saying, touching Mary's hand under cover of her long glove, which she had drawn off, and which lay on her lap.

"Such a useful little hand it is," he went on, in a lower tone, looking at the strong, capable white fingers with their taper nails, and soft lines of youth still making tender little creases on the slender wrist. "I wonder when I shall be able to call it mine, and when my wife will come home to me?"

Mary blushed sweetly, and then looked archly up at him and shook her head.

"I had really no notion before that lovers were such impatient people. Now, *my* idea of a nice engagement is at *least* five years, and *we* have only been engaged six months."

"Your experience of lovers is so enormously varied that mine pales away into utter insignificance before it, of course, my sweet!" he answered.

"We *must* wait until Gloire is old enough to be father's housekeeper, Basil; for Nan is so clever and so pretty that she does not make a very good head of the house; and besides, she will marry very soon, I expect—at least, if there was only someone for her to marry; but young men are scarce round Dalton."

Wyndham's opinion of Nan's character was not a particularly exalted one, but he did not utter his sentiments aloud.

"I know someone who is a thousand times prettier and cleverer than any Nan, and yet who is the best housekeeper in the world. Nevertheless, my queen, it sometimes causes me much anxiety to think that all I can offer you is three hundred pounds a year, and no hopes of any more for a long, long time."

"Why, we have not very much more of our own to live on at home," said Mary innocently. "You see, father is putting by as much as he can possibly spare every year, so that we may be able to live quietly, without depending on his practice, because he is not a very strong man. And then some day Alec will step into the work at Dalton."

There was silence for a few moments, and then Wyndham said dreamily—

"Well, I have not many relations to consult over

my affairs and to ask to our wedding. In fact, I believe there is not a single person I can claim kinship with except one aunt, and my brothers and sisters. But then, as their name is legion, the world is pretty well peopled with Wyndhams just at present."

"Relations?" said Mary, laughing. "Oh, I am much better off. We have a cousin six times removed, whom we don't care for very much, because the last time she saw us she said that Nan and Gloire ought to be sent to very strict schools, where they would be taught to behave properly; and then we have an uncle—a brother of my mother's—who lives out somewhere in Australia, but we have not heard of him for years, so perhaps he is dead. So that no one on *my* side will be likely to forbid the banns."

"Why, you are absolutely *rolling* in relations," he returned. "Fancy having a whole cousin and a mythical uncle somewhere in the Bush to boast of! I wonder you don't sink under the weight of the burden."

"When I begin to find myself overpowered I will let you know," she said saucily.

Then, rising to her feet as she heard the distant chime of the church bell, "Why, that is actually four o'clock, I believe; and father promised he would come and fetch us at a quarter to!—Little Sister Ann, look out of the window, and tell me if you can see anyone coming."

Gloire left her illustrated papers, and going to the window, looked out across the square.

"No father coming yet," she said, "but there is a man walking quickly up the pavement—a man with a rather grey beard."

"Perhaps he is bringing us a message," said Mary, moving towards the door. "Come and let us meet him. Why, it is Dr. Hancock," she added, with a touch of anxiety in her voice as she stood on the steps, shading her eyes with her hand.

Dr. Hancock, as he came up to the little group, took them all in with one swift glance: Mary, with her happy face, standing in the full sunlight, with Gloire clinging to her dress, and her lover looking over her shoulder. She was the very incarnation of youth and joy, and to that peaceful group he was the bringer of news that would crush the very life out of their young souls.

He looked round as if for a moment's respite, and caught sight of the two boys lounging towards them, whistling, and talking in loud, merry voices. Then inspiration seemed to come to him, and he said suddenly—

"Wyndham, I want to speak to you for a moment.—Good-afternoon, Miss Fawcett. Will you spare him to me, please?"

Wyndham followed him, surprised, round the angle of the house into the garden at the back; then Dr. Hancock turned and faced him.

"Wyndham," he said, almost fiercely, "can't you see something dreadful has happened? Dr. Fawcett is dead—and how can I tell those poor children?"

Wyndham staggered back, sick and faint, against the wall.

How hateful the smell of lavender seemed to him ever afterwards—recalling to him the sunny garden and the peaceful town around him, and the awful contrast of that stern white face, and the words that brought death into life.

"It is not possible," he gasped, utterly unnerved for the moment. Then, as he began to realise the truth from his companion's face of agony, he collected himself and stood upright, facing Dr. Hancock with clenched hands.

"How did it happen?—tell me quickly," he said. "I must go to Mary."

"He came to me to consult me about his heart. He had known of the existence of disease for some years, and lately he had become much worse. I had already warned him that any sudden shock might kill him. He went into the waiting-room until I was ready to see him, and there we found him, half an hour afterwards, quite dead, with the paper containing the intelligence of the failure of Baxter's bank in his hand. I had not seen the paper or heard the news, or, knowing that his savings were invested in the concern, I should, of course, have broken the intelligence carefully to him," said Dr. Hancock huskily.

"How am I to tell her?" groaned Wyndham, utterly appalled by the prospect of the ordeal that he had to face, and thinking only of the girl he loved, whose sorrow was more to him than all the world beside.

"Delay will only make the matter worse," said the older man decidedly. "Come at once!"

But there was little need to break the tidings to Mary's anxious heart; for when the two men turned the corner of the hall, and came out into the square again, she came swiftly forward, reading her sorrow in their faces.

"I know," she said passionately, her slight figure swaying with the wild throbbing of her heart as she stood before her lover. "Something has happened to my father. Basil, I command, I entreat you to tell me the worst." Her hand was gripping his coat-sleeve with the convulsive clasp of despair.

"He is dead!" she said at last, mechanically, when no answer came from his parched lips.

She put her hand up to her throat, for she felt as if she were choking, and as if she must scream aloud in her agony.

"He did not suffer at all," said Dr. Hancock soothingly, feeling that he could not tell her of the loss of their little fortune—time must soften the first shock before the other could be inflicted. "His heart failed him. He had had disease for some years, and all was over directly. You are at least spared the sorrow of that thought."

The boys, seeing that something had happened, had come up to the group, and were looking from one to the other with scared, frightened faces.

Then Alec pushed his way forward, and with a sudden assumption of dignity, took his sister's hand.

"What is it, Mary?" he said. "Is it my father?"

She turned to him, the sudden blessing of tears coming to relieve her overwrought brain. "Oh, Alec—Alec—we have no father!" she sobbed, clinging to him, till Gloire roused her with her wailing cry, and she checked her own sobs to take the child in her arms and soothe her with caresses and loving words.

To see Mary once more her old self seemed to strengthen her brothers, and it was a very composed

group that faced Dr. Hancock, anxious to do whatever he advised.

He took Alec off with him to make the arrangements for their return, and the others, turning up a narrow lane that led to the churchyard, passed almost instinctively up the flight of steps and through the long porch into the church.

It was the seventh day of the month, and they were reading the thirty-seventh Psalm, and the first words that fell on Mary's ears were those verses that have comforted so many an agonised soul.

She listened, with the quiet tears rolling down her cheeks—the bitterness of her sorrow softened into patient resignation—until the service was over, and they passed out with the congregation, and stood waiting for their carriage at the church gate.

While they were standing there, the vicar came up. He knew Wyndham very well, and he hesitated in front of the little group.

"Pardon me," he said gravely, "I think you are in great trouble. Can I be of any help to you? It is Miss Fawcett, I think?" for he never forgot a face, and although he had only met Mary once before, he knew instinctively who she was.

Wyndham told him in a few words what had happened, and he turned to Mary, with a wonderful light of pity shining in his face; and the girl, looking up into his tender brown eyes, that, in spite of his more than fifty years, were so young in their expression, thought that she had never seen a more hopeful face, marked though it was with lines of sorrow and trouble that must have worn their way deep into his nature.

"Mere words would not help you at such a time," he said solemnly. "God has sent you this terrible grief for some Divine purpose of His own. I pray that the peace of God may rest upon you, and that in time you may fully realise that we have a Father in heaven. He may let us sink deep in the river of adversity, but He will never let us drown, and will come walking to us on the water through the darkness of the night."

He pressed her hand and Wyndham's with deep sympathy, and passing on, was soon out of sight, leaving the little group to realise that sometimes "men can be to other men like the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land."

Wyndham, as he bade farewell to Mary at the church gate, felt powerless as he realised that twelve long miles would be between them that night, and that he would not be able to speak one word of comfort to the one being he loved best in the world at the time of her most dire distress.

But the girl, with her white face fixed immovably on the line of hills that marked their distant home, was only wondering, with numb despair, as to how she should break the awful tidings to Nan.

(To be continued.)

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES ON CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

LUTHER'S EXAMPLE.

MARTIN LUTHER.
(From a Painting by Cranach.)

HERE is a grand and noble face! You can imagine that you hear the man making his memorable defence before the Diet of Worms: "Unless I be convinced by Scripture and reason, I neither can nor dare retract anything, for my conscience is a captive to God's Word, and it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. There I take my stand. I can do no otherwise. So help me God. Amen." This reply of Luther's is one of the sublimest instances in the history of the world of boldness for conscience' sake. The attitude taken by the great Reformer made him the most prominent man in Europe, and gave a death-blow to the monstrous pretensions of the Church of Rome. Now, what Luther did on a large scale, we may all do in our daily life; and this boldness for conscience' sake is often called for in the smaller duties we have to perform. There are some people who seem to have a Sunday conscience only, not one for the business of every day. Who can calculate his influence on others? It may happen that a reply given, or a right action taken, for conscience' sake and "in scorn of consequence," may prove the saving of a human soul.

"ONLY MY WIFE."

"Oh! what matter? It 's only my wife!" So said a gentleman in our hearing the other day, when accepting an invitation to join some friends at the hour he had promised to be at home to help his wife entertain a party of especially invited guests. "*Only* my wife!" we thought. "God help her, if it be her lot to drift through life with broken appointments and indifference from the one who ought to make her his first and tenderest care." How many women's lives are ruined every day by just this want of thought from the husbands whom, no doubt, they have married for love. Husbands and wives should remember that courtesy and politeness in

things small and big help to keep up their faith in each other, and that harmony in the home which, in after-life, their children will love to look back upon.

LITTLE THINGS.

If we will only rightly use little things, it is surprising how much may sometimes be done with them. A vizier, having offended his royal master, was condemned to lifelong imprisonment in a high tower, and every night his wife used to come and weep at its foot. "Go home," said the husband, "and find a blackbeetle, and then bring a bit of butter and three strings—one of fine silk, one of stout twine, another of whipcord—and a strong rope." When she came, provided with everything, he told her to put a touch of butter on the beetle's head, tie the silk thread round him, and place him on the wall of the tower. Deceived by the smell of butter, which he supposed was above him, the insect continued to ascend till he reached the top, and thus the vizier secured the silk thread. By it he pulled up the twine, then the whipcord, and then a strong rope, by which he finally escaped. It was a little stone that slew Goliath; it was a common basket that saved the life of a great Apostle; it was a spider's web spun across the opening of the cave in which the great Scottish patriot was hid that made the soldiers not think of searching for him there. Let us never despise small instruments, for by them God sometimes works in bringing about great results. There were only two small fishes, but from them Jesus fed the multitudes, so that it says, "Likewise of the fishes as much as they would."

"Great things from little ones are born;
So little ones treat not with scorn."

"THE QUIVER" HEROES FUND.

We are sure that our readers will be glad to see the following letter, which reached us a few days after our last number, containing the announcement of the award to Constable Lawson, had gone to press:—"198, Scotland Road, Liverpool, Monday, Feb. 29th, 1892. MR. EDITOR.—SIR,—Allow me to tender my sincere thanks for the bronze medal in connection with the recent fire in Burlington Street, Liverpool. The above was a very sad affair. Out of seven people burning in one room only one man got out without assistance. Six lay unconscious in the burning room, all more or less under the influence of drink, when I entered the place. THE QUIVER medal is much admired, and is causing much pleasing comment among my comrades here; and, believe me, sir, as long as I live your medal shall remain one of my most valued possessions.—Thanking you once more, I remain, yours respectfully, DAVID LAWSON, P.C. 124 D."

NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS.

We have heard that E. L. Blanchard, a well-known writer in his day, used to tell with great gusto a story of an American, to whom he acted the hospitable cicerone throughout one day, engaging a cab to drive about in and show him as much of London as could be seen in the time, lunching and refreshing him entirely at his own expense. The American had to return to Southampton that night, and so they had to cross Waterloo Bridge, which was not then free. Blanchard put his hand in his pocket for the toll, when the American stopped him, saying: "No, sir, allow me. You have been bearing the costs all day; it's my turn now," and magnanimously paid the penny. If we may without irreverence compare great things with small, we would suggest that those persons who say or think that they can save themselves, or that their good deeds entitle them to heaven, are like this American with his penny. To talk of our "pennies" after God's free gift of salvation is an insult; though, of course, if we feel that we have received the gift, gratitude will prompt us to try and do all such good works as He has "prepared for us to walk in."

WORKING LADS' INSTITUTE, ETC., STRANGEWAYS, MANCHESTER.

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD.

There is a familiar French proverb to the effect that different times require different customs—altered circumstances call for new men, new methods, new buildings. In nothing is this more apparent than in the case of philanthropic institutions. Take, for instance, the Manchester and Salford Boys' and Girls' Refuges Society, which, after twenty-one years' active service over many varied fields, has taken another step forward in the occupation of a new building for its Working Lads' Institute and other branches of its labours at Strangeways. The work of the society is growing, and its capacity for coping with it grows equally.

THE SEER.

When Elijah made Elisha's receiving of his spirit depend on the condition of his seeing him when he should be taken away from him, the elder prophet was not insisting upon any arbitrary condition, but on a test of qualification. The power to see the things that are spiritually discerned is necessary for a man who would have Elijah's spirit and carry on Elijah's work. He must be a seer. And it is no less necessary that the man who would be God's servant to-day should have such a seeing eye and understanding heart, than that the man who was God's servant in old time should have them. God's servants to-day, working among their fellow-men, must be filled with deep love for men, and must have the gift of rightly estimating men and things, but their dependence must be on God. They must know and see Him, and recognise His presence as well as His claims in the matters with which they have to deal.

LENDING UNTO THE LORD.

A man in Bristol, who had made a great fortune by some invention connected with the cotton trade, used to give fifty pounds every Monday morning to Müller's Orphanage. He did not lose by his generosity, for, when an adverse turn of fortune caused his large income to fall away, and he became bankrupt, he was so much respected in Bristol and its neighbourhood that a subscription was got up, and enough money collected to enable his friends to settle five hundred pounds a year upon him for life. "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again."

LETTING HIS RIVAL REAP.

Many who listen to the words, "In honour preferring one another," treat them as a counsel of perfection. Ambition drives men to their goal, and they are glad to pass their competitors. But renunciation may easily have a better glory than that of success. There is a noble act for which Cuvier, the great zoologist, deserves the supreme fame of magnanimity. Agassiz was visiting him, and the two naturalists were soon deep in science. Suddenly Cuvier instructed his secretary to bring him a private portfolio. It was full of drawings of fossil fishes, with original accompanying notes. Cuvier had planned a work on the subject, but he had also seen that Agassiz was prosecuting researches in the same direction. Instead of cutting the ground from under the feet of the Swiss *savant* by preparing and publishing his own studies, he quietly placed the portfolio with its invaluable sketches and memoranda in the younger man's hands. He informed Agassiz of what had been in his thoughts. But he added that he had read with satisfaction his friend's fragmentary survey of the topic, and he now begged that Agassiz would accept and use the preliminary results of his own labours. It was a striking display of generosity. Well might Agassiz write, "You can imagine what new ardour this has given me for my work." Such self-sacrificing kindness was a grand spur.

ABSOLUTE FAITH.

"Who calleth those things which be not as though they were," says St. Paul in Romans iv. 17. The faith which believes that, will be a mighty power in the spiritual life. But it must be absolute and unlimited; it must go into regions far beyond man's ideas of the possible—it must set to its seal that nothing is impossible with God. It must absolutely believe that where nothing exists, where material is altogether wanted, God can produce anything—no matter what it may be; and that He can make anything come to pass, no matter what that circumstance may be. Put yourself this question, however startling or even absurd it may seem to you to be, and if you cannot say "Yes" to it, then you certainly have not the amount of faith which will enable you to set to your seal that this text is true. It does not follow that you have not saving faith in Christ, or that you have not in many things and to a certain extent faith in God; but you have not faith which reaches out as far as it can, and which can do the greatest things which can be done. Here is the question, though any similar one would do as well: Do you believe that in that vacant space before you, God could in one minute—in the very next minute if He so pleased—cause to grow and fruit a tree? No. You cannot say you believe that; then you cannot be believing that He could call things which be not as though they were; and yet, would this be one whit more wonderful than His causing Aaron's rod to bud? On one occasion, in a time of great trouble, Carlyle wrote, "Oh that I had faith; oh that I had, then there were nothing too hard or heavy for me." He was right. If our faith can stand the fruit-tree text, or any similar one, nothing will be too hard for us. Under its influences we shall offer many a prayer, perhaps a bold one—and receive many an answer, assuredly a great one: which prayer would never otherwise have been offered—which answer would never otherwise have been obtained. We are not saying anything now of God's will. He assuredly, for His own reasons, will not always do what He could do; but we must try to believe that He calleth things which be not as though they were.

SELF-RESTRAINT.

One of the tricks which a lady friend of ours has taught her little dog is this:—She places a bit of sugar, cake, or something else of which the dog is fond, before it, and says, "Self-restraint, Tiny!" The dog, though longing for the dainty, will not touch it until he gets permission to do so. It is to be hoped that this object-lesson in self-restraint will not be wasted upon those who see it.

HOW THE BISHOP CONQUERED.

Prejudice of colour is harder to overcome than any. Even servants of the Saviour who gave His

life a ransom for all have needed to be taught that the black man is a brother. Bishop McIlvaine (of Ohio) was once taking Sunday duty at Gambia. At the time the place was in a ferment, and the question agitating the community was whether a coloured divinity student should receive Holy Communion in company with his fellow-collegians. The chaplain of the school had allowed a barrier to be set up. The white population was received at the communion-rails first. Then the black had to present himself, alone, and feeling keenly the arbitrary division. Bishop McIlvaine was grieved at the weakness of a faith that could observe such an unjust rule. But he did not make a noisy protest that might have been futile. His wish was to show a better way, and illustrate his creed by an act that could not be misinterpreted and would not soon be forgotten. A substitute had to preach for him on the Sunday morning. When the time came for the administration of Holy Communion, the Bishop was not with the clergy. He waited, and soon he was seen kneeling at the chancel, with the coloured student by his side. He earned the poor fellow's warm and lasting gratitude, he broke down a tradition dishonouring to his Master, and, best of all, he proved that Christian love for the heathen and the stranger is a reality and not a sham.

"THE PRINCE OF PREACHERS."

No reader of THE QUIVER will dispute the late Mr. Spurgeon a place among "The World's Workers," or will regret that our contributor Mr. G. Holden Pike was entrusted with the task of writing the story of the great preacher's life for Messrs. Cassell's series under that title. For many years Mr. Pike was in close touch with Mr. Spurgeon as one of his literary assistants, and so, even in the narrow space of the little volume before us, he has been able to give a very comprehensive sketch of the busy life of him who was well called "the Prince of Preachers." It is as a "worker" that Mr. Pike aims at presenting Mr. Spurgeon to his readers, but he gives us all through the book word-pictures of the man—of his kindly feeling, his strength and singleness of purpose, and, dominating every other characteristic, the grand firm faith that enabled him to triumph over every obstacle and continue steadfastly in the path which he believed was marked out for him by his heavenly Father. None who had had any personal experience of the great preacher could fail to have gathered a fund of interesting anecdotes about him, and some that are given us in this volume are very characteristic. If we are to take one story told in Mr. Pike's book as representative, it would seem that Mr. Spurgeon's faculty for quaintly turning an odd situation to good account was inherited from his grandfather, long pastor at Stambourne. "Once," says Mr. Pike, "when he had to preach there (for his grandfather), the youthful pastor arrived late through being delayed by a block on the railway. The aged village pastor had to open the service, and he had already begun the sermon when the long-expected young preacher from London arrived. The old man at once stopped, and the younger, on ascending the pulpit, took up the discourse where his aged relative had left off. 'My friends,' remarked the venerable James Spurgeon, when the sermon was finished, 'you see that my grandson can preach better than I can; but he cannot preach a better Gospel.'" The story of the founding of "Mrs. Spurgeon's Book Fund" is incidentally well told by Mr. Pike. "Mrs. Spurgeon entered upon what may be called her life-work in the year 1875, in a somewhat unexpected manner. It was in that year that Mr. Spurgeon completed the first series of 'Lectures to my Students'; and when, as was very natural, he asked his wife, 'Well, how do you like it?' the answer was given very sincerely, 'I wish I could place it in the hands of every minister in England.' On such an occasion Mr. Spurgeon was always practical, so that he answered by asking another question, 'Then why not do so? How much will you give?' Mrs. Spurgeon confessed that, while unprepared for such a challenge, the challenge itself set her thinking. The question was asked and well pondered, 'How much can I spare from housekeeping or personal matters to start this new scheme?' Money for such a purpose was not very plentiful at that time; but, as Mrs. Spurgeon once said, 'Then comes the wonderful part: I found the money ready and waiting. Up-stairs in a little drawer were some carefully hoarded crown-pieces,' it is added, 'which, owing to some foolish fancy, I had been gathering for years whenever chance threw one in my way. These I now counted out, and found that they made a sum exactly sufficient to pay for one hundred copies of the work.' Thus it happened that, before even the founder herself was aware of the fact, the Book Fund was established."

A STRANGE CONGREGATION.

Among the grand monuments of Buddhism to be seen at Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto, perhaps the most impressive is the Temple of San-ju-san-gen-do, or the 33,333 gods. Its façade, 389 feet in length, is partly closed by enormous shutters swung from above, and the dimness of the light admitted adds to the sombre solemnity of the spectacle within, as given in our illustration. This represents one-half of the great company of idols: all images of the eleven-faced, thousand-handed Kwannon, the popular goddess of mercy. There are in this portion of the great silent congregation 500 figures, 5 feet high, each distinctly visible in their eleven-tiered gallery: a similar array occupies, in line with this, the other half of the building: in the centre is a huge altar, surmounted by a giant Kwannon, surrounded by her twenty-eight attendants. The total number of 33,333 is obtained by including the smaller effigies on the foreheads and halos, and in the hands of the full-sized divinities. Though all of the latter represent the one goddess, no two have the same

arrangement of hands and objects held in them. According to tradition, the head of the great central Kwannon contains the skull of a Mikado, who, tortured by headache, was informed by a monk that the skull belonging to his body in a former existence lay at the bottom of a river, attached to the root of a willow-tree, the shaking whereof when the wind blew, occasioned his Majesty's frequent suffering: which ceased when the skull was transferred to its present exalted depository. Here, as in all other temples of the ancient capital of Japan, the costliness and perfect preservation of the edifice, and the devoutness of priestly officials and passing worshippers, were remarkable. A striking instance of the people's high esteem for their sanctuaries was the offering of women's hair, forming the ropes used by workmen in rebuilding the temple of Higashi-Hongwan-ji, the largest in the land. A coil of cordage several inches in span was piled on the unfinished flooring: it weighed 10,000 lbs., and was more than 4,000 feet in length: a similar quantity had been already used. We were not surprised to learn that, notwithstanding the readiness wherewith many Japanese, with characteristic national versatility, have adopted the "Western religion," outbreaks of Buddhist opposition to Christian work still occur.

A STRANGE CONGREGATION: THE TEMPLE OF THE 33,333 GODS, KYOTO, JAPAN.
(From a photograph.)

"THOU GOD SEEST ME."

In the Life of Simeon the following story is told:—The portrait of the devoted missionary, Henry Martyn, who had been Simeon's curate, hung over the fireplace of Simeon's room in King's College, Cambridge. Simeon would look up at it with affectionate earnestness, and say, "There! see that blessed man! What an expression of countenance! No one looks at me as he does; he never takes his eyes off me, and seems always to be saying, 'Be serious—be in earnest—don't trifle—don't trifle.'" And then, smiling at the picture of his late curate, and gently bowing, the aged vicar would add, "And I won't trifle—I won't trifle." If even the picture of a good man has this inspiring effect, what a dread of trifling away our lives ought to be aroused in us by the consciousness that the eye of our Heavenly Father is always upon us! This, if anything, ought to make us serious and in earnest.

THE PARADISE OF MEMORY.

Richter says that "Recollection is the only paradise from which we cannot be turned." We know not how God will deal with the memory of sin in those whom He has cleansed in the fountain for sin and all uncleanness. The ancients believed that the souls

passed from this world drank of the river of Lethe, the waters of which had the effect of making all things to be forgotten. But in the parable Abraham says to Dives, "Son, remember"—and that word "remember," as used there, often seems to us to be one of the most awful in the Bible. We do not see how the memory of sin can be ever blotted out, though we do see the sense in which God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;" and we can understand how the recollection of what we have done may but fill us the more throughout eternity with adoration, wonder, gratitude, and love. But, turning to Richter's remark, recollection may be indeed a paradise. Alas! to some it must be a hell; and which it will be depends upon ourselves. It is indeed a kind of paradise to walk in, when we can go up and down in memory, and recollect this tear that we wiped away, and this smile that we called forth, and this heart that we comforted when sad, and all the kindness we showed to those who are gone, to whom kindness can be shown no more. Now is the time for us to make our paradise, in which we shall be able to pluck many a pleasant fruit when our hearts will be hungry enough, and will look around in the world here and there in vain for food. And oh! —awful thought—now is the time for us to make for ourselves a hell of recollection. God keep us from that place of torture, for His mercy's sake in Christ, and give us this paradise on earth, which no tyranny or misfortune can take away.

SOME OF THE NEWEST BOOKS.

The Bishop of Wakefield was long known as a hard worker and popular preacher among the London poor before he was called to become the first bishop of the new northern diocese. It is well, then, that he should be included among the representative "Preachers of the Age." To Messrs. Sampson Low & Co.'s series under this title he has contributed a volume of sermons, to which he gives the name "The Knowledge of God: and other Sermons." Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book is the sermon preached at St. Paul's on the occasion of the consecration of the Bishop's successor in the East End; but all are valuable, and the portrait which serves as a frontispiece to the volume is characteristic.—From the consideration of the words of a distinguished worker among the London poor, it is interesting to turn to "The Pinch of Poverty" (Isbister) by an anonymous writer, who calls herself "The Riverside Visitor." Evidently she has seen much of what Sir Edwin Arnold called

> "The slow, dull sinking into withered age,"

but it is cheering to find that she would agree with the same poet in his conclusion that

> "All the poor are piteous to the poor."

These sketches are wonderfully pathetic in their tales of quiet heroism and patient suffering, and their obvious fidelity to truth gives them a special value of their own. We cannot put down the volume without a tribute of praise to the publishers for the admirable manner in which it has been got up.—From Mr. Elliot Stock we have received a bright single-volume story by E. J. May, entitled "Victory at Last," which is very readable, despite closely printed pages. From this same publisher comes "Woman's Influence in the East," in which the Rev. J. J. Pool sketches the noble lives of past queens and princesses of the native States of India. As a contribution to the study of a little-known side of history, this book should be very valuable. We have so many and such varied interests in India, that we cannot know too much about the history of those who have helped to make our great dependency what it is. A third volume from Mr. Elliot Stock is a new and enlarged edition of Mr. J. M. Sutherland's admirable little biography, "William Wordsworth: the Story of his Life." We spoke with approval of the first edition when it was issued some time ago. With even greater confidence do we now commend it to all who would take up the study of the great poet of nature. Another new edition that we heartily welcome is one, for schools, of Mr. Andrew Lang's "Blue Poetry Book" (Longmans), that brings this excellent collection within reach of every household.

SECRETS OF MINISTRY.

We are told, with reference to the late Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, that the secret of his ministry lay in two little sentences which he was never tired of emphasising. One was "God loves you," and the other was "I love you." His teaching, we are told, was embodied in the former, and his pastoral life amongst his people was a daily illustration of the latter. The great success of that ministry is known to, and acknowledged by, all; and so it is well worth our while to observe the sources from which it sprang. If we know or think that anyone hates us or dislikes us, our natural impulse is to put up our back and hate and dislike him in return. However sad this may be, this is undoubtedly the case with our poor fallen nature; and God meets our poor fallen nature according to its need: "In that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us;" "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." God hates your sin, but He loves you, poor sinner; and because He does, He wants to separate you from your sin, as a ruinous and condemning thing. Would that with every one of us the common proverb, "Love begets love," were true, and that God could see His great love to us reflected back in our great love to Him! This is the secret of God's power over a soul—the manifestation of His love to it, and the realisation of His love by it; and this, we are told, was the secret of Mr. Spurgeon's own putting forth of power. He brought the personality of his own love to bear upon his people, even as the personality of God's love had been made to

bear upon himself. Those to whom he ministered felt that they had to do with one who loved them. That in itself was likely to do away with prejudices, to soften opposition, to give a readiness and preparedness for reception. It established a mysterious bond between him and those with whom he had to do. What affects mankind is not theories, not abstractions, but personalities. That is one of the reasons why we are more affected by practice than by mere precept. The precept and the practice both meet in Christ, and that is why Christ is so powerful in His work where He is received. Spurgeon was a human instrument of God, working in personal contact by the personality of love. He came into touch with people on the side of love. Oh, that we may do the same more and more, and then our life, like his, will be more and more a power for good.

UNION IS STRENGTH.

We regard it as a very cheering sign of missionary progress, that a monthly union prayer-meeting has lately been organised in Shanghai, not only, as hitherto, among "foreign" missionaries of all denominations, but including now our native brethren as well. "Our second such gathering," writes a correspondent, "was held last week, and it would have been an interesting and a gladdening scene to friends at home of our work abroad—English, American, Chinese Christians in turn speaking and praying, all in the Shanghai dialect; while the harmonium for our most hearty hymn-singing was played by a young Chinese brother. We meet at our various mission churches in rotation."

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from February 24th, 1892, up to and including March 23rd, 1892. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver" Waifs Fund:* Four Sunday-school Boys, Margate, 1s. 2d.; A Glasgow Mother (23rd donation), 1s.; Woodbridge, 2s.; J. J. E., Govan (53rd donation), 5s.

For "*The Friends'" Russian Famine Fund:* A Sympathizer, 5s.

Dr. Barnardo asks us to acknowledge the receipt of 10s. from E. B., Reading, towards the funds of his Homes.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

73. What may we understand by the Psalmist's expression, "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's"?

74. In what way does David illustrate God's love and pity to sinful man?

75. From what date is the seventy years' captivity of the Jews reckoned?

76. What special training was given to Daniel in his youth, and where?

77. What early record is given of Daniel's faith in God?

78. In what knowledge did Daniel specially excel?

79. Under what signification is the Church of God expressed in the king's dream interpreted by Daniel?

80. What lesson is taught us by the circumstances attending the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

81. What form of capital punishment was in use among the Babylonians?

82. What do we learn from the conduct of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego?

83. In whose reign was Daniel put into the den of lions?

84. What proof have we that the custom of putting a seal upon the entrance to a tomb or other place, to guard it from being opened, is of early origin?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 479.

61. That the existence and glory of God are set forth by nature. (Ps. xix. 1—4.)

62. St. Paul. (Rom. i. 20.)

63. He says God's law is "perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true." (Ps. xix. 7—9.)

64. Secret, wilful, and habitual. (Ps. xix. 12, 13.)

65. "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." (Ps. xxiii. 1.)

66. Darius believed God would take care of Daniel in the lion's den, for he said, "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee." (Dan. vi. 16.)

67. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." (St. John vi. 35.)

68. David looked upon sin as especially an offence against God, and as a cause of separation from Him. (Ps. li. 1—4, 11.)

69. The longing for a new and better life, and deep humility. (Ps. li. 10—17.)

70. God is spoken of as "the Living God" or the Fountain of life. This expression is used only once more in the Bible. (Ps. lxxxiv. 2; xlii. 2.)

71. It is a narrow, gloomy valley near Jerusalem, the last halting-place or caravan station on the road from the north, known also as the "Valley of Weeping." (Ps. lxxxiv. 6.)

72. It sets forth the joy associated with the public worship of God in His temple, and represents the gladness of those who come from distant places as they approach the holy city. (Ps. lxxxiv. 4—7; Deut. xvi. 16.)

HIGHER THAN STORMS.

A PAPER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.

BEECHER tells us that he has stood upon Mount Holyoke while the thunder rolled below; people hurried up the side, anxious to escape the storm, and at last upon the top they were secure. "Many storms there are," said the great preacher now beyond the reach of tempest, "that lie below and hug the ground. The way to escape them is to go up the mountain-side, and get higher than they are." Perhaps to-day we are tempest-tossed, distressed by cloud and blast of sorrow, or dreading some threatening storm; let us haste to seek the heights, "the mount of God," the calm, pure air of spiritual health and strength, that is breathed by those who forsake the gloomy flats of doubt and despondency. Physically, we are braced by the mountain air; we have climbed, ere this, some grand, flower-girt peak, and forgotten weariness in the fresh atmosphere of the ascent, the scene wherein there is inspiration and joy at every opening prospect. "Ah! but our mountain-climbing days are over now," we sigh in our present feebleness. Whether it be so or not as regards the *visible* heights, it is certain we can at this moment ascend higher than storms and tumult, for on the wings of prayer and faith the humble soul can reach the Shining Mountains, and commune with the eternal God, our refuge and our strength.

In the tropics, we are told, the raging storms have a patch of clear blue sky over the central calm, and poets call this "the whirlwind's heart of peace." But the quietude means dread and danger to the mariner, for no wind moves the sailing ship, yet the blast around drives in heavy, troublous billows: the sailor would fain avoid that perilous centre. There is no *false* peace in the calm the Christian knows even at the whirlwind time. There are seasons when it seems to us the Lord thundereth in the heavens, and the Highest gives forth His voice in terror and in wrath; but higher than the storms our vision must look, even to our Father's face, which is love and rest and protection.

On the Rock of our salvation let us abide till the storm pass by and for evermore; here is security for our feeble steps, and here the Lord giveth quietness. "He standeth very totteringly," says Thomas à Kempis, "who casteth not all his care upon Thee": but the life that rolls its every burden on the Lord, and in thankful prayer makes its requests known unto Him, has found the sure foundation whereon to rest and dwell, while the waterfloods are out, and the winds of trouble are sighing round about. Standing on the heights above the storm, oh! believing, loving souls, you gather strength and courage as you survey the spreading prospect: you see the way you have come, the past scenes wherein you have been helped and delivered.

Every past hour choirs the mercy and goodness of God: "let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Then you look, too, at your *present* blessings—the causes that exist even now for praise and thanksgiving. "Forget not all His benefits": surely they are as the stars of heaven, as the grains of sand upon the shore, that cannot be reckoned and told. To-morrow you need *not* survey; on the heights of communion with the Lord, you learn to leave with *Him* the next step, the coming way. "Come what may," says the great preacher of the Tabernacle, whose voice is still heard in his messages of peace, "we are determined to trust the Lord. Let the morrow be what it may, our God is the God of to-morrow, our Jehovah is God of the unknown." Higher than storms abides the heart that trusts its concerns to its heavenly Father, and reposes in His love. Luther noticed one evening a bird quietly settling down for the darkness of the night, and he exclaimed, "That little fellow preaches faith to us all! He takes hold of his twig, tucks his head under his wing, and goes to sleep, leaving God to think for him." *Have faith in God!* He giveth perfect peace to His trusting children who fly to Him for sanctuary till calamities be overpast.

The stormy winds confess the Master's power: they work His purpose, which is infinite love. Winds arise and tempests blow according to His word. He hath His way in the storm, and, however strong be the fury of the blast, when *He* speaks "Peace" He maketh the storm a calm. Prayer moves the hand that holdeth the forces of creation: faith leans upon the heart that in tender mercy is a strength to the needy in his distress. Be of comfort, my soul! His arms are around thee in the tempest-hour, He will stay His rough wind from which thou tremblest, He will be to thee a covert from the storm, an everlasting shelter. O God, the hope of Israel, the place of repair for every weary life! keep me, trusting in Thee, higher than sorrow's tempest, above the blast of despair. "From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee; when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

M. S. HAYCRAFT.

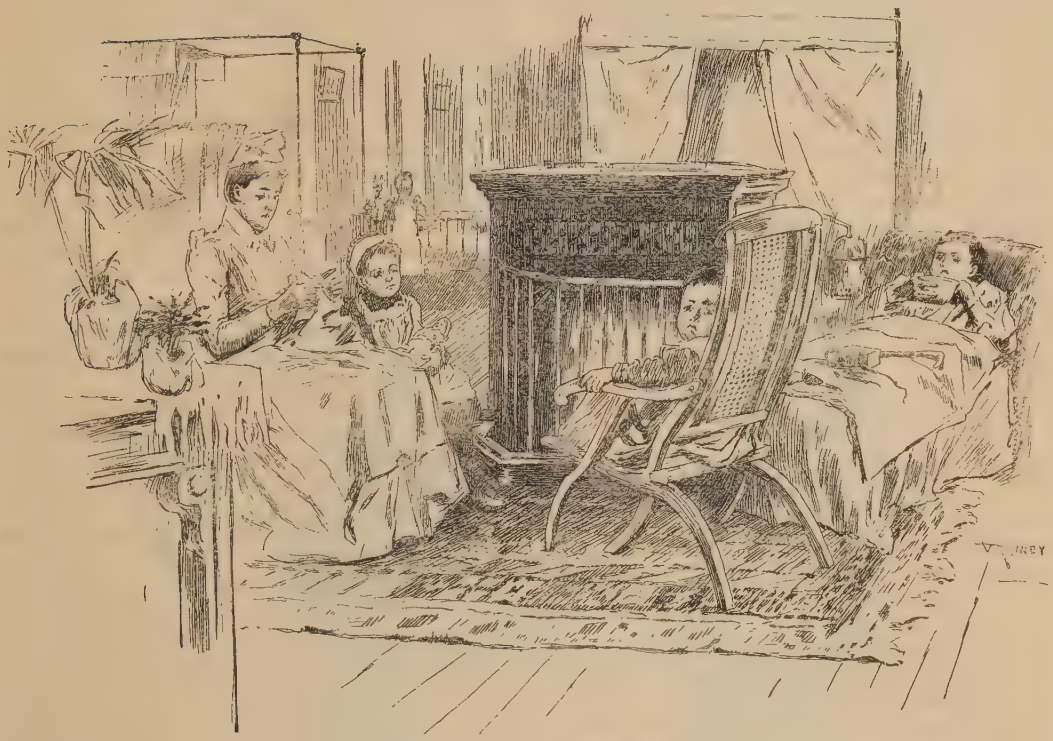
A LITTLE MISUNDERSTANDING.

[*From a Picture by* SYDNEY COWELL.]

OUR OWN HOSPITAL SUNDAY.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A.

"Who healeth all thy diseases."—PSALM ciii. 3.



A SKETCH FROM THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

THAT I may speak to you to-day of those terrible needs of the body which necessitate the existence of our hospitals, and solicit your generous help on their behalf, I have chosen a text which speaks of the deeper needs of the soul, and the provision which is made that they may be met; that, passing from what has been done for you in these, the greatest needs of all, you may in the lesser needs of your fellows, the alleviation of which is within your reach, do to others as God in His mercy has done for you.

In what a blessed aspect, then, does God present Himself before us here by the words of a stricken man: He is a Healer. It is out of the depths of our miseries that there come some of the most splendid manifestations of the heights of God's glory. We are stricken and diseased, and He is a Healer. By our sin there comes His glory as a Healer. In all around us we see Him as a Creator; in all within us, a Healer. The revelation of His tenderness comes by the way in which He handles our sores. We can understand God's eye resting upon everything that is "very good;" but, except by His own revelation, we cannot understand it resting upon what is very bad. See it, it must; but only for condemnation—to put it in its own place, out of His sight; but He need not see it to contemplate it for healing and restoration, and the inestimable gift of health.

In those sad times when we are conscious that disease has broken out afresh within us, that some infection has fastened upon us, that we have met with sickness or accident to our souls, then let us think more of the manifestation which God gives us of Himself as our Healer, than of any discoveries which we can make. Our health, our cure, lie not in what we can find out about Him, but in what He reveals about Himself to us. For none by searching can find out God; it is by accepting revelations, and not by making inquiries, that we are healed. Without a spontaneous manifestation from Him, and of Him, we may ransack all creation for help, but it will be in vain.

Let us believe, then, that in all our soul's sickness the manifestation which God is willing to give us of Himself is that of a Healer.

And so, when we find any hurt in our souls, let us at once view God in this aspect. It will do what is above all things necessary to be done; it will make us draw near to God, and not drive us from Him. If we view Him only as a Judge, we shall hide ourselves from Him, or harden ourselves against Him, or vainly try to justify ourselves before Him; but if He is our Healer, we will go to Him, and His manifestation of Himself will be according to our need.

Do not be afraid of God, as though He would consider your sin so loathsome, that He could only feel disgust with it and you. Remember that, no matter how offensive any disease is in itself, the earthly physician does not turn away from it, but looks at it with a view to its being cured. And is not God better than man? and will you withhold from the one the confidence you repose in the other? Oh, when the pressure of any spiritual disease is upon us, let us say, "I will go to God, that my disease may be healed."

There is something very soothing, very beautiful in that word "heal." It seems so full of beneficence, so full of restoration, so full of balm; there is such a removal of fear as to final result, such a removal of discomfort and disability, such a lifting off the mind of the ever-present consciousness that all is not right, that there is something the matter, such a sense of sweetness and healthiness. "Heal"—so near "health"—it is a beautiful word.

And it must be a very beautiful and precious word, when, to embody it in operation and being, God sent His only Son into the world that by Him that world might be saved. It is by His stripes that we are healed.

Whatever form the disease may take, the healing is found in Him. There are some medicines which are called polychrists; they heal so many diseases. Heaven knows but one polychrist; it is one to heal not only many diseases, but all diseases, and that one is the touch of Christ.

Little better than a vast hospital is this poor stricken world of ours; harm has come in all directions to bodies; and to souls, the worst of all. Yes, and to hearts; for, in truth, heart-sick and heart-sore are many. Though there be a smile on the lip, there is a pang at the heart; there are pains and sinkings, and uneven beatings, and palpitations of misery and unrest.

There is but one Healer for the heart's sorrow, whether it be stricken as regards this world's sorrows or the next. It is the One who was sent to heal the broken-hearted by the breaking of His own heart upon the cross. Seek, poor stricken heart, thine healing nowhere save at Calvary; from no one save from Him who suffered there.

Thus heals Christ all stricken souls, and He has left us an example that, following in His footsteps, we should—as in other things, so in this—be healers so far as we have power. Much may we often do ourselves, and much by the ministry of those vast centres of healing, the hospitals of this metropolis. There with open doors they stand by day, by night the same. Come summer sun, come winter cold, these walls of brick or stone, more tender than many an arm of flesh and blood, are ready to draw aside and shelter in their bosom the maimed, wounded, diseased, and stricken, and to tend them with all the skill of science, and to provide for them with all the resources which Christian charity has put within their reach. Oh, how many touching sights are to be seen in any, in every hospital in our land!

There, I myself have seen the strong man (struck down in a moment with a crash) speechless, motionless, for many days, his body indeed on the hospital bed, but his mind, God only knows where, watched day and night, as though all around had been mother, or sister, or wife, when, as we should say, they were nothing to him at all.

There I have seen over and over again the little cripple boy, his almost baby face white as the pillow-cover on which it lay, a sore problem to the great surgeon as to what he could do with him; and after wonderful things had been done, I have seen him cheerful as a song-bird amid his brothers and his sisters in his home again.

Oh, how lovingly they tended at the hospital that little lad—that fragile frame which looked as though it had been of spun glass rather than flesh and blood. What loving looks they bent upon him, what merry things they said to him, and how they tended, coaxed, and fed him back to health again. And all did their part, from the surgeons with their frightful instruments but tender hearts, to the nurses who smoothed his pillow, brought his food, and cheered him with their applause as he hobbled forth to make his first essay at walking something like a man. And at last they sent forth the little lad, with untwisted limbs, to begin life more like other boys, and take his place amongst his fellows, as I hope, please God, he yet will do.

And there in another hospital I have seen, what looked at first like a doll, but curtained about with too close care for anything which had not precious human life—there it was, in its own little corner, housed in from even a passing breath. Bronchitis, which seizes so many a strong man by the throat, had not disdained to choose this little scrap of humanity as a battle-field for the tremendous issues of life and death; and the watchful care of physicians, and the tender thought of "Sister" and nurses, were converged upon that morsel of our kind, that it might live and not die.

Let the pauper be brought in here; he shall have the same attendance as the peer. The descent here is reckoned from Adam, the father of both.

Let the heir of thousands be brought in from an accident in the street, and with him the humble hawker, whose whole fortune was the handful of

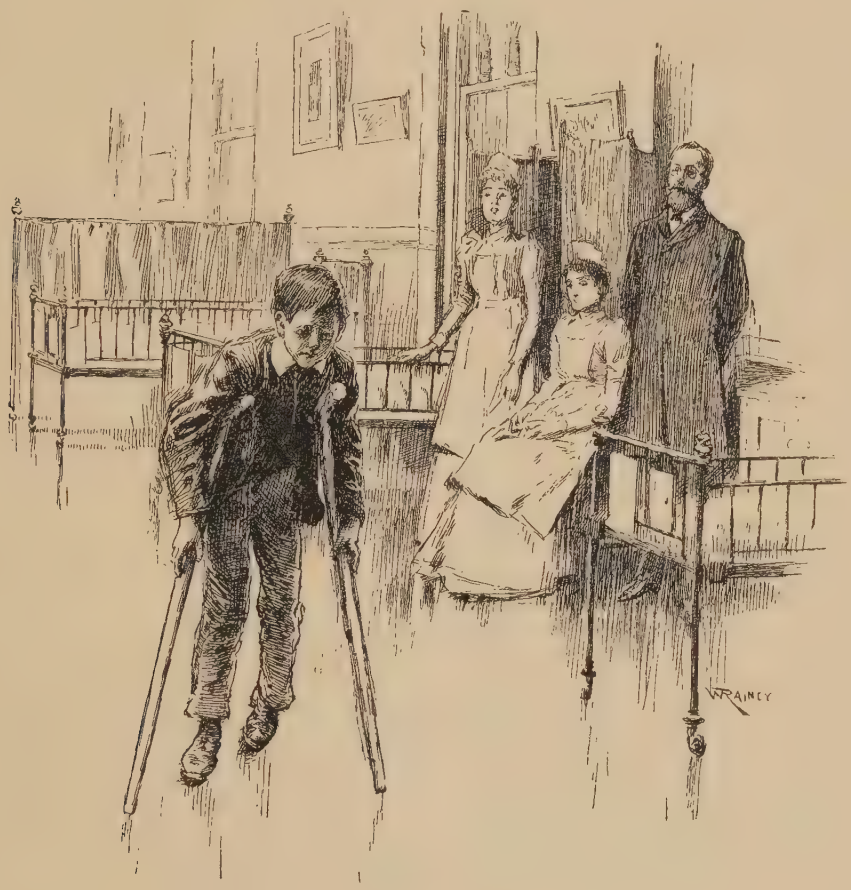
matches, which the cab that smashed him up has scattered about the streets; or the ragged urchin whose only estate, real and personal, is in his crossing and his broom; the one shall have as much as the other, for the hospital is no respecter of persons in the attention which it bestows; it knows no heritage, save that which all have inherited—the heritage of the body's woe; it knows no lineage save straight descent from him to whom God said, "Thou shalt surely die."

Let the poor servant with infectious disease become not a comfort but a plague-spot in the house, with father dead, and mother dead, and none to give her shelter in her distress; the hospital says, "I will be your home;" those who minister to her there say, "We will be father, mother, sister, and brother to you in your need."

The hospital, twice blessed, becomes an orphanage as well; and she who but an hour before was only a servant to wait on others, is now, in her dire need, waited on herself; the only claim she has on service being need; and gratitude all the wages that she can pay.

There are hospitals which meet all the rough accidents and harms of life, and others which, drawn aside, as it were, from the world's turmoil, soothe the suffering, and often are instrumental in the cure of those upon whom disease has fixed a silent and mysterious grasp.

Amongst such diseases is consumption, which we might almost call the national disease of our race.



"He hobbled forth to make his first essay at walking."—*p.* 561.

Consumption—the mysterious messenger of death, the silent-footed thief of strength, the canker that comes upon the bud, the blight that falls upon the flower, the unseen finger that plucks the unripened fruit, the mildew that blasts the harvest of our homes; consumption—with its mockery of hope, with its deceptive gifts of brilliancy in the eye, and carmine upon the cheeks, and bright transparency of skin—gifts which are like the poisoned gloves of old—those who wear them die.

This terrible consumption attacks all, without discrimination. It is not *the* disease of the rich man, nor yet is it *the* disease of the poor. It is in our land everywhere at home; it enters the palatial mansion of the rich, as though it were its own; it

enters the humble cottage of the poor, as though, however much the Englishman's house is his castle, to it the doors stand on the latch by day and night; and from each it will take what it lists, and that asking leave of none.

Proscribe it, pursue it, do all that man can do against it—in the present state of science, at any rate, notwithstanding all recent hopes to the contrary—you cannot drive it out. It takes Protean shape, and eludes human grasp. It is now in the dull fluff of cotton and wool, now in the glittering dust of brass and steel, now in the harsh blast of the east wind, now in the soft breath of the summer evening air. For one young girl it looks in the unwholesome ballroom, in the senseless whirl of the dance; for another, amid the whirling machinery of the mill. Reading a report a little while ago of the patients treated at a hospital for this disease, I there saw how it laid its grasp upon all sorts and conditions of men. In the list of its patients I found the blacksmith wielding his hammer, and the milliner plying her needle, the labourers, the hawkers, the postmen, the errand-boys and girls in the open air, the clerk upon his stool, the compositor at his case, the shop assistants in their shops; it has laid its hand upon the sailor on the sea; and, descending even into the bowels of the earth, has arrested the miner under ground. The reports of consumptive hospitals embrace all sorts and conditions of men, who, from their station in life, are likely to be found in such a list.

Let us, when we think of these stricken ones, remember this: that there is not one amongst us whose home may not by this very enemy be made a hospital—aye, even ere many days have passed; and by the virtue of what may happen to yourselves, I ask you to help in what may happen to others.

It would be impossible for me now to enter upon the circumstances of all the patients whose occupations are mentioned in the report of one of the hospitals for which I plead, viz., that which is devoted to the treatment of consumption. But looking over the report of a consumption hospital a little while ago, I observed one item to which I would draw your attention. It is the largest figure in the list. Its largeness, I confess, has touched me to the quick.

Among the patients of this hospital were 1,401 *housewives*, *i.e.*, for the most part the mothers and heads of families—the ones on whom depend the family, the husband's home, the children's rearing, the light and life of the house itself.

It would be dreadful to follow out what consumption does with all the breadwinners who are classified in this report; but I am arrested by this terrible item—1,401 housewives—*i.e.*, one-fourth of all.

But what this means—ah! who can tell?

These are no females jostling to the fore for "women's rights," claiming the soft courtesies which are due to the weak, while they elbow their way, if possible, to the fore amongst the strong, but plain and simple folk, performing quietly the God-appointed function of the ministry of home. On them husband and children to a great extent depend; on them the little homes rely for their brightness and their thrift. The woman may depend upon the man abroad, but the man depends upon the woman at home.

And now consumption touches her. I wonder if it has come through all the wear-and-tear which falls to woman's lot? One thousand four hundred *housewives!* Nothing else. Not stricken by poison of deleterious trade, not by inclemency of the weather, or the overwork of outdoor toil: the enemy has come upon them in their own homes, and the Death-hand touched them at their own hearth.

This is not the glorious death of a hero, as the world thinks of heroes; but it is often the death of a heroine—as heroines are counted *elsewhere*; and it will be no disgrace, after a long-drawn fight, to have fallen (if fall the poor housewife must) under this mysterious consumption, which has taken for its allies the honest cares of house and home, perverted them to its fell purposes, and spirited away her life.

But the woman *need* not always die. Surely amongst these fourteen hundred housewives—aye, and the multitude of housewives from all other complaints, in all other hospitals—there is a large percentage which is not of necessity drawn for death.

They can be saved by you—by you who in common womanhood sympathise with these, who are your sisters, separated from you only by the adventitious circumstance of poverty—one with you in common flesh and blood.

Aye, and if there were not any of the other thousands whom these hospitals have befriended to be pleaded for to-day, if there were not even one *man* amongst all their patients, I would ask you, my brother men, to open your hands liberally on behalf of the multitude of women lying sick and stricken in our hospitals to-day.

For do not we men owe all to women—to the housewife—both you and I?

Who tends us in sickness? Who is patient with us in our fretfulness? Who sympathises with us in our sorrows? Who rejoices in our joys? Who has given up all for us, and would if possible give up all ten thousand times over? Who would rather live in beggary with us, than live alone in affluence without us? Who, if your comfortable home, or perhaps luxurious mansion, were broken up to-morrow by bankruptcy, would go without a murmur and be the bankrupt's housewife in, it may be, but a lodging, or at best in a mean and poverty-stricken home? Who? Is it not the one you call "wife"? who is "housewife" because she is wife; and who is sister in sex, in feeling, in possibility of suffering, with all the housewives laid low on hospital beds to-day; to whom, in appreciation that your own wife, your own housewife, is spared to you, you will open your hands now.

But let us turn for a moment from the men and women stricken down by accident and disease of every kind, to the smaller folk, who by reason of their smallness do not escape from accidents or disease, but share with their elders man's common lot. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward" has its commentary, its testimony in the child, as well as in the man. In the records of our race is many a little roll, written like that of the prophet within and without with lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

Of all God's creatures, the offspring of man continues longest in helplessness, the most exposed to injury, the one needing the greatest care, the one who, considering what he is afterwards to be, is the greatest mystery.

In that cradle, its whole earthly existence conditioned by the three prime necessities of warmth, and sleep, and food, lies perhaps the philosopher who will revolutionise science, or the warrior who will deliver or overthrow a kingdom, or the philanthropist who will upraise the downtrodden, the ignorant, and the oppressed; but now, a little waiting too long for food, a little carelessness in the preparation of that food, a little exposure to a draught, very little accident or harm, and all the probabilities of the future are gone; the cemetery has one more little heap, another mother has a little grave dug in her heart; another of the great mysteries has been accomplished—the mystery of the coming of a life which was not to continue—the mystery of the why it came and whither it went.

Let it not be all tears. When, as we advance in life, we see what many a child grows up to be, we learn to smile as well as sigh, and say, "The worst off are not those who come up and are cut down as a flower—the worst off are not the early dead."

Yes, in the midst of large circles of wretchedness around, stand our hospitals; and, though all open their beneficent arms to the child, there is one which belongs to the children altogether.

One can scarce believe, at first, as one goes through the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, in Great Ormond Street, that it is a hospital at all. On entering one of its wards, one sees what might be the children of some large and well-to-do family, all in their little red jackets, and all in their comfortable little beds. Yet not all; some are clustered with the nurses round the high-fendered fires, and some are playing with their picture-books and toys; and, what with sunshine, and pictures, and flowers, and toys, and, above all, with nurses, who, even in the worst times of London fogs, seem to have some mysterious means of washing their faces in the sunbeams before they go to their day's work, one would ask oneself, "Can this be the ward of a hospital at all?"

These Christian sisters of the wards, these nurses, these probationers who hope to be nurses, are all great mysteries to me. Whenever I see them they are full of smiles and brightness; they are, indeed, taken as a class, the brightest set of people I know on earth. I meet them in the London streets, out for their short recreation time, often in fog and rain; I meet them by the seaside, I see them in their wards, and they are cheery everywhere. Their faces must be as good as medicine to those they tend—possibly a great deal better too. Oh, how much better their healthy cheerfulness, the outcome of self-denial, and patience, and consecration to services of love, their even cheerfulness and brightness, than that spasmodic hilarity which comes of excitement, and is dependent on this and that, which sometimes may be had and sometimes not; and which, when had, soon perishes in the very using, and which, when not to be had, leaves the sourness of unsatisfied longing—the tartar of miserable discontent.

Rough men, cranky old women, those whom, by reason of the irritability of illness, scarce anything will please; those who are thankless and exacting, and it may be rude, all share their sunny cheerfulness; and the quick eye, the ready foot, the tender hand, the sympathising voice, the attentive whisper-catching ear, the bright looks of the Sister and the nurse, are the common property of all. I have preached in their hospitals; and a little congregation of Sisters and nurses and probationers, and their patients well enough to attend, was really a sight to see; and in no pulpit has it ever given me greater pleasure to stand than in theirs.

And, oh, how precious must these smiles be to the poor little children who are brought away from their homes, and set amongst strangers! How they encourage and cheer them! How they make them happy, as I have seen these little creatures happy—with nurses full of stories; giants, and dwarfs, and fairies, and good children, and naughty children too, all pressed into the service of healing; and who can tell how soothing a potion there is in a smile, how strong a tonic in a laugh?

Sore, often, is the need of clothing for these children; they are brought to the hospital in some cases absolutely destitute; and what is there to send them out in when they are discharged? Anything of any size that is suitable for the children of the poor, from twelve years of age downward, will be of use. Parcel post is cheap, and I trust some whom I address to-day will thus minister in the hospital, even though in body they cannot be there.

I have been able to bring to your notice but two or three of the many hospitals in this great metropolis. There are many more, however, which are claimants on your charity, and for which I solicit your support.

Remember that the skill of the metropolitan hospitals is at the disposal of the whole country, and that the special talent which naturally centres here is available for all those terrible cases from the treatment of which in many instances local practitioners would shrink.

Representatives of all counties in our land, of all nations of the world, of all classes, of all diseases, are

here ; be you also in your contributions to-day representatives—representatives in your humble way of Him of whom it was said, "He healeth them all"—of Him who, stooping to all our deepest needs, "healeth all our diseases."

TO OUR READERS.

THE Hospital Sunday Fund ought to appeal to all Christians, not only those worshipping in the metropolis on the appointed day. The London hospitals and kindred works are not for the exclusive benefit of the five million Londoners who live nearest their doors : they are national institutions. Some who are now separated from them by many miles had once, in days gone by, reason to be thankful for the open doors of some London hospital ; others cannot fail to call to mind the help given in time of need to some relative or friend, the victim of an accident in London. To all such, and to all of our readers (for *all* have benefited by the medical skill learned in the London hospitals) who will not on Hospital Sunday have an opportunity of contributing to the Hospital Sunday Fund in some metropolitan place of worship, we present this seasonable opportunity of forwarding a subscription or a collection on behalf of this Fund.

The Editor will be glad to acknowledge at once, and by post, the receipt of all subscriptions of £1 and upwards. All amounts of not less than 1s. will be acknowledged in our pages under the senders' names, but initials or pseudonyms may be used. Postal orders or cheques, payable to Messrs. Cassell and Co., Limited, should be sent for all amounts of one shilling and upwards.

The subscriptions sent us will be handed over to the Committee of the Hospital Sunday Fund, as soon as the collection is complete.

All subscriptions should reach us on or before June 27th, 1892, and should be addressed in every case to the Editor of THE QUIVER, La Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.

A LINCOLNSHIRE LASS.

BY C. E. C. WEIGALL, AUTHOR OF "THE TEMPTATION OF DULCE CARRUTHERS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

"This only grant me—that my means may lie
Too low for envy, for contempt too high."

NAN received the news of her father's death in the most surprising fashion.

Mary had expected to cope with tears and hysterics, and the wild outpouring of a passionate nature, but this dull tearless horror was something that she could not understand. She clung weeping to her younger sister, praying her to give way—to do anything rather than stand in stiff, stony despair, that seemed to have no outlet for its frozen s'ream. But Nan put her almost roughly away.

"Don't touch me, Mary," she said. "*You* cannot understand what I am feeling, for you never deceived him."

Mary gazed at her in tearful astonishment, for she knew nothing of the stolen meetings with Reginald Dempster ; and her own nature was not one of those whose stern self-accusing conscience can think only of what they have left undone, and of how mu h happier they could have made the dear dead if they had only known that the dread parting was so near at hand.

When the funeral and the sad dreary days that preceded it were over, and the blinds were once more drawn up in the grey house, the Fawcetts began to look their future steadily in the face, and to consider what they had better do by way of earning their own living, and providing themselves with bread-and-butter.

Dr. Hancock and Mr. Ricardo had been everything that was kind, and they had each begged to be allowed to adopt one member of the orphan family. Indeed, the former had asked, as a personal favour, to be allowed to defray Alec's expenses at Edinburgh for the rest of his time.

But the very idea of being parted from one another was hateful to them, and Alec gratefully, but firmly, declined all offers of help. They would all stick together, like the fable of the faggot of old, and, each with shoulder to the wheel, would earn their living in a new sphere.

The only help that Alec would accept was the offer from Dr. Hancock of an introduction to one or two friends in business in London, for he had made up his mind to try for a clerkship in some firm or house of business. That would bring him in a little income at once, whereas, if he went on with his medical studies, it might be years before he earned enough to bring any grist to the family mill.

It was found that nothing had been saved from the wreck of the bank, and that therefore they were absolutely penniless, save for the five or six hundred pounds that the good-will of the practice would bring in when sold. The house was not their own, and they

must leave it at once, as the rent was far too high for their slender purses to afford; and charity they were too proud to accept, even from their dearest friends.

The furniture was not worth very much, but, such as it was, it must be sold, for every penny would be a help to them.

But they were young and full of energy, and when the first grief and horror of their father's death was past, they turned with keen interest to the project of their future life, and began to map out their plans with something suspiciously like amusement at the idea of their poverty and of their self-dependence.

Nan was the only one who did not join with alacrity in their consultation. She displayed a dulness and want of interest in all their proceedings which puzzled her sister at first—until one afternoon Nan came in from a visit to The Court, and ended all speculations as to her future proceedings by saying, casually—

"Oh, by-the-bye, I am not coming to London with you. I am going to live with Miss Dempster, who will provide for me until I marry."

"Nan!" cried the others, in tones of incredulous surprise.

But the girl proceeded—taking off her black hat, and twisting the ribbon nervously in and out of her fingers—"I know you will be surprised; but Miss Dempster is very fond of me, and is going to take me up to her London house next season, and give me every chance of marrying well—which she declares I ought to do at once."

"She surveyed her empty purse."—*p.* 573.

"Are you a machine, Nan, that you should talk of marriage in that horrible way?" cried Alec indignantly; while Cyril, fuming in his chair, expressed an ardent desire to shake all the nonsense out of her at once. But Mary went round to where the girl was standing erect and stately, and slipped her arms round her waist.

"Nan—my Nan," she said softly, "have you quite decided not to throw in your lot with ours? We shall be very happy, darling, in spite of our poverty."

The girl lifted her glorious eyes to her sister's face, and in that one glance Mary saw that her whole nature had been changed by some new feeling, and that it was useless to try and dissuade her from her purpose, for her ardent soul was chafing to try its wings in a new and happier flight.

"I couldn't, Mary," she said. "I *couldn't* live in poky London lodgings, and drudge as a governess. I was not fitted for poverty; and if I get my chance I will make my fortune, and that of all my family besides."

"Thank you," said Cyril disdainfully. "*We* prefer to make our own fortunes by honest work, and not by becoming slaves to peevish old women, and fighting for husbands in the matrimonial market."

"Oh, Cyril! dear Cyril!" said Mary, distressed; but Nan merely glanced haughtily at him.

"Of course I must expect to be misunderstood, but my mind is made up, and we will say no more about it. I go to Miss Dempster to-morrow," she replied.

"So soon? Oh, Nan!" was all Mary could say, bewildered at her sister's selfishness in leaving her with such a heavy burden on her shoulders.

"I know you have made up your mind, and I will not try to turn you from it," she went on, earnestly taking the girl's hand, and gently forcing her to look straight into her face. "But I want to tell you, dear, that if at any time you

get dissatisfied and unhappy with the life you have chosen, you must come back to us, and make your home with us, and let us care for one another and live for one another, as we used to do—when we were children."

Nan looked for a moment into those sweet, tender eyes, that held no shadow of reproach.

"Oh, Mary! I wish I were as good as you," she said suddenly, and catching away her hand, ran out of the room.

"Well, of all the beastly—selfish——" began Cyril, looking up from a paper of calculation as to how to live in comparative luxury on sixpence a day; but Mary laid her hand on his mouth, and checked his flow of words.

"Nan is free to do as she pleases," she said.

"And at any rate it makes one less mouth to feed, and one less person to clothe," added Alec, laughing bitterly. "There is always a bright lining to every cloud."

By the next post there came a letter from Dr. Hancock to Alec, containing an offer from an intimate friend of his to take "young Fawcett" as a clerk in his counting-house, at the rate of £80 a year, providing that he was good at book-keeping and figures, and had a fair knowledge of the French language.

This offer raised the family to the seventh heaven of happiness, and Alec grew at once a whole inch taller in his self-esteem.

"What a mercy, my dear boy, that you learned book-keeping and figures so thoroughly at school; and *how* fortunate that you have always been fond of French, and had that six months in Paris with that nice friend of yours last year!" cried Mary, ecstatically clasping her hands, and feeling that a very big part of the burden had been lifted by that letter from her shoulders.

Alec's grateful answer, accepting the situation, was despatched at once, with an example of his proficiency in French correspondence, and by return of post they received another letter from Mr. Clark, saying that his services were required immediately; and the Fawcetts made arrangements to leave Dalton the following week.

What an awful event that packing-up was; and as the day of parting stole on apace, even Mary began a little to lose heart. There were so many precious relics and papers to be looked over and burnt, so much to be prepared for the auctioneer, and so many small presents to be laid on one side for their humble friends.

Their cook had already taken her departure, but Nurse Alison absolutely refused to move, and announced her intention of taking up her permanent abode with them. And when Mary remonstrated, and tried to show her that they had scarcely enough money to provide bread for their four selves, she pooh-poohed the idea with scorn.

"Why, bless your bonny heart, Miss Mary! I've savings of my own that'll keep me from want this many a long year, let alone having had a good home here for a lifetime. And is it likely that I should go and leave the blessed lambs that I've reared myself from the cradle while I've got a penny in the world? No, Miss Mary, you don't get rid of me so easy."

And Nurse Alison set her arms akimbo with a jerk of motherly defiance, which only melted away into tears when Mary fell on her neck and kissed her.

"Why, Allie dear, of course we don't want to get rid of you!" she cried: "you can come and stay with us until you get another situation."

To which pleasing little farce Nurse Alison became a confederate, and was installed in the bosom of the family as an honoured guest at once.

It turned out also that she had a sister married and living in London, who let lodgings.

"She's only in a humble way, miss—her husband's a greengrocer, and has a shop in Chelsea way—but she's clean and loving, and would give you a welcome for my sake, as well as your own, if you would please to go to her when we go up to London town."

Mary, too delighted to have found a place among friends, from whence she might survey the world of London at her leisure, at once agreed to the plan, and Mrs. Holmes was written to and her lodgings were taken by the next post. The letter which she sent in reply to her sister is worthy of being transcribed, were it only for the edification of the school boards and the present educators of the young. But, although her orthography might be faulty, could any welcome be warmer than that which good Mrs. Holmes proposed to bestow on the young people?—

"6, Back Street, Chelsea.

"DEAR ALLISON,—This letter comes hopping to find you well, as it leves me at this presint. Give my humbel respet to the young ladies and gents, and tell them that both Maria and Sam Holmes would be honored by their presince in this house, let alone the ten shillin a week as is all I could ask for lodgin them as has been so kind to you, Allison dear. So no more from your lovin sister to command,

"MARIA HOLMES."

Mary carried this effusion solemnly to the drawing-room, and over it the whole family had the first hearty laugh in which they had felt inclined to indulge since the death of their father. It did them all a world of good, and Cyril declared, wiping away the tears from his eyes—

"The woman will be a delicious person to live with, and the whole idea of living over a greengrocer's shop in Chelsea is too absurd. I suppose we shall all live in a state of 'commanding Maria Holmes' until we make our fortunes, and retire to Eaton Square."

Nan was not so delighted with the plan as were her brothers and sisters, and when she came to say good-bye the day before their departure, and heard their destination, she drew her fine eyebrows together in a frown of impatience.

"Good gracious, how horrid!" was all she said, however. "I really *cannot* tell Miss Dempster where you are all going—and I hope she won't ask me."

"Miss Dempster be hanged!" was Cyril's laconic reply. "When you get up to your grand town house next spring, I shall bring the costermonger's barrow

every morning to your front door, and cry, 'Fresh young cabbages and potatoes alive oh!'"

"I should not acknowledge you if you did," was the girl's contemptuous answer, as she turned from him to say good-bye to her sister.

Mary clung to her tenderly, for she felt as if this were a long farewell—a farewell for ever to the little Nan of the old days; for already, in her handsome new mourning and fashionable hat, she looked a perfectly different creature from the bonnie Nan Fawcett of one short month ago.

"I shall come and see you directly we get up to town, Mary," she said affectionately, "and I shall write to you very often. And if I am ever a rich woman, what happiness we will have together again!"

"Riches do not make happiness, remember, dearest sister," whispered Mary gently; but the answer came like an echo, straight from those perfect rosy lips—

"To me they do."

And Mary knew that the child must "dree her ain weird," buy her own experience; she prayed that it might not be a very bitter one, such as might crush the life out of her sister's young heart.

The history of Miss Dempster's curious friendship for Nan was a strange one, and, like most out-of-the-way things, worth relating.

To speak briefly, Miss Lavinia Dempster was a disappointed woman, who had found the world detestable, and had bought Dalton Court on purpose to bury herself in the wilds of the country.

During her nearly sixty years of life she had had two disappointments in love, had inherited three fortunes, and had broken off her engagement with the only man who had ever loved her for herself, for reasons in which unfounded jealousy held a high place.

He had gone abroad, crushed by the disappointment and a deep sense of personal injury, and had died in the backwoods of America, a broken-hearted man.

All this, instead of softening the woman, seemed to freeze her very heart—if she had ever had one—to the mere semblance of a block of ice, and she had thrown herself into the wildest dissipation of London life, from which she had not emerged with an untarnished name.

Then a curious fancy took her, and she adopted an orphan niece, poor and pretty, who afterwards offended her beyond hope of forgiveness by marrying a curate, while her aunt was angling for a superannuated baronet with a few thousands a year.

After which Miss Dempster flung up the world in contempt; and if she had been the stuff that nuns are made of, she would probably have retired into a convent. Not being of that calibre, however, she merely retired to Dalton Court, where she led everyone around her lives compared to which those of the victims of the Inquisition would have seemed desirable.

She had met Nan Fawcett one day wandering about in the woods, and being particularly exasperated with the stupidity of both her nephew and her companion, she had taken a fancy to the girl's beauty, and had asked her to come up to the house and get some flowers.

This accidental acquaintance had ripened into liking on her part, for Nan proved herself deft and handy, and possessed of a good voice for reading aloud. And insensibly the girl grew to be a constant visitor at The Court, and to spend the greater part of the day there, with or without her father's knowledge.

That Miss Dempster's opinion of Dr. Fawcett was not very high was shown by her words when Nan came to her one day, half weeping, and told her that her father objected to her visits to The Court.

"Your father is an unworldly fool, my dear," she said, in her decided tones. "And as for his permission, why, the Fifth Commandment has long ago gone out of fashion."

And although Nan was apparently shocked and horrified by these terrible words, and ceased her visits altogether for a few days, yet the attractions of riches were too much for her, and in the end she proved the truth of Miss Dempster's words by coming down one morning, and taking her usual place, as if nothing had happened.

"Ah! I thought so, my dear," was Lavinia Dempster's concise remark. "You and I are kindred souls, after all."

Perhaps Miss Dempster may have liked to have a pretty face about her; perhaps she may have felt that, with Nan to chaperon, her *début* into the fashionable world next season would be both successful and welcome; or perhaps she may have cared a little for the girl somewhere down in her hard, worldly nature. At any rate, no sooner was Dr. Fawcett dead than she eagerly offered to adopt her, and was genuinely pleased when her offer was accepted.

"I believe we shall get on, Nan," she said, the morning after the girl's arrival; "for neither you nor I have any heart; and when your face and figure have won your matrimonial prize—be it duke or commoner—you will live to bless the name of Lavinia Dempster, who gave you your chance."

Strange though it seems, I believe that Miss Dempster flattered herself that it was a wonderful piece of charity on her part to take this girl, and train her up in the heartless, worldly way of thinking which was so peculiarly her own, and to set before her, as her highest aim, the snaring of a rich husband; and, stranger still, Nan Fawcett was rather pleased than otherwise at being told that she had no soul, and was a second Undine.

CHAPTER V.

"I WONDER if *any* cab ever held so much luggage before!" gasped Cyril, as he sat with his arms tightly clasped round the cage containing Gloire's guinea-pigs, and a basket, whose inmate, a big and indignant tom-cat, was making the air hideous with its wailing.

He surveyed Mary, who sat opposite to him, flushed with her energetic battling with a small crate of china, which, at every jolt of the shambling four-wheeler, threatened to topple over, and crush Gloire like a blackbeetle under a flat-iron.

"I am really in doubt as to whether we shall ever reach Back Street, alive," she answered, averting destruction once more with a well-timed shove. "Any way, it is a mercy that Alison has gone on with the

rest of the luggage to prepare poor Mrs. Holmes for what she has to expect."

Alec was the only one of the quartette who was silent. He was looking out of the window as they drove along through the busy streets, wondering and speculating as to their future life.

It had, of course, been a great wrench for him to give up all hopes of the profession he had chosen, and the responsibility of the support of the family weighed rather heavily on his young shoulders.

Mary seemed to guess his thoughts, and slipped her hand into his quietly, and gave it a loving little squeeze.

"Isn't it nice to be all together?" she said. "Fancy what it would be if we were all earning our living in different parts of the globe."

They were for the present quite out of the reach of want, for the sale of their furniture had realised £100, and the purchase-money of the practice, which amounted to nearly £500, was to be paid in to their banker's in a few days.

So that, as Mary said cheerfully, no one *could* call them poverty-stricken, when the sum, well invested, would bring them in nearly twenty pounds a year; and that, with Alec's salary, would start them in the world with an income of almost a hundred a year.

The streets grew narrower and more dingy as they went along, and Gloire, with a little sigh of weariness, turned her head away from the window and laid it on her sister's shoulder, that she might not see the crowds of wretched grey-looking people who went to and fro —people the like of whom she had never set eyes on in her short life.

They passed the river and the gates of Chelsea Hospital, with its peaceful green garden and its air of old-world content, and entered an unpretentious, respectable little street, which had a righteous air of being better than its neighbours.

At last the cab drew up before a greengrocer's shop, above which the house with its clean muslin blinds, and beside which its newly painted private door, rose with a look of absolute cleanliness, which certainly distinguished it from its immediate neighbours.

At the door stood Nurse Alison, and behind her, completely blocking up the passage, a slender edition of herself, curtseying so profusely, and wearing such a marvellous cap, that she could be none other than Mrs. Holmes herself. And behind her again was a vista of a black-coated, grey-haired, angular Scotchman, and a maid with a white cap and apron.

It was a work of considerable difficulty to extricate themselves from the cab, but when it was done, and they stood upon the pavement, surrounded by bag and baggage, the Fawcetts became aware that they were the centre of the admiring gaze of the whole neighbourhood. This so convulsed Cyril, that he went off into silent paroxysms of laughter, and was conveyed with great difficulty into the house by Mary, who assured him that they would be taken for a theatrical troupe, and he for the clown, if he persisted in walking with his head under his arm, and his shoulders contorted up to his ears. Whereupon he assumed the deportment of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, and strode up the passage with a gloomy air of defiance, which caused the small servant to gaze at him in open-mouthed awe.

"Bless the boy!" said Nurse Alison, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. "What spirit he has! It 's my belief that if it wasn't for him you 'd all be miserable this day. But aye, it 's a poor place for you all to come to, Miss Mary."

It struck Mary, through all her mingled feelings of grief and home-sickness, that this was a strange way of complimenting Mrs. Holmes on the house she had evidently been at considerable pains to prepare for them. And she felt an hysterical longing to laugh at the ludicrously deprecating air which the good woman put on as she continued to salaam at stated intervals, like a Mahommedan.

"Oh, I think this is such a nice, fresh-looking little house, and I am sure we shall be very comfortable," she said, turning with a smile to Mrs. Holmes; and the gentle courtly manner which was one of Mary Fawcett's great charms won their landlady's heart on the spot.

It was certainly true that, as Cyril remarked, it was absolutely impossible to turn round in the passage, and that if you had left your umbrella up-stairs, and remembered it half-way, you would have to get out into the street to turn, unless you went backwards, like a crab.

But that was surely no hardship, for the passage was clean and thoroughly ventilated, as the door of communication between it and the shop was hardly ever closed.

When they had, with great difficulty, mounted the steep narrow staircase, they found that the apartments allotted to their use were two good-sized bedrooms, a sitting-room, and a large species of attic that extended the whole length of the topmost storey, and which was absolutely unfurnished.

The sitting-room was furnished, according to the usual taste of London landladies of that class, with a good deal of mahogany and horsehair, and a preponderance of fluffy mats and artificial flowers, while the walls were brilliant with oleographs and water-colour sketches of dear departed relatives, and a paper in which purple peonies and bright green foliage had the upper hand.

Alison's countenance was strictly discouraging as she accompanied the little party on their tour of inspection.

"Bless *me*, Miss Mary!" she whispered, as they stood together in the parlour, "my poor dear sister seems to have gone off dreadful since she married Sam Holmes. But we 'll clear these things out first thing to-morrow."

"Oh no!" said the girl quickly; "we must do nothing to hurt our kind friend's feelings."

The boys were much depressed by the look of the rooms, and it seemed as if they realised for the first time the depth of their poverty; while Gloire actually wept when told that she had to wash that night in a wooden tub instead of a bath.

But Mary brought them all to reason by her cheerful spirits and ready suggestions. She declared

that she would manufacture marvellous things next day with extempore hangings and the odds and ends that she had brought away from home. While as for the attic, they would turn that into their regular sitting-room—their snuggery—and furnish it with the two or three tables and chairs brought from Dalton, and some old boxes, knocked into shape and covered with cretonne: which idea at once roused their drooping spirits, and made them begin to view life once more through rose-coloured spectacles.

Mary was their good angel—always cheerful, always looking on the bright side of everything; and although in the solitude of her own room she had her hours of darkness, her spirits never failed her when the boys needed a word of comfort.

So the young Fawcetts were launched on their new life, with the world before them to face and to fight, and no tender protecting hands to shield them from every blow. And yet each of them was sure of the other, certain of sympathy and affection, and confident of success.

Alec was at present the only one who was actually earning his own bread, but Cyril had laid deep plans, which he had divulged to no one, and which he intended, before he was many hours older, to carry into operation.

And as for the girls, Gloire was to go on learning at home, and Mary was determined to find some employment, either as a governess or assistant of some sort.

Alec's work lay within a mile or two of Chelsea, and he set off in good time to his office, leaving the three others at home busy over their plans of house decoration.

Alison was to wait upon them entirely, besides helping her sister with her own house-work and cooking, and she and Mary sallied forth, laden with minute instructions from Mrs. Holmes as to shops and right turnings, to do the household catering.

It was a very hot morning, and the dingy streets around them looked more uninteresting than usual after the vivid memories of the country, where, as Mary knew, the gardens would be brilliant with flowers, and the deep shade of the Court woods would be greenly inviting at that very moment. Nan was there; and Nan was perhaps basking in the shaded sunlight while she was toiling through the streets of busy, heartless London, calculating ways and means to save a penny here and there.

"Oh, Alison! if only we could live on dry bread and potatoes, what a lot it would save!" she said in comical despair, as she packed away her small piece of beef into her basket, and surveyed her empty purse.

"Eh! Miss Mary, but you'll never live on beggars' fare while I'm above ground to stop you. And, pray, what would Mr. Wyndham say when he came to see you, and found those bonny roses faded on your cheeks? He'd not bless your old nurse, I'll warrant. And, oh! to think of Miss Nan rolling in luxury all this time," said Alison.

"Poor, pretty Nan!" said Mary softly, with tender emphasis; for her sister's desertion had saddened her a little, and it grated on her gentle pride to imagine her sister a poor dependent in Miss Dempster's rich household.

When they reached Back Street again, and Alison had opened the dun-coloured front door that scraped so harshly over the stone threshold, they heard the sound of merry voices from within the shop, and going hastily forward, Mary discovered Gloire standing among the piles of earthy potatoes and crumpled cabbages. She was behind the counter, and, all unconscious of the two pairs of eyes gazing at her from the doorway, was weighing out a pound of potatoes for a child in a ragged frock.

"And is your name Sue?" she was saying in her clear childish treble. "And have you *really* got ten brothers and sisters? If it was *my* shop, I'd give you some potatoes extra, because you are so poor; but as it isn't, you see, I must be quite honest. Oh dear! how heavy these scales are!"

"Lor', mum!" here ejaculated the small girl, whose eyes were so wide with surprise that they appeared to be in danger of falling out; "if you haven't been and weighed me out a quartern, and I don't want more than a pound, neither!"

"Miss Gloire, you'll be the death of me!" said Alison, dropping her basket with a despairing thud in the passage, and coming forward between the piles of savoys and the swards of late peas and beans, which looked as if the fog-demon had had them in his clutches.

The child turned round laughing.

"Mr. and Mrs. Holmes were both away somewhere, and I wanted to surprise them, so I told this little girl to come in here and buy her potatoes. She was going to a shop round the corner, she said. I hope her mother won't scold her."

Alison weighed the vegetables and dismissed the customer, but even her outraged sense of decorum was not proof against the laughter in Mary's eyes, and she joined her, rather unwillingly, in applauding the first of the Fawcett family who had turned an honest penny by her own exertion.

But she nevertheless administered a severe and scathing rebuke to her sister and brother-in-law on the audacity of their leaving their shop untended, which they received with all due humility.

But Cyril vowed that although Gloire might be the first, he should be by no means behindhand in doing his best towards supporting the family; and without saying a word to his sister, he slipped out of the house next morning, determined to search for work.

Although he was full of hope and confidence, yet he fully recognised all the difficulties he would have to encounter; for he had read a great deal about the overcrowding of the labour market, and knew that if older and more capable men were starving for lack of employment, he, a young, inexperienced boy, would scarcely be likely to succeed where they had failed. He had wisely determined to shun the larger, more pretentious places of business, and to begin his attack on those shops that seemed to be only moderately high in the social scale. For he had made up his mind that his part in life must at present be played behind a shop counter, and that offices and banks were not in the habit of engaging clerks who dropped from the skies, without testimonials or previous experience.

Cyril was proverbially the quick-witted one of the

family; and although this was the first walk he had ever taken alone in London, he seemed to know instinctively which was the right omnibus to hail, and which the right underground station to patronise.

He was soon in the Strand, and much bewildered by the roar of traffic and hurry of ceaseless busy steps, all tending in one direction, and all striving to be well to the front in the race for wealth.

He did not pause to look long at the shop windows, but selecting a stationer's which he thought looked hopeful for his plans, he boldly entered, and marched up to the counter.

The obsequiously civil shopman was, alas! only too delighted to take any orders he might be likely to give them, but most unwilling to look upon him in the light of a probable assistant, and with an impatient "Nonsense! we want no boys here; and if we did, a lad like you, with no experience, would hardly do for *us*," turned away, and Cyril departed crestfallen.

He had one or two more disappointments in the busy thoroughfare; and although he always chose the smallest shops, they none of them seemed to be in need of any assistant, nor did their proprietors trouble themselves to be particularly civil to the anxious inquirer after work.

One man did go so far as to put a few questions to the young fellow as to his education, etc., which Cyril tried to answer; but when he found that the cross-examination was being conducted merely out of curiosity, and not from helpful sympathy, he declined to disclose the facts of his difficulties any further, and left the shop with a swelling heart.

It was past mid-day when he gave up his designs in despair and turned homeward, feeling as if all the world were against him, and as if he were a mere atom, struggling in a vast universe of beings in league to crush him to the earth.

He went home by a different route, and turned down a quiet street not far from Victoria station, which seemed to be principally devoted to the sale of second-hand furniture and old clothes, with a few bird-cages and morsels of old silver thrown in *ad lib.*

The street seemed to be rather deserted, and the dozen or so of people who were about seemed to be in no particular hurry to get to anywhere, but rather as if they had their whole lives before them to spend in some fashion, and as if they might as well occupy a week or so in getting through Louis Street.

Cyril walked along with his eyes bent upon the ground, for there was little to interest him in the grey line of houses, varied here and there with a touch of brightness by cast-off scarlet military coats which hung above the door of some pawn-shops, or by a clump of green lettuce or water-cress on a costermonger's barrow.

Half-way up the street Cyril came upon a quaint little book-shop—a small building shoved away wedge-shape between its neighbouring houses, with an air of being rather ashamed of itself and its surroundings.

In front of the open window were displayed some of the wares, in the shape of a few vellum-bound volumes of considerable antiquity; and a glimpse was afforded into the interior of the shop, where shelf upon shelf of books, each seeming older and mustier than the others, lay heaped up in bewildering confusion.

Cyril's eye was caught by a rare edition of Spenser's "Faëry Queen," where the "blatant beast" was displayed in all its horror, with all the skill of the seventeenth-century artist, to whose imagination there had apparently been no limit.

Cyril was always fascinated by books of any description, and this little second-hand shop appeared to him to be the very acme of delight.

He paused, and beginning to turn over the pages of the little volume, was soon lost in a day-dream.

He made an unconsciously attractive picture as he stood leaning against the frame of the window, his fresh country cheeks, fair hair, and handsome boyish face seeming so wonderfully out of place in this gloomy bye-street. His lips, which had been curved in a droop of depression ever since the failure of his expedition, gradually slipped into their wonted smile, and he might have stood for a model of perfect youth outlined against the gloom of his surroundings.

Presently he was aroused by a touch on his arm, and he started back in surprise and confusion, expecting to receive a few hard words for obstructing the pavement; instead of which, he faced a little old man who was looking at him with a quiet friendly smile.

"Oh!—I—I—beg your pardon," said the boy, with a quick blush. "I was only interested in your delightful books."

The old man said nothing for a moment or two, but stood still, smiling at Cyril, with his hand on the boy's arm, half in and half out of the shop door.

Cyril took a rapid survey of the front of the building, on which the words "Aaron Davis, Second-hand Bookseller," were inscribed in large letters.

Then he looked at Mr. Aaron Davis, to see if he corresponded with his name.

He was a small, sparely built man, dressed in curiously fashioned corduroy clothes, with a large leather apron enveloping his whole outward man. His legs were encased in knee-breeches, and on his heavy leather shoes glittered a pair of massive silver buckles.

His face was wrinkled and yellow, like one of his old parchments, and his chin was clean-shaven. All the hair which should have been by rights on his face or head seemed to have centred itself in his eyebrows, which had grown to an extraordinarily bushy length, and overshadowed his keen brown eyes, which needed no spectacles, although he had nearly reached the appointed limit of the age of man.

"Well, young man!" he said briskly, at last. "And, pray, are you going to buy what you so much admire? I 'll only charge you a guinea and a half for the little gem, and it 'll be dirt-cheap at that."

Cyril's confusion grew tenfold.

"I haven't any money," he blurted out. "I am quite poor, and have been tramping through the streets this morning trying to get work in some shop, but no one will have me."

Aaron looked him slowly up and down, from his neat leather boots to the crown of his well-worn hat.

"And so you came up to London thinking that the streets were paved with gold, young fellow, did you?

Ah! you're only another fool, like all boys of your age."

Cyril's heart swelled within him.

"If I am a fool," he said hotly, "I have no intention of allowing strangers to twit me with my folly. Good-morning, sir!"

And lifting his hat with a proud air, which became him wonderfully well, he moved away.

"Stop a bit! Stop a bit! Not so fast, young man," cried old Aaron after him. "I've got something to say to you. Will you step inside, where we shall be free at least from the thousand and one eyes of the London streets?"

After a moment's hesitation, Cyril returned, and Aaron shuffled on before him through the somewhat dimly lighted shop into a back parlour solidly furnished in black oak, and full of curiosities that must have employed a lifetime to gather together.

Then closing the door cautiously behind them, the old man turned and faced Cyril, who was standing, with his hat in his hand, still half annoyed, on the threshold.

"If there's a fool in this room, it's myself," he said emphatically. "For I'm going to do what no one but a rash idiot would do: and that is, to ask you to come and work with me here. I like your face, and I've taken a fancy to you, though I don't know anything about you, except that you're a gentleman, if ever there was one in the world. Sit you down, and let's talk it over. But you'll excuse me putting the door ajar, for fear of accidents, as some of my books are worth their weight in gold."

Cyril, absolutely speechless from astonishment, sat down on the edge of a high-backed carved oak chair, which dated back—if the evidence of well-known experts might be accepted—to the reign of good Queen Bess.

"Well—well!" continued Aaron, rendering himself a little difficult to understand by constant unpremeditated jerks and headlong raids into the shop to discover if his goods were as yet untouched by marauding fingers. "You mightn't think it, but I've got a rare big business down here, though I only live in a back street. Every buyer and collector in London knows old Aaron Davis; and he's a cute 'un at picking up bargains and rare editions, *he* is;" and the old man went off into such a paroxysm of inward laughter that he choked himself as red as a turkey-cock, and required five minutes' silence before he emerged, still breathless, from the fray.

"Well, as I was saying, I've a big business, and want a bit of help, and it isn't every boy that I would be willing to take to work with me; but I could trust you; and if you like to make it a bargain, I'll give you twelve shillings a week, and let's say 'Done,' and have a glass of ginger cordial over it. You look as if you wanted a touch of something warm, and mine's a rare recipe."

"Thank you," said Cyril, more moved than he cared to confess at the bluff friendliness of the old man. "I take your offer, and I am very grateful to you, Mr. Davis."

"Grateful! grateful! Not more than I shall be if you do what I want you to do. Now, not another word till you've swallowed a mouthful. Bless the boy! I don't want to hear your history. I tell you I take you on trust."

Aaron began to bustle about the room, for he saw that Cyril's eyes were full of tears, and he knew that to boyish pride discovery would be very galling. He produced from a corner cupboard of embossed leather and carved oak a flagon and two glasses of the most rare Venetian crystal, which he proceeded to fill with the boasted cordial.

And Cyril guessed that (although he personally hated the taste of ginger) the old man had given him of his best, and he felt proportionately grateful.

"May I begin work to-morrow?" he said, as he rose to his feet.

"To be sure you may—to be sure! I like to see young men keen over their work," returned Aaron.

"I think it is only fair to you to tell you my story," went on Cyril bravely. "I am an orphan. My father was a doctor, and he died three weeks ago. We were left quite penniless, and we have come up to live in Back Street, Chelsea—not very far from here—and my brother has got a place as clerk in a house of business in Vauxhall; and my two sisters are doing what they can to help us. That is all."

"Well, well!" said Aaron, suddenly becoming much interested in an engraving upon the wall which he must have seen a hundred times a day for several years. "Dear me! I really scarcely noticed what an exquisite line of shadow there is upon this child's hand. Well, as I was going to say, I was sure that was your history. I saw it written in your face, and that made me speak to you; for fifty years ago I, too, came up to London, a poor north-country lad, and should have lain down to starve to death in the street, if it had not been for a chance friend, who set me in the way of earning my bread and standing on my own feet. God keep his memory green! as the saying is. Well, good-bye, my boy, till nine o'clock to-morrow. And remember, punctuality is an uncommon virtue."

Cyril bounded home again, up one street and down another, with a heart as light as relief and joy could make it.

The streets no longer looked dreary, or the passers-by wretched prisoners of a city of misery; but there was a light on every face, reflected from the happy eyes of one who had found his vocation, though it might be only behind the counter of a musty book-shop.

"My dearest boy, where on earth have you been to?" was Mary's anxious question, as he raced up-stairs two steps at a time, and nearly landed in the sitting-room on his head.

But she could get nothing out of him till he was calmer, and then he sat and expatiated to his two sisters on the wonders of the old book-shop and the marvellous things he intended to do with his twelve shillings a week, until far into the afternoon.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. DEMPSTER was not at The Court when Nan arrived. He had pleaded business in London, and had taken himself off for a few days, to consider the present situation at his leisure.

Nan's permanent establishment in the household was, in the present state of affairs, to say the least of it, embarrassing, and it took some time before Reginald Dempster could make up his mind how to treat his aunt's new *protégée*, who was, to his own undoing, so provokingly pretty.

He abused himself a hundred times over for having gone so far as to make love to her and to give her presents, for he now saw that to a certain extent he was in her power; for if she chose to revenge herself on him, she had only to inform his aunt of his proceedings to bring down dire wrath and ruin on his head; for Miss Dempster would rather see him in his grave than married to a penniless, titleless girl. But again he reflected that in his ruin Nan must necessarily involve her own, for such a dangerous person would never be allowed to remain under the roof of Dalton Court so long as he, the heir, was in imminent peril of falling in love with her.

So, after various qualms of conscience, and a sharp letter from Miss Dempster to say that the estate was going to ruin without him, he returned with some trepidation to Dalton.

Nan had been an inmate of his aunt's house for a week, and as he entered the hall and threw open the door of the morning-room, he noticed with vague wonder that there seemed to be a subtle difference about the house.

Big bowls of roses and lilies stood on the tables and shelves, and purple, yellow, and white irises made a blaze of beauty against the dark background of the fireplace.

A stately figure rose up from a deep lounge chair by the window to greet him, and he saw that it was Nan, attired in a sombre velvet gown, out of which her swan-like throat and graceful little head rose in sharp relief.

"He started back in surprise."—*p. 574.*

The curves of her figure, set off by the well-fitting gown, and the whiteness of her skin under her masses of dark hair, struck him with admiring wonder, and in silence he held out his hand.

She shut up with a little crash the great scarlet fan which she was holding against her black gown, and faced him with perfect composure and a charming smile.

"Your aunt wished me to apologise to you for her

non-appearance this afternoon; but she has a bad headache, and I am afraid she will not be able to see you till to-morrow morning," she said calmly. She had schooled herself to greet him with indifference during the past few days; for that one short interview in the wood had changed her love for him to dislike and contempt, and she now felt that *all* she wished as regarded Reginald Dempster was to punish him for the part he had played towards her, and, if possible, to revenge her wrongs with absolute completeness. She had therefore been able to reply decidedly to Miss Dempster's remark, "I suppose you won't be such a fool as to fall in love with Reggie?"—"No, *indeed*, dear Miss Dempster. He is not the sort of man who could attract me, *now*, in the least."

And the old lady had thought that the emphatic *now* had reference to her improved position, and to the numbers of wealthy suitors she might reasonably hope to have at her feet in an incredibly short space of time.

Dempster was far more agitated.

"I—I am sorry I shall not see my aunt," he stammered. "But, Nan, what has happened to you? You have altered!"

"Sit down, Mr. Dempster," said the girl imperiously. "And once for all let us understand our position. I am Miss Dempster's adopted daughter, and, as such, intend to make a good match; while you are her nephew, who in your turn must marry well, or to a dead certainty you will be disinherited. For the future I am Miss Fawcett to you, and nothing more. Do you understand?"

"But I thought—I was under the impression that you cared for me?" he said, with a dismal attempt at resistance.

"Cared for you? As much as I care for Miss Dempster's pet spaniel, and no more. *That* mad folly is over long ago, and *you* cured me of it."

She laughed a little hardly, while he gnawed his moustache in crestfallen silence. Her words were scarcely complimentary.

"I hope that you have had a good journey," she continued, after a moment's silence, waving her brilliant fan backwards and forwards with a lazy movement of her wrist.

"Yes, thanks," he said mechanically; and then, thinking he ought to say something kind, "I was so awfully sorry, you know, to hear of all your trouble."

Nan's eyes flashed fire, and she set her teeth.

"Don't speak of it," she said hastily. "I think that I began to hate you first when I got home from the wood that day, and found that he was dead, and I had deceived him."

"Oh, well! I say, isn't that a little rough on a fellow?" he said lamely. This sudden change of front on the part of the girl before him completely took him aback. He began to admire her far more than he had ever done in the days when she had seemed to be quite ready to fling herself at his head.

He had yet to learn the subtle changes of a woman's heart, and her wonderful power of compressing her feelings, where her sensibilities are injured or her future is affected.

"What do you do with yourself all day long?" he said at last, after a furtive and puzzled look at her.

"Well, really, it is exceedingly difficult to say what my duties are exactly; but as long as I amuse your aunt and keep things pretty smooth in the household, I may do as I like. I am to begin to have singing lessons next week, and am to be finished in London in the spring."

"I did not know that you had a voice," he answered.

"No? Ah! I expect there are several points in my character of which you are utterly unaware. At any rate, I will show you that I can sing a little."

She went to the piano, and began some low rambling prelude, gradually growing more distinct, until her voice took up the melody.

Dempster listened critically, but could find no fault with the clear contralto notes that were filling the room.

Pure and sweet they were, with a touch of defiance in them, which somehow suited the quaint French melody she was singing. But Nan's voice would never have drawn tears from her listener's eyes, for there was no depth of soul in it.

"Thank you," said Dempster, when she had finished her song and had returned to her seat in the window. "I wonder how many more accomplishments there are dormant within you to be yet discovered."

"I am devoted to riding—if you call that an accomplishment," she said, smiling. "And Miss Dempster is only waiting for your return to see about buying a horse for my own use. I was measured for a new habit yesterday."

"I think that you are a very fortunate girl to have so completely won your way to my aunt's heart," answered Dempster, as he rose in obedience to the sound of the dressing-bell, which was clanging backwards and forwards in the turret at the back of the house.

"The proper thing would have been for you to say that your aunt is the chief person to be congratulated in the arrangement," she said quickly, as they separated in the corridor, and turned lightly away from him, so that he might have no chance of replying to her saucy remark.

Nan's bedroom faced west, and looked out over the sloping garden and the park, down to the lake which lay flashing and sparkling under the rays of the westering sun.

The trees grew thickly round the house, hemming it in on either side, and the larger part of the garden, with the conservatories, lay to the south and east.

The Court was an Elizabethan red-brick house, of considerable size, the back buildings and kitchen belonging to a later date, and evidently having been tacked on as an after-thought, when the ideas of its owners grew more expansive, and the sense of their importance as a county family more exalted. The consequence was that the back of the house had a way of looking exceedingly shy, and of endeavouring

to bury itself under its sheltering veil of ivy, with only partial success. But the rest of The Court was perfect in its own style, both inside and outside.

Dempster looked after Nan, as she tripped up the staircase trailing her dainty draperies after her, with something like annoyance.

He had left Dalton with the consciousness that a simple, pretty little country maiden was weeping her eyes out because he had shown himself cold and unresponsive to her affection.

He had returned to find the country maiden with the uncontrolled feelings a thing of the past; and from the ashes of the dead phœnix, a peerless beauty had arisen, with a touch of scorn in her manner and an utter disregard for his attentions which made her a hundred times more attractive in his eyes. He was piqued by her coldness, which was so unutterably becoming to her, and he passed on to his own quarters with a growing sense of admiration for the cleverness with which she was playing this new *rôle* that she had assumed.

And Nan?

To say that she was happy when she reached her room would not have been the strict truth, for it was difficult at first to root out the love that she had once felt for Reginald Dempster. Her heart still quivered with it, although the pain was growing more dull, and the first sight of his unworthy face had set those feelings on edge once again, mingled with shame at the part she had played; so that she required a few moments' quiet thought and repose before she felt equal to meeting him again at their *tête-à-tête* dinner.

She let her eyes wander over the pretty little room that the west-going sun was flooding with brilliant light.

To live with everything so daintily beautiful around her, ivory and silver toilet accessories, exquisite china and rare embroidered hangings, was in itself so unusual as to be intense happiness to her beauty-loving nature.

If Reginald Dempster had been faithful to her, and had wooed her honestly in the sight of all men, she would not now be living in luxury at The Court, but would in all probability have been dragging out her weary days over the Chelsea greengrocer's shop, waiting for a marriage which would have meant poverty for life, with no hope of reconciliation with the implacable Miss Dempster.

Things were far better, she said, as they were; although Nan was a little sore at the thought of how easily she had been deceived; and, with a little triumphant laugh at the idea of Dempster's signal discomfiture, she began to put on her delicate white tea-gown, with its flashing bands of jet, in which she knew that she looked her best.

Miss Dempster's indisposition had been part of a cleverly laid plan, to see and prove Nan's present state of feelings towards her nephew. She had made a pretty shrewd guess at the tender passages that had passed between the young couple at the early stage of their acquaintance, and had at first hesitated at the idea of inviting the girl to be a permanent resident under her roof.

But closer study of Nan's strange nature had resulted in proving to Miss Dempster that this young lady would never ignore the fact that bread-and-butter is infinitely to be preferred to a dry crust, and that it is better to live in a castle than a two-pair back. Love in a cottage would be as little to Nan Fawcett's taste as it would have been to Miss Dempster herself, and therefore Reginald's ardent feelings—did they exist—might be safely left to be cooled down at Nan's discretion.

Still, that did not prevent the invalid from being on the watch for the whole of that evening. And when the sound of the opening and shutting of the drawing-room door announced that the young people were separating for the night, Miss Dempster stole softly to her bedroom door, and opening it cautiously a little way, set her eyes to the crack with the intentness of a cat watching the helpless gambols of a couple of mice.

The corridor and staircase below her were brilliantly lighted by the branches of wax candles that studded the walls at intervals, and she could clearly distinguish every movement of the two who were bidding each other good-night half-way up the stairs.

Nan, a step above the young man, radiant in her flashing gown, was looking down at him with an expression the old lady could not quite fathom. But Reginald's feelings were ludicrously easy to read as he gazed passionately up into the *criante* lovely face, and Miss Dempster set her teeth with a smothered expression of wrath.

"Nan—oh, Nan!" he said quickly, "are you, can you possibly be, such an icicle as you are willing to make me think? Can't you forget for once that there is such a thing as money, or such a being as that old frost-bitten cat?"

He stopped short. Something, perhaps, in Nan's eyes had warned him, for she, with quickened perception, had caught sight of a vague shadow within Miss Dempster's half-open door.

"*Mille pardons, monsieur*," she answered, lifting her voice a little, and making a saucy pirouette as she turned away, "I entirely fail to understand the drift of your meaning, nor do I at all desire to do so."

Reginald Dempster—rash and impetuous for once in his life—caught at her gown.

"Hear me out, at least," he said roughly. "I have deserved *that* at your hands."

But she, with one hand, gave so determined and sudden a wrench to the gown that he staggered a step or two backwards in astonishment, and had he not caught hold of the banister, Reginald Dempster would have measured his long length on the mat at the bottom of the stairs.

When he recovered himself, Nan, with a light laugh, was flying along the corridor far above him, and Miss Dempster was maliciously grinning at him from her door.

"Dear me, Reginald! what a disturber of the peace you are! How do you come to be having a lonely scuffle on the stairs?"

"Oh—ah—good-night, Aunt Lavinia. I wish you would have your—ah—stair-carpet nailed down a

little more securely," answered Dempster, plunging down-stairs in confusion.

"And at the same time it might be a good plan to have your head fastened on a little more firmly," retorted Miss Dempster, as she retreated into her room and banged the door.

"Ah, Nan Fawcett! Nan Fawcett!" she muttered to herself through her teeth. "You little knew how near you were to the greengrocer's shop this evening. So I am a frozen cat, am I, Master Reginald? Very well! I shall not forget that in a hurry."

And, with a cruel smile, Miss Dempster blew out her candle and got into bed.

(To be continued.)

AN OLD-WORLD CORNER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELOW THE SEA-LEVEL," ETC. ETC.

THE barometer has been for a long time steadily falling. The wind blows in fierce gusts from the south-west, and squall succeeds squall, and thunderstorm thunderstorm, with tantalising persistency. Nothing can be more melancholy than the aspect of the Zuyder Zee—an expanse of whity-grey water tumbling beneath a whity-grey sky. Far away, above the level horizon, a spire rises here and there, seemingly out of the vasty deep, or the upper arms of the omnipresent windmill show themselves; then a sudden downpour of rain blots out all but a strip of ragged sky overhead and the waves immediately surrounding the despatch-boat, the nearest of them banging at her barrel-like sides, and clamouring loudly to be let in.

Sea, sky, rain—they disturb not the equanimity of the Dutch *schipper*, who, as he steers, lolls against the great tiller of the rudder, with his hands in the capacious pockets of his knickerbockers. Now and then he eyes the water, now and then the towering red leg-of-mutton sail, and anon gives an order to his *knecht*, or mate, who, always watchful, squats in the bows.

In the middle of the boat is the pump, and to leeward are piled sundry long oars; as usual, there is no keel, a substitute being found in two huge lee-boards, one on either side, which prevent the vessel from drifting to leeward. No paint is used on the outside; the hull is varnished with Stockholm tar, which gives a beautiful appearance to the wood, showing off to advantage its natural markings, the richness and variety of colouring being enhanced by age. Boat and crew antedate time by, say, two or three hundred years, making the nineteenth century a dream, and steam, electricity, and the telephone, chimeras of the imagination.

The *schipper* wears a brown felt hat; his vest is of dark brown, with a low collar and a double row of buttons, the top ones being of gold; the button-holes are worked in green, the wristbands are scarlet, and a narrow scarlet stripe runs down each arm. Round his neck he wears a scarlet tie with long ends; beneath his vest a scarlet shirt shows here and there. His wide knickerbockers—darker in colour than the vest—are attached by gold buttons to a band round the waist; below these are black woollen stockings, and shoes fastened with large buckles.

What few passengers there are have taken refuge in the cabin, a sort of doll's house forward, so low as not to admit of standing, but spotless with the perfection of cleanliness seldom seen out of Holland. Half a dozen people would be inconveniently crowded in this limited space. It contains a tiny brightly polished brass stove and brass kettle, a tiny cupboard-bed with curtains, a low seat, and a rack on the wall holds a few plates and one or two small articles. The exterior is white, and is ornamented with red, blue, and green scrolls interwined, looking as if fresh from the hands of the painter.

And now the rain that has been moderating ceases; the heavens are still draped with a heavy pall, but the clerk of the weather threatens only, and for a time the deluge is stayed. Taking courage, the passengers creep forth from the doll's house, and looking ahead, see a long flat island only just above the level of the waves. A little closer, and down comes the main-sail with a run; under the jib only the boat makes for a narrow entrance between high wooden posts, and entering carefully, comes to a standstill by the side of a little quay in the harbour of the isle of Marken.

Marken has seen a good many changes since the middle of the twelfth century. Friesland and North Holland were then connected by marshes and low-lying land covered with extensive forests, in the middle being a large lake—Lake Flevo. Actions often carry with them unforeseen consequences. From the time that the Emperor Nero turned a branch of the Rhine into the Yssel, Lake Flevo, with which it was connected, gradually extended its boundaries, until eventually the barriers between it and the salt water being broken, the German Ocean rushed in and formed the Zuyder Zee.

In shape, the island is long and somewhat triangular, and being barely above water, is surrounded

on all sides by a bank about a yard in height. It is intersected in every direction by dykes and water-channels, and communication is by means of raised causeways and bridges. Seven small hamlets perched

PEASANT WOMAN OF MARKEN.

on mounds in order to protect them from periodical inundations contain a population of about a thousand persons. The central village is called Marken; it consists of one main street, containing a few small shops, and numerous narrow alleys branching off to right and left. In the centre of the village stands the church, a plain building both outside and in: over each aisle there hangs from the ceiling the model of a full-rigged ship.

All the houses have a ground-floor only, the space being divided by wooden partitions into as many rooms as may be required. They have no ceilings, but are open to the great roof, which is covered with red tiles. The gables are painted white, as is the woodwork surrounding the windows; the low walls are dark brown or black. This contrast of colours gives the little town, even on a dull day, a very picturesque appearance.

It is quite amusing to see the number of *sabots* ranged outside the front door of each house, the number of pairs being a safe guide to the number of inmates.

One has heard so much of Dutch interiors that one longs to have a peep at the domestic arrangements of these representatives of older Holland; but the Markeners are naturally jealous of intrusion, and only by favour is one allowed sometimes to gratify one's curiosity. Fortunately, there lives in one of the largest houses an old widow, who, diplomatically approached, will admit the inquiring stranger, and even take a very justifiable pride in showing her humble dwelling. Turning up a queer narrow alley, unevenly paved with cobble-stones, one enters a large room; in the middle a ladder leaning against a main beam gives access to the rafters. It looks as if some gigantic spider had spun his web overhead, for hanging in festoons from point to point are innumerable nets and fishing gear, in admirable order, just as they had been used and left by the deceased fisherman—the old lady's husband.

Opposite the entrance to the room is a deep recess in the wall, occupied by two high beds, with curtains hanging before them. The coverlets are beautifully worked in various colours, and the mattresses are wedge-shaped—high at the head and sloping towards the feet—as in Norway. To the right of the recess, and about four feet from the nearest wall, a hearth is formed in the floor, and over it, hanging from the roof, is a burnished copper kettle. To the left of the recess are some fine old *armoires* in black oak, richly carved, and of great value. Shelves run along the walls, and they, as well as every available space around the floor, are crammed with old dishes, bowls, and plates—specimens of Dutch art. There are a number of pictures—mostly old prints; and the chairs and other articles of furniture are all more or less interesting. Nothing could be cleaner than the room and its contents, nothing more neat and orderly.

The widow is as interesting as her house. Imagine a very old lady, tall and spare, with skin brown and shrivelled like a walnut, almost toothless, but with a sparkle in her keen grey eyes, and a youthful sprightliness of step, chattering away in Dutch or German,

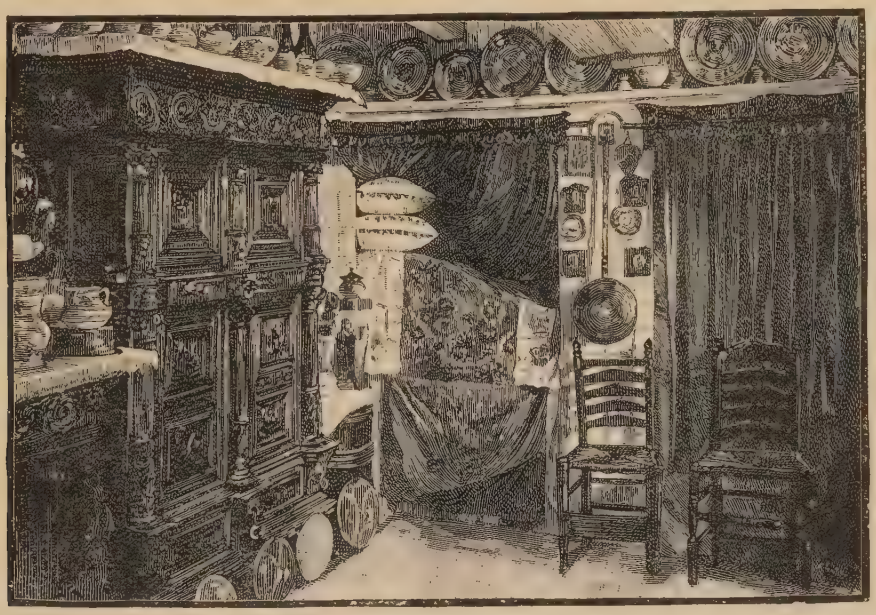
A MARKENER.

backed by animated gestures. She is dressed in the strange costume peculiar to the island only. A very large white mitre-like cap forms her head-dress; it is lined with brown, to show off the lace and embroidery with which it is decorated; it fits close round the face, and is tied under the chin. Her hair comes low over the forehead, being cut square like a fringe; a single long ringlet falls down each side of the face to the shoulders. The upper part of the dress is a brown body, without sleeves, covered all over with embroidery in various colours and patterns. Some of these embroideries are very complicated, and take years to make, and the best are handed down as heirlooms from mother to daughter. The sleeves are in two unequal parts; the upper, reaching to the elbow, has black and white stripes, the lower is of dark blue, and reaches to the wrist. The skirt likewise is in two unequal parts: the upper, but eight inches wide, has black lines on a light ground, whilst the lower skirt is dark blue, and has a double band of reddish-brown. Such is the costume of the women and girls; the men's and boys' is similar to that described as worn by the skipper of the despatch-boat.

It is indeed a novelty to come upon such an old-world portion of the globe, for here there has been no change in dress, manners, or customs for a hundred years at least. Hans Andersen's Councillor, who longed so earnestly for the "good old times," would have found them here, and it would have been no dream—the Middle Ages in truth, minus only, say, the Pope and the Feudal System. Mark Twain's uncle, who asks so plaintively if anyone can tell him where he might really live in quiet, would find it in the isle of Marken if he took up his residence on sufficiently high ground. There would be no wild Indians, no active volcanoes, no bears, to keep him perpetually "on the jump"—not even a policeman to "move him on."

Although the Markeners know little of the outer world, education is by no means neglected; all can read and write, and possess some knowledge of figures. They are hale and strong, and often live beyond the allotted span.

As may easily be imagined, there is little dissipation. Throughout the week the men are engaged in fishing. Their fleet of a hundred fishing-boats may be seen every Sunday in the small harbour, a short pennon flying gaily from each masthead, a flag from that of the admiral.



A COTTAGE INTERIOR.

Whilst their husbands are away, the women look after their homes and families, and in the summer much of their time is occupied in haymaking, for the island is one large meadow. Twice a year, when the grass is long, a body of Germans armed with scythes come over from the mainland to cut it. After they have left, the women and children toss the hay, collect it into haycocks, and store it for future use.

There are only a few poor specimens of trees and cattle on the island. Fish and wild duck are plentiful, otherwise all the provisions and necessaries are brought from the mainland, the nearest large village being Monniekendam, with which regular communication is kept up through the despatch-boat.

Monniekendam has a very large church, stripped of all ornament within and without, and a town-hall with a pretty campanile that is worth ascending for the extensive view it commands. Upon the woodwork at the top of the tower many names have been

scribbled by those who yearn for fame. Among the distinguished family cognomens of Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson, is that of Buonaparte. The inscription is in French—bad French—and so must be taken for what it is worth: "Napoleon Buonaparte, Empereur de la France, 1809, voyagent incognito."

Although Monniekendam has but a population of 2,000, religious sects are numerous, for one finds here Calvinists, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Mennonites. These last are an offshoot from Calvinism, the special points on which they differ being that baptism should be given to none but responsible persons claiming it; that education should precede the sacrament; and refusal to take an oath or bear arms. In the days of Menno Simonsz, their leader the sect was bitterly persecuted, and made comparatively few converts. They were as one large family, marrying amongst themselves; peaceful—and by their vows professing peace—in the midst of wars and the turbulency of the times. They bore persecution meekly, willing to endure all things for the sake of their religious convictions. To-day the levelling power of conscription obliges them to serve in the army when required. Their numbers have considerably increased, and in various countries the Mennonites have offshoots, under different names.

A. E. BONSER.

"ONLY A CHILD."

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER. BY EVELYN EVERETT GREEN.

"IT'S only a child—shrimping, no doubt, in the shallows."

"What sight you have, Thurloe! I should have taken it for a large bird—a penguin, or something like that."

"You'll see better in a moment. It's a boy fast enough. Come on, old man; this shore is none too safe for riding in the dark. It is full of quicksands, to say nothing of deep holes."

The young men, both of whom wore the huntsman's pink, set spurs to their horses and galloped steadily onward over the glimmering sands, which stretched away before them as far as the eye could see. The October day was waning fast, and although the air was close and sultry, as it sometimes is in that month, there was something depressing in the moaning sound of the sea as it rippled far away to the left upon the sandy waste. The sky was dull and leaden in colour, and out in the west a dusky orange glow lighted up the restless water with a weird and uncanny effect. As the horsemen drew near to the object upon the shore which had attracted their attention from afar, it became plain that young Squire Thurloe had not been mistaken. Alone in the midst of those lonely sands a little boy was sitting, his pale wistful face, full of a strange pathetic fear and misgiving, fixed full upon the glimmering water, creeping slowly, slowly up towards him, whilst the last reflection of the fading sunset seemed to be lingering upon the bright curls which crowned the broad white brow.

Not an ordinary-looking child, by any means; but young men are not wont to pay much heed to the looks of children. Both riders turned a careless glance upon the little fellow as they passed, and met the mute, pleading glance of a pair of dark blue eyes, which appeared to ask for something which the quivering lips would never frame in words; but neither of the pair drew rein. The light was fast fading; their horses were eager for the shelter of a comfortable stable. What was the child to them? His own people would see to him in time. It was no business of theirs.

"What on earth can the little beggar be doing out alone here at this time of evening?" said the squire's companion. "I suppose he is safe from the tide?"

"Oh, yes, safe enough—above high-water mark. I suppose his father is out shrimping somewhere; I thought he looked as if he were taking care of some clothes. This is our way up, old fellow—through this gap, and then we hit the road. Will you come home with me to-night? No? Well, then, here we part company; your way lies to the left, and mine straight on. Good-night; see you again next meet. It's at Sir John's place, I believe."

"I think so. Good-night, Thurloe. I must look sharp or I shall be late for dinner, which, I hear, is an unpardonable sin in the eyes of my hostess."

The elder of the two companions set spurs to his horse once more, and was quickly lost to sight in the windings of the lane, whilst the young squire, who was within a mile of his own house, and in no particular haste to reach it, seeing that there was nobody at home to welcome him, paused irresolutely at the fork of the road, and looked back towards the sea. He was thinking of the wistful child's face he had seen a few minutes before. It had suddenly occurred to him as strange that he did not know the face; for he had grown up among the people of the tiny fishing hamlet which lay upon his own property, and if he did not actually know each individual child, he was known well enough by them; and certainly such a face as that would not have been unobserved by him.

"If he does not belong to the place, what on earth can the little beggar be doing out there all alone?" questioned the young squire, debating the matter in his own mind. "I really don't see that it's any business of mine. It's only a child—somebody must be looking after him. I don't know why I should trouble my head about it."

But yet he remained motionless in the saddle a full

minute longer, and then, with a slight shrug of the shoulders, turned his reluctant horse round, and descended once again the short decline which led to the level waste of sand.

It was no darker than it had been some little time before, for the moon was full, and was now giving a bright light. The squire's far-seeing eyes swept the plain before him with hawk-like glance, and—yes, sure enough, there was the little lonely figure, just where it had been before; only now the golden head was down-bent, and the face hidden between the two hands. The young man rode quickly forward, and pulled up close to the child.

"I say, my little man, what are you doing out here all alone?"

The big dark eyes, which looked black in the moonlight, fixed themselves wistfully on the speaker's face. In a refined and silvery little voice the child answered—

"I 'm waiting for father, please, sir."

"And where is father?"

"Please, sir, he 's bathing in the sea. Father is very fond of swimming. I take care of his clothes till he comes back. Sometimes he is a long time in the water, but he has never been so long as to-day. The sun was all red and bright when he went in, and I saw him for a long time swimming out and out; and then he threw up his hands and dived down, and I never saw him come up again. But I often can't see him, he goes out so very far."

The child continued speaking in short sentences, because the gentleman made no reply. The young squire was, in fact, greatly taken aback. He well knew the perils of this apparently safe-looking shore, and though a strong and practised swimmer himself, would never have ventured out alone at this state of the tide. He knew perfectly, as he stood there, half afraid to look into the child's face, that his father was no more. His life had paid the forfeit of his ignorance. But how was this to be broken to the little fellow?

To gain time, he asked a few questions of the boy.

"What is your name, my little man?"

"Jocelyn Carew, please, sir. Father calls me Jock."

"And what does your father do? And where do you live?"

"We haven't lived anywhere since mother died. Father does a great many things. Sometimes he paints pictures for people to hang on their walls; sometimes he sings, or plays the fiddle in bands; sometimes he conjures, or recites poems. I think father can do almost anything. But we always move about; we haven't any home."

"A better-class vagrant—possibly a decayed gentleman," was the squire's mental comment. "One knows there are plenty such, poor beggars; and they don't have too good a name, as a rule. But the little fellow does not look as if he had got much harm yet. What in the world is to become of him? I suppose the parish must take him."

But somehow it went against the grain to condemn that noble-looking child to the life of the great county workhouse, admirably as that institution was conducted.

Still with the view of gaining time, the young man asked the boy's age.

"Next birthday I shall be six," answered the child, proudly. "Father says I shall be almost a man, then."

It was always "father, father," with the little fellow. He had plainly no thoughts in which the father was not involved. How would he bear the news which must soon be broken to him? The young man had not strength of mind to try and enlighten him yet.

"Look here, my little fellow, it is no good your waiting here any longer. We must send a boat after your father. He has evidently got into some current, and cannot reach the shore again. I will see about all that, and you must come back with me for the present. When they bring your father home you shall know all about it."

The child was too weary to remonstrate; moreover, the habit of obedience was evidently well ingrained in him. He let himself be lifted up in front of the gentleman on his tall horse, and the squire had the satisfaction of seeing the curly head nodding suspiciously before they had reached the road again.

The little fellow did not hear the words spoken to a pair of stalwart fishermen as the squire rode through the hamlet on his way to his own gates. Heads were shaken and grave looks exchanged as the men went down to launch their boat. They all knew what had happened to the unwary stranger who had trusted himself to the treacherous waves. But the child slept on, soothed by the motion of the horse, and worn out with watching and the vague distress of his own loneliness. Somebody was caring for him now, and in the unquestioning trust of a little child he could forget his troubles in slumber.

But the squire could by no means share this pleasant oblivion. He was not a little disturbed. It was all very well to know that for the present the child was sleeping soundly upon the sofa in the housekeeper's room, and that she would look after his comfort for the night; but what of that morrow when the truth must be told to him? And what of the future that lay before the little fellow?

"I really don't know why I should bother myself so; he 's only a child—a vagrant's child. He will forget fast enough, and be happy wherever he is put. I mustn't grow sentimental over him. Victoria would not tolerate it for a moment; I know she would send him off straight to the workhouse if she were here, and perhaps she would be right. I know the whole question of the bringing-up of vagrant children is uncommonly difficult, and I have no experience."

The squire did not eat his dinner with the appetite he generally brought with him from the hunting field; and when he heard that two of the fishermen had come to the house and were inquiring for him, he rose at once to go to them.

It was just as he had expected. The body had been found, washed up at the flow of the tide in a certain bay where only too many other lifeless corpses had been stranded before. It was a greedy, merciless sea that swept those shores, and perhaps that was why the custom had grown up of laying the dead to rest, for the few days that must elapse before burial, in a

little old neglected chapel, close beside the sea, where once, no doubt, prayers had been said by mariners before they put their boats out to sea.

The young man slept restlessly that night, and, waking early, rose and stepped forth into the clear October sunshine, hoping by fresh air and exercise to dispel the mist of unwonted depression which still hung over him. He had half resolved not to see the child again, to send for the relieving officer and let him be taken straight off by him. It was for the parish authorities to make all needful inquiry about the little waif. It was absurd for him to grow sentimental over a vagrant's child, just because he possessed a pretty face and a pair of appealing eyes. In another month he himself would be the husband of the beautiful Victoria Wellesley, who was soon coming to reign in the old house; and she was the last person in the world to approve of his taking an irrational interest in some unknown and uncared-for waif. No, no, the whole thing was absurd. He wondered that he had ever dreamed of making a pet of the golden-haired little fellow. Why, before very long he hoped to have children of his own about the old place. What an absurdity to fancy that the little stranger could ever be anything to him!

His meditations had just reached this point, and he had resolved to send off immediately for the relieving officer, when a soft hand was slipped into his, and a sweet little voice said confidingly—

"Please will you take me to my father? They told me you knew where he was."

Here was a pretty situation! Of course he knew where the dead man lay, and he knew, too, that the kindly fisher-folks would have paid all tender and reverent heed to the last sad offices to the dead. But what was he to say to the child? How answer the appeal in those trusting blue eyes? How best could the truth be broken to the little one? Would it be the kindest thing to let him look once more upon his father's face? The fishermen had said he looked as peaceful as though asleep, as the drowned generally do. There would be nothing in the sight to repel or terrify the boy. Might it not be the kindest as well as the simplest way just to take him into the little chapel and let him see for himself?

Certainly it was the easiest way for the young man, kind-hearted and averse to inflicting pain, and yet totally unversed in the ways of children: utterly ignorant how to frame his words so as to be at once intelligible and not too harsh. His mind was quickly made up.

Taking the child's hand in his, he turned towards the sea, saying in a kindly voice, which shook a little in spite of himself—

"Yes, I will take you to your father. Will you try to be a brave, good boy?"

The earnest eyes raised and flashed a strange look upon him. Could it be possible that the little fellow apprehended more than he actually understood? He felt that the tiny fingers clutched his hand more closely; but though there was appeal and pleading in the dark blue eyes, the quivering lips framed no more words, and the young squire, not knowing what to say, remained mute.

The little chapel was not far away, and the door was unlocked. The early morning sun streaming in through the eastern window fell full upon the calm pale face of the dead, stamped with that ineffable peace which is never seen save on the faces of those who have laid down the burden of the flesh. The man and the child had both uncovered as they crossed the threshold. Both now paused and stood still, the young man expecting each moment to hear from the lips of the child some wild outburst of grief.

He did not dare for a moment or two even to look at the child's face, but as the deep silence remained unbroken, and was becoming almost unbearable, he ventured at length to glance down at his companion, and when he did so he could not restrain a start of astonishment. The lovely little face was irradiated by a wonderful light. The child's hands were clasped in a species of awe-struck rapture. The sparkling tears were standing in the blue eyes, yet they scarcely appeared to be tears of sorrow. The squire gazed in amaze.

"Oh," breathed the boy at last, "he has gone to mother; he said he should some day. That is how she looked when she had gone to heaven. He has gone to her now; and, oh, how happy they will be together! Oh, let me go after them! they will want me—they will be waiting for me by the beautiful pearly gate! I know they will! Oh, please may I go too?"

"My poor little chap!"

It was all he could think of to say, and the words, accompanied as they were by a look of compassion, seemed to bring home to the child the first sense of his own personal loss. The expression changed for a moment, a wave of some other emotion swept across the upturned face; the child's breath came thick and short. Was he going to break down in wild weeping? For a moment it seemed as if he would; but with a self-control wonderful in one so young, he choked back the tide of emotion, and the squire heard him whisper to himself—

"I will be brave, I will be brave. He said I must not want *her* back. He said we must never want them back, because they were happier there. Father, dear father, I will be brave, I will be good. I will not want you back. But oh, why did you not take me with you?"

The child sank upon his knees beside the bier upon which his dead father lay, and the young man softly withdrew, feeling that this was a scene upon which no human eye should look.

Rapidly he strode away, his mind in a tumult of conflicting emotion. A baby not yet six years old, and with thoughts and feelings like that! He could not understand it. Perhaps it had never come home to him before, that strange, mysterious nearness to heaven so often seen in little children. Yet why should it be strange to us, who have so often heard those wonderful words spoken of the little ones, the babes, the children—"For of such is the Kingdom of heaven"?

Let that child with such a depth of poetry in his nature, be dragged up amongst the outcast population of a great workhouse? Never! It might be foolish,

wrong, irrational, but the squire's mind was made up. He strode away fast in the direction of one of his own lodges, where his old nurse now lived, pensioned off by his liberality to an old age of peace and leisure, and to her he told his tale in rapid fashion, putting before her a scheme of his own, and asking her if she would help him.

Before he had done, he read assent in her eyes; and she was folding her shawl about her as she spoke at last.

"Take the bairn and give him a home with me? Ay, that I will, if no kith or kin of his own lay claim to him, poor lambie; and I'd do it for love of the blessed little ones of our Lord's, without the money, squire; though it's like your kind heart to provide for him so liberal like."

"Tush! it would cost me more to send him to any institution; and I know how much happier such a child will be with you, nurse. If you take the care and trouble of him, the least I can do is to provide the funds for his maintenance. Some folks will call us a pair of fools for our pains, but I think our backs are broad enough to bear their ridicule."

"Ay, ay, let them talk; a few laughs break no bones," answered the old woman with a smile that did not lack a dignity of its own. "But I'll go to the bairn now, and tell him the good Lord has provided a home for him. Maybe he'll take to it all the kinder for thinking it comes from His hand, as indeed it has."

"Alone in the midst of those lonely sands."—*p.* 582.

"Yes, go to him," said the young man hastily. "You will know how to deal with him: I don't. But I'll come down and visit him later in the day, and see how you shake down together."

The young squire was a busy man. He had a large property which he managed himself, and managed well; and he was fond of sport, and gave a considerable slice of his time to shooting and hunting. His

approaching marriage gave him extra employment at this time; and yet to-day, as he went about his work, the pathetic face of the little orphaned boy was seldom absent from his mind. It was only a child, a little waif of humanity cast up at his doors: strange that he should take such an interest in him. Yet as days sped by, there was never one allowed to pass without his making time to run down to the lodge to have a look at little Jock; and the child's beautiful eyes would light at his coming in a way which could not but be pleasant to see; whilst in his childish prattle, which every day grew more confidential and unconstrained, there was an element which fascinated the young man, he knew not why.

Little Jock never pined after, though he never forgot, his father. He entered so fully into the thought that father and mother were happy together in the Home which would presently be his, that he would have felt it wrong to sorrow for his own loss too much. He was very young, too, and his present home was a very happy one. He loved his granny, as he called the good old woman, with all his heart, and for the young squire he felt an ardent love and admiration, which exercised over him the sweet fascination which such strong attachments always exercise upon the minds of the young and imaginative.

The daily visits of the squire were the brightest spots in Jock's life: the days on which he was summoned to the Hall to see the master were soon the red-letter days of his calendar. Love was to him the very elixir of life, and the deepest love of a warm heart was now lavished upon the Squire of Thurloe Hall.

But with the advent of a mistress there, things changed considerably. How eagerly did little Jock await the coming of the carriage that was to bring home the bride! He was dressed in his best clothes, and to him was given the post of honour at the gate. He was to present to the lady the huge bunch of flowers, the offering from the fisher-folks; and how his heart beat, as the sound of shouting and cheering told him that the carriage was coming, and how eagerly did his eyes scan the handsome, high-bred face, as the carriage pulled up for him to deliver his gift!

The squire's kindly brown face was beaming all over, and he caught hold of little Jock and gave him a kiss that sent the blood rushing to the boy's face. But the beautiful lady only thanked him with careless good-will, and he heard her say to her husband—

"Really, Leonard, there is no need for quite such demonstrative proceedings. Who is the child?"

The answer was lost to Jock, but the squire replied eagerly—

"Oh, Jock is quite a pet of mine. I hope he will be a pet of yours too. Poor little chap, his father was drowned bathing on our shore, and I thought the least I could do was to——"

"Surely you have not saddled yourself with the maintenance of a vagrant child?" said young Mrs. Thurloe sharply. "Really, Leonard, you do indeed need a wife to keep you in order. What are our unions for, if we first pay for them, and then pay for all the nameless children cast upon the world too?"

"He is not a nameless child, Victoria," answered the squire, with more zeal than discretion; "and though I cannot find out about his parentage, I am sure there is good blood in him. He must have sprung from a good stock. You must learn to like him for my sake. He is a dear little fellow. He——"

"He is only a common child, and I really cannot be enthusiastic over him. If you begin taking him out of his place you will bitterly repent it later. Now let us drop the subject. I am not sentimental, as you know, and there is plenty to think of besides this vagrant boy."

Somehow the squire felt as though a shadow had been cast upon his home-coming, and possibly his wife felt the same, for from that day forward she evinced a marked dislike to Jock; and on the one occasion on which she found him with her husband in the gardens of the Hall, she dismissed him so sharply that the child ran home in floods of tears, wondering what he had done that was naughty.

The whole household found a difference now that there was a new hand upon the domestic helm. Mrs. Thurloe was a just and good mistress, but there was something about her which repelled the affections of her dependents, and though they might respect, they did not like her.

Was it the same with her husband? Nobody could say. Outwardly they appeared an attached couple, and their household was governed with clockwork regularity. The squire had his wish, and children were born to him—first a boy, and then two little girls, and the strong affections of his heart wound themselves more and more closely round his little ones with every year that slipped by. As for little Jock at the lodge, he was growing a fine stalwart boy; and the squire was fond of him and proud of him, though he had now to show these feelings somewhat by stealth.

Mrs. Thurloe disliked Jock with an unreasoning dislike she did not attempt to disguise or explain. "He was only a child—a vagrant's child; it was absurd to make such a fuss over him. He ought to be sent off to the workhouse." This and suchlike statements were always being dinned into the squire's ears, especially when anybody had especially admired the boy, as strangers were wont to do, for his beauty was of a rare and striking kind, and seldom failed to rivet attention from visitors.

Perhaps this was one cause of offence, for her own boy was not beautiful. It was strange, with so good-looking a father and mother, that the child should be so plain. The squire laughed and said that it did not matter in a man, and both the little girls were pretty; but the mother's affections were centred in her son, and she looked upon it almost as an affront to herself that he should lack personal beauty. And he was not an engaging child, either; for the truth of the matter was that he was spoiled to the top of his bent. He was overbearing, tyrannical, and disposed to be a bully; and his father felt keenly that there was something lacking in his training which he knew not how to supply. Perhaps it was with the desire to discover and supplement this lack, of which he was painfully conscious, that the young father at this

time cultivated Jock's society more than he had done for many years, actually suggesting to his wife that she should have the boy up to the Hall sometimes to play with little Victor.

"The boy wants a boy companion; the little girls are too young, and no match for him, and he bullies them shamefully. Jock would teach him how to play rationally. It would do him a world of good."

Mrs. Thurloe was at first scornfully indignant at such a proposition; but it had been made in Master Victor's presence, and he was straightway resolved to have Jock as a playfellow. He was by this time five, whilst Jock was nearly twelve. He thought that a white slave to drive about and do his bidding would be fine, and he gave his mother no peace till she had consented to command that Jock, now just released from regular attendance at school, should be at the beck and call of Master Victor.

It was a new and strange life for Jock, but on the whole he did not object. He was sorry to have less time for his books, but to do anything for his benefactor had always been his dream; and surely this might count as service for him. When the squire came himself to join the games, or tell stories to the children, then Jock's cup of happiness seemed full. And he was very devoted to the little girls, who delighted in his strength and gentleness, and were always begging to have Jock to play with them. Jock was soon quite an institution in the nursery; but Mrs. Thurloe's prejudice against the child of a vagrant was never overcome, and she seldom addressed the boy save in sharp speeches, which gave him the sense of having offended her in some unknown way.

"He talks so oddly to the children," she once said impatiently to her husband. "I call him a little sanctimonious humbug. I cannot bear a child to profess that absurd amount of piety. I know he is an arrant little hypocrite at heart. I confess I do not like seeing him so much with the children."

"It is hardly fair to call him a hypocrite or a humbug until one has the chance to see whether or not he lives up to his profession," answered the squire quietly. "Besides, the boy only talks to the children of his feelings, never guessing that they repeat it to us. I agree that I should not like him to talk to us in that strain; but he never does, and I suspect the little girls make him talk to them. There is a natural vein of reverence and poetry in a child's nature that must and will find an outlet somewhere. For my own part, I am glad enough for the little ones to make a confidant of Jock."

Mrs. Thurloe tapped her foot impatiently on the turf. She knew that there were subjects upon which she and her husband disagreed, and she resented even the consciousness that he criticised her method of training the children. She knew that he thought their education lacked one essential element, and that he secretly hoped this element was in part supplied to them by Jock. Hence a part of her dislike to the boy.

"Jock, Jock—it is always Jock! I am perfectly sick of the name. I wish you had never taken him up. It is absurd the notice you take of him, and the amount you think of him. He is only a child—and a vagrant's child. I call it a perfect absurdity."

There was no time for a reply. The squire had started to his feet with a quick exclamation, and his wife looked up to see the two little girls racing towards them, their faces blanched with terror. She sprang to her own feet and ran by her husband's side.

"What is it, children?"

"The river—the waterfall—Victor—Jock!" panted the little ones, ready to drop with exhaustion and fear. "Oh, papa, be quick!"

No need to add that injunction; the squire was off like an arrow shot from a bow, whilst mother-love put wings to his wife's feet, and she sped along hardly twenty yards behind him. They knew well the dangerous river-bank, that tempting place just above the fall, where the children loved to play, and which had been at various times the scene of some accident to members of the house of Thurloe. In five minutes they had reached the spot: and what did they see?

Two boys in the deep water, not twenty yards from the head of the fall. Victor was clinging with the desperate clutch of the drowning to the shoulder of Jock, who had flung one arm round him to hold him out of the water, whilst with the other he grasped the branch of the overhanging willow and held on like grim death, though the rigid whiteness of his face, and the unnatural look in his eyes, told the squire at the first glance how terrible was the strain he was putting upon himself.

"Hold on, Jock—one minute—only one minute more!" he cried, as he dashed down to the water, and threw himself along the limb of the same willow-tree within reach of the boys. "Now, Victor, stretch up your hand to me. So—now the other. That is right! Jock! Jock! don't let go, boy! Oh, my boy, what have you done? Take care, Vic! Don't clutch me like that! Let go, child! Ah! it is too late!"

For no sooner did the father release Jock from the clutching clasp of the burden he held, than his own grasp upon the willow-branch relaxed, and before the squire could reach forth a hand to save him, the swirling stream had swept him down out of reach, and the next moment there was a swift flash over the head of the fall, and Jock disappeared from view.

White to the lips with horror and dismay, the squire retraced his way along the branch, and placed the dripping child he carried in his mother's arms. Then, without another word, he dashed along the bank, and plunged down the descent to the lower level, leaving Victor shivering and sobbing, and his wife agitated beyond the power of speech. By this time others from the house had caught the alarm. Gardeners, who had heard the frightened crying of the little girls, were hurrying down to the spot. Mrs. Thurloe pointed in the direction in which her husband had disappeared, and bade the men follow him, only keeping one back to carry the dripping Victor to the house, her own trembling arms being unequal to the burden.

The little sisters were now seen hastening to the scene of the calamity, and when they saw Victor safe and sound in the arms of the head-gardener, they broke into cries of joy. Whilst the man ran with his burden to the house to get the child attended to, the little girls clung to their mother, panting out their tale.

"Oh, mamma, it was so dreadful! Victor *would* get on the branch. Papa tells us we mustn't; and when Jock begged him not to, he boxed his ears and called him names. He said *you* would let him, and that you did not let Jock order him about—and then—oh, I can't quite remember how it was, but he was saying naughty things, and making faces at Jock, and he fell off into the water."

"Yes, mamma! and Jock jumped in after him directly, holding by the branch, and got hold of Victor, and called to us to run and fetch somebody, and so we did. But, mamma dear, where is Jock? Didn't he save Victor's life? Oh, he is so brave and good!"

Mrs. Thurloe made no reply, though a strange thrill ran through her. For the moment her whole soul was wrapped up in her son; but when she had seen him safely asleep between hot blankets in bed, she was able to think of that other boy, to whose courage and presence of mind her child owed his life. What had been his fate? Could it be possible that there was the smallest chance for one hurried by the fierce torrent over the rocky waterfall? She shuddered as she pictured the scene. And but for Jock that fate must have been her child's.

"Where is your master?" she asked.

"He has gone to the lodge with the boy."

"Is he——?"

"They say he is dying, but he may perhaps come to himself at the last. The master said he should stay with him to see."

Mrs. Thurloe was throwing a shawl across her shoulders. She stepped out into the dewy freshness of the summer's evening, and walked rapidly towards the lodge, a strange look upon her face.

The cottage door stood open, and the soft light of sunset was streaming in. Jock lay upon the broad oak settle, wrapped in blankets, a strange, sweet smile upon his white face. Bruised, maimed, torn by the cruel pointed rocks as was the poor little frame, the lovely face was unscarred, and the child felt no pain from his hurts. He lay holding the squire's hand, perfectly content to know that he was near, and that Master Victor was safe. As the tall form of the lady for a moment blotted out the sunlight, the boy's eyes raised themselves, and fastened upon her face with a pleading, wistful look. For once in her life Mrs. Thurloe was deeply agitated.

"Jock, Jock! what can I say—what can I do for you?"

"Please will you forgive me?" said the child, in very low tones.

"Forgive you for what?"

"I do not quite know," he whispered. "For what I have done to vex you. I could not ask what it was, but I always knew I had done something naughty. You never liked me, and it must have been my fault. But indeed I did not mean it."

The lady's proud head sank beneath the trusting gaze of those blue eyes; a dry, hard sob broke from her.

"Oh, Jock, Jock! it is for you to forgive me!" she answered, in accents too low to reach any ear but her husband's. "What can I do to atone?"

Jock's senses were fast failing. He felt himself at peace with all, though he could hear no words spoken by those about him.

"May I send my love to them?" he whispered. "Please tell them it is more beautiful than anything we talked about—all gold and pearl, and the rainbow everywhere. Oh! and the music! I can hear it now so plainly. There they are—there they are! Father! Mother—Oh! and——"

The whispering tones ceased. The look of awe and rapture upon the white face deepened to an expression which made the onlookers hold their breath. There was a Presence in that still room which was only seen to one of them, yet all were conscious that it was there.

The Angel of Death had not come alone—there was Another with him. Another—the Angel and Messenger of Life, holding out His hand, and saying to the shadowy attendant with the sword—

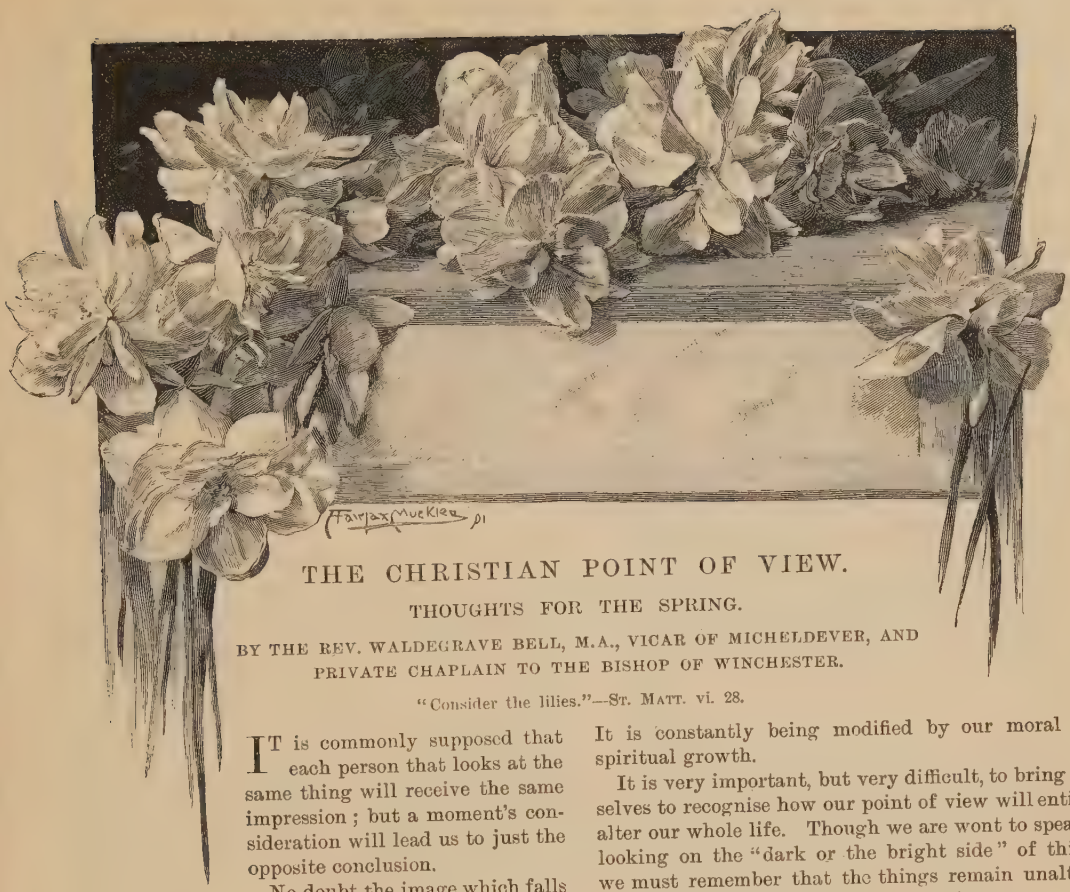
"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven."

In the little green churchyard by the sea stands a small marble memorial at the head of one grave—a grave that is always carefully tended, and at most seasons of the year bright with flowers. Children's hands, for the most part, keep that grave trim and flower-decked; and it is there that the children whisper softly together, and tell each other how different "mamma" has been since Jock went away to heaven.

TUNING UP.

I TOOK my place the master's work to hear—
The lights were dim and but a few were near—
When presently upon my ear there came
The organ's roll, the keynote to proclaim.
Then up there rose a wild tumultuous bound
Of untuned strings, whose melancholy sound
'T were not in power of mortal here to say;
But all strove hard the one note to obey.
Methought, 'T is like to weary souls adrift,
Who struggle hard their world-worn hearts to lift
Above the sordid, carking cares, to find
Their lives attuned—with holiness refined.
And as I wailed, in spirit's agony,
That He my Alpha and Omega be,
The tuning ceased, the hymn of praise began,
And, like to angels' joy, the music ran.
The wind and stringéd instruments did then
His love declare; and *my* soul sang "Amen!"

C. P.



THE CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW.

THOUGHTS FOR THE SPRING.

BY THE REV. WALDEGRAVE BELL, M.A., VICAR OF MICHELDEVER, AND PRIVATE CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

"Consider the lilies."—ST. MATT. vi. 28.

IT is commonly supposed that each person that looks at the same thing will receive the same impression; but a moment's consideration will lead us to just the opposite conclusion.

No doubt the image which falls on the eyeball of each is the same, but before he sees the object, this image must be conveyed along the optic nerve to the brain; and as the brain of each differs, so will the actual impression be modified.

The brain is the organ of the man himself. It is stamped by his character, it embodies his preconceptions, it is enlightened by his ideals; and thus it comes about that each man's observation of the world without depends largely on his individuality.

This is true of all the impressions which are conveyed to us by the senses. What is read, what is heard, what is experienced, is interpreted to each through the medium of his training, his capacities, his desires. There is, then, a personal factor which largely modifies the message brought to each observer from the outside world.

It is to this personal factor—this subjective element in all experience—that Wordsworth refers when he speaks of—

> "All the mighty world
> Of eye and ear, both what they half create
> And what perceive."

To us it is given not merely to receive images and to register them: we have the additional power of perceiving their meaning and estimating their worth.

This self-originating capacity of seeing more than is apparent to the senses is called the "point of view." It is constantly being modified by our moral and spiritual growth.

It is very important, but very difficult, to bring ourselves to recognise how our point of view will entirely alter our whole life. Though we are wont to speak of looking on the "dark or the bright side" of things, we must remember that the things remain unaltered—that the shadows and the sunshine are cast by ourselves. We may be said even to transform our surroundings by the way we look on them. They are coloured by our fancy and enriched by our imagination, or blighted by our selfishness and spoiled by our sin.

We project our minds into the objects of our thought.

To the selfish man, intent on pleasure, sorrow and suffering are the object of aversion rather than pity; while to the noble and refined woman even sores and sickness are not repulsive, but are welcomed as a call to the hospital, and as a claim on the life.

To us, as children, things appeared different. What appealed to us once has been forgotten; our range of interests is wider, our grasp of the meaning of things is firmer, our ideal is more defined. Except for our memory, we should be unable even to trace the connection between our former self and the self of to-day; for life and its responsibilities, its joys and its sorrows, appear to us now in a totally different light.

But have we lost or gained in the transition? Is life brighter or darker to us than it was? Does it bring fewer messages from the Unseen, or more? Is our standard, is our point of view, higher or lower?

The opening of the flowers, in which Jesus sees so much, reminds us of His divine insight. If His life

means anything to us, they will gain fresh beauty because they reflect His penetrating gaze; and we, too, shall see behind their lives the evidence of a Father's care.

Let us call to mind, at the inflooding of the spring-tide, how He looked on all things; let us learn from Him how our conceptions of Nature, of our fellows, of ourselves, and of God, may be enlarged, glorified, transfigured, as His point of view becomes our own.

I. Consider how our point of view influences our whole appreciation of Nature.

Now, some value things according to their size.

The vulgar mind sees in the Falls of Niagara or the Eiffel Tower only the evidence of colossal proportions. It finds in the one no revelation of the majesty of God: in the other it reads no message from the intellect of man.

The purely mercantile instinct values everything according to its price. To him who is the slave of Mammon the waving corn-field, sighing under the breeze, whispers only of gain.

Contrast the point of view of refinement. The artist goes to Nature and finds a new kind of preciousness; he traces a beauty of form which captivates the eye, a wealth of colour which entrances the sense. He goes to her, not to monopolise her value, but to scatter her priceless worth by reflecting his impressions of her harmonies.

But how much more profound is the view-point of Jesus!

He looks not only for the beautiful, but for the true; He finds out worth where man sees it not; He pierces to the spirit, which lives behind the form; He looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart of things. To Him the lilies bear a silent message of a Father's care; to Him the birds sing of the Divine protection. Nothing is commonplace or beneath notice: everything but sin speaks to him of the Divine.

If, then, this is Christ's point of view, it is the Christian's point of view. As Jesus values all things because of the messages they bring Him from God, so must we. And if we do, we shall, like St. John in the Apocalypse, behold "a new heaven and a new earth"; we shall be seers instead of mere sight-seers; things will be different to us because we are different: our enlightened perceptions will image a new universe of Nature because we feel it to be informed by God.

Why, when we need repose, do we instinctively seek the country? Is it merely for the sake of the purer air and the brighter sunshine? or is it not because we have been

> "Well pleased to recognise
> In Nature, and the language of the sense,
> The anchor of our purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of the heart, and soul
> Of all our moral being?"

Is it not because in the lanes we feel nearer to the heart of the Father than in our man-made streets, which shut out all of God except a strip of sky?

Even the opening flowers seem to bring Him nearer; and though they die to-morrow, surely they have not lived in vain if they have yielded up their frail lives in teaching us more of God's goodness.

When we "consider" them as Christ bids us consider the lilies, they seem to us as God's very angels—messengers direct from Him; and we recognise their gentle mission when we use them to convey our own messages of love and sympathy, both to those that rejoice and to those that mourn; and so, if our spiritual eye be open, we may see their meaning; if our ear be unstopped, we may hear their angel voices; if our souls be freed, we may interpret their subtle influence (which we all feel, but cannot define) as the speaking witness to the glory of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

II. What was the point of view from which Jesus beheld mankind? While the schoolboy venerates a man according to the size of his muscles, the employer measures him according to the quality of his work, the artist seeks him because of the symmetry of his proportions, Christ values and loves him because of his intrinsic and eternal worth.

To the Lord, who sees the Kingdom of God within men, no physical weakness makes them contemptible, no want of skill makes them useless, no deformity makes them hideous.

As we look at the grain, and see in it the potency of fruit, so He sees in men, through the husk of sin and selfishness, the germ of a life which is to be. Below the sin He comes on the sinner; He claims for Himself the previously perverse activity of the will; in the renegade He finds the child, in the prodigal the son.

Yes: and we are to get to His point of view here; for if we must not tread carelessly on the lily because it teaches something of a gracious Father, surely we dare not despise even the least of His children.

And what a revelation of God does the world of men and women bring us! In their fitful struggle after the better life, what a showing forth of the attractive force of good, of the power of the Cross, of the omnipresence of the Spirit!

If we get to Jesus' view-point, we shall recognise in each man, woman, and child something of infinite worth. If they do not realise it themselves, if they have not yet discovered it, are we not here to help them to seek it? And this we may best do by showing them such consideration and respect as may cause them to long for and to understand the fulness of the Divine sympathy and love. To the man who sees his brethren from this point of view, life will be no paltry round of pleasure and gain. If he sees his relation to his fellow-men as Christ saw it, life is transfigured and ennobled. It becomes a privilege, a responsibility, an enthusiasm. He dare not go back: he must go forward; his ideal becomes incorporated in his life. Instead of being worried and bored by hearing of others' sorrows, he welcomes in them a call to his sympathy, and only grieves because it is so poor.

III. To come nearer Him than the things and the men around us, we want to see ourselves from Jesus' point of view.

Are you haunted sometimes by the thought that your life is a dull round of monotonous duties? Do you feel it to be commonplace, that it leaves little margin for religious endeavour, for the higher service of others, for the glory of your Divine Master?

Do you think, then, that He found no chance of doing His Father's will during His life of labour at Nazareth? Surely His toil gives a sacredness to all toil. Our Lord redeems every life from commonplaceness by shedding over it the halo of a consecrating purpose.

To His followers every temptation unfolds a promise of victory, every duty is a call to obedience, every cross is the earnest of a crown.

IV. Lastly, beyond and above nature, mankind, and ourselves, He would lead us to His view of God Himself. He reveals the Father, He gives us eyes to see His vision of Him, He shows us that He is no austere being, but loving and tender, long-suffering and kind. To see Him from our Lord's point of view is to recognise our origin and our home. And when we are brought so near to His heart, can we despise His invitation, can we fear His welcome?

Oh, if we would only see God as Jesus saw Him, neither ambitions nor pleasures, nor life nor death, nor things present nor things to come, could separate us from His love.

We have reminded ourselves that things impress us differently, not because they differ, but because we are not the same. We have seen how we half-create the world in which we live, how our interpretation of life and its surroundings depends wholly on our point of view. And we have seen how necessary it is, if we would get to the true meaning of things, that we should see them from the Christian stand-point: that is, through the eyes of Jesus. We have endeavoured to contemplate from our Lord's point of view, not only the inner meaning of the great world without, but also the significance of the lives that blossom around us, the promise of our own lives, and the ever-faithful fatherhood of God Himself.

If we "consider" them as He did, we shall see all in a new light: we shall be translated now into the eternal realm of a "new heaven and a new earth." We shall confess that

> "When love interprets what the eye discerns.
> When mind discovers what is truly meant,
> When grace improves what man from Nature learns,
> Each sight and sound becomes a sacrament."

Then, too, we shall know better why we were born, and why life is worth living; for all life will have a new value. We shall forget its shortness, absorbed in the consideration of its eternal significance.

Standing as we do, surrounded by things of sense and time, let us listen to the angel-voices of the opening flowers, which bid us consider "not the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

SUNDAYS WITH THE YOUNG.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR FINLAYSON, AUTHOR OF "THREEFOLD SALVATION," "THE ETHICS OF ATHLETICS," ETC. ETC.

LIFE'S CLEANSING: THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."—1 JOHN i. 7.

THE Prince of Wales once heard an unexpected sermon from a little girl; and it came about in this way: A nobleman, a widower, had a little daughter under ten years of age. He was very fond of his daughter, though his engagements prevented him from seeing much of her. The child was therefore mostly in the society of her governess or in the nursery. Now, her nurse was an earnest Christian woman. She felt for her motherless little charge, and early stored the child's mind with Scriptural truths. The father used sometimes to amuse his little daughter by asking riddles; and one night, when she came in after dinner for dessert, she said to her father, who was not a Christian, "Father, do you know what is whiter than snow?" —"No," said he, somewhat puzzled, "I do not." —"Well," replied the child, "a soul washed in the blood of Jesus is whiter than snow." The nobleman was surprised, and asked, "Who told you that?"—"Nurse," was the reply. The father did not discuss this point, and conversation changed to other topics: but afterwards he privately requested the nurse, whose opinions he respected, not to mention these matters to his daughter, as at her tender age he feared she might take too "gloomy" a view of life. The incident was accordingly forgotten; but not long after, the Prince of Wales was visiting the house, and the little girl was allowed to be present. The Prince, with his usual affability, noticed the child, and, thus encouraged, she said, "Sir, do you know what is whiter than snow?" The Prince, not seeing the drift of her question, smiled as he answered, "No."—"Well," she said, "a soul washed in the blood of Jesus Christ is whiter than snow." The remark was overheard by the father; his little girl's words were used to carry conviction to his heart; he became an earnest and devoted Christian, and thousands will hereafter rise up and call him blessed. Now perhaps you may be tempted to think that little girl was forward or precocious; but she was not. She had learnt a truth which is better than rank, or wealth, or titles, or estates: and, child-like, the truth slipped out in her conversation. The truth she had learnt was this: *The soul needs cleansing*, and *the blood of Christ can effectually cleanse from every stain.*

This need of cleansing may be called the *pons asinorum* in our spiritual Euclid; and very many who desire to lead a religious life, and to make others around them brighter and happier, stumble here. They cannot see the need of cleansing; and the reason of their difficulty may often be that they are apt to look for God's message through the spectacles of self-conceit or self-will, instead of coming to study the Word of God in an attitude of humility and submission, saying, like little Samuel of old, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.

To all who would draw nigh to God—whether young or old—the message comes, "Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well" (Isaiah i. 16). God deigns to argue the point with us, and He says, "Wash *you*," that we, finding we are not able to make ourselves clean, may cry to God, like David, "Cleanse me from my sin; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Psalm li. 2, 7, 10). That is a prayer which young or old should daily use; and if you keep in remembrance what I have written in previous papers, you will not require to be told that the soul needs cleansing. "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Prov. xx. 9.) God be thanked if your life has been, in the eyes of those round about you, pure and holy, gentle and good, upright and blameless; but you can never urge this as a plea in the presence of God. "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirit" (Prov. xvi. 2). Your purest thought is stained with sin; and therefore you need cleansing.

How can you be made clean? There is only one way. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews ix. 22). The blood represents the life taken or forfeited as the penalty of sin. It is by blood-shedding that we are saved. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews iv. 28). And thus it is that the Apostle declares "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). In the Old Testament, by type and shadow, emblem and figure, by prophecy and sign, God indicated the real value of the blood. And you are now able to understand why the Apostle lays such stress on "The precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 19). Wilt thou be made clean? Then let me point you to "Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh" (Hebrews xii. 24, 25). Beware how you close your eyes, stop your ears, or harden your hearts to this truth.

"'Father, do you know what is whiter than snow?'"—*p.* 591.

"Inscribed upon the Cross we see,
In shining letters, 'God is love.'
He bears our sins upon the tree,
He brings us mercy from above."

Men may deride. But this is the melody of heaven: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (Rev. v. 9). All glory and dominion are there ascribed "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. i. 5). Why? Because the robes of the redeemed are made "white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 14). And of all who enter heaven it shall be said, "they overcame by the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. xii. 11).

The blood of Jesus is the key to all heaven's treasures. "He hath made peace through the blood of His Cross" (Col. i. 20); "and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39), for they are "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). Christ stood in the sinner's stead. He bore the sinner's punishment. He freely shed His blood for you and for many, for the remission of sins. Hence we have "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephes. i. 7; Coloss. i. 14). And being redeemed with "the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 19), we have boldness to "enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. 19).

A clergyman was preaching to a congregation of young people. He narrated a well-known story of a Russian nobleman who, with his wife and child, were driving through a forest, when they became aware, by the frantic way in which the horses struggled and strained at the traces as they sped along at a furious pace, that the animals feared some calamity. As the frighted steeds tore through a ravine and up a high hill, those in the carriage looked back fearfully, and across the white fields of snow on the hill they had left they saw a black moving mass, and knew that a pack of ferocious wolves were following them. Every nerve was strained to reach the village, still a few miles distant, but the wolves drew nearer and nearer, and at last the coachman cut away the traces and set two of the leaders free, just as the wolves were approaching. The hungry pack directed their attention from the carriage to the unfortunate horses thus set free. They were speedily torn to pieces, and then, with their appetites whetted, the wolves continued their pursuit in full cry after the carriage, which was now some distance ahead. The coachman again felt the wolves approaching, but he could not sacrifice the two remaining horses, so he nobly volunteered to sacrifice himself, and he implored his master to take his place on the box as the only hope of saving his wife and daughter, while the devoted servant descended and stood across the road, attempting, revolver in hand, to bar the progress of the pack. The carriage dashed into the village. The nobleman sallied forth at once with a crowd of villagers in quest of that noble-hearted servant whose voluntary sacrifice had saved three precious lives; but after beating back the wolves, they found only a few mournful relics, which they reverently collected as they returned to spread the story of the coachman's devotion. "Now," said the clergyman, pointedly addressing his hearers, "was that man's devotion like the love of the Lord Jesus Christ?" Clear as a bell came the answer from a young girl: "No, sir."—"Why not?" said the preacher. "Because," replied the young listener, "that man died for his *friends*, but the Lord Jesus died for His *enemies*." Ah! that girl had learnt a great Christian truth. It was not when we were friends of God, but "enemies of the cross of Christ," that the Lord Jesus undertook our salvation. "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 7). Hence St. Paul says: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." And He says: "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 8—10). Therefore the love of Christ is like an ocean without shore, a fathomless deep, a peerless profound.

There is nothing in nature whiter than snow. A scientist will tell you that the whiteness of snow is generally positive. And there is no colour so indestructible, notwithstanding all the appliances of modern science, as red or scarlet. "We have some little difficulty," said a scientific lecturer, "with the iron dyes; but the most troublesome of all are Turkey-red rags. You see, I have dipped this into my solution; its red is paler, but it is still strong. If I steep it long enough to efface the colour entirely, the fibre will be destroyed; it will be useless for our manufacture. How then are we to dispose of our red rags? We leave their indelible dye as it is, and make them into red blotting-paper. Perhaps you have wondered why your blotting-pad is red; now you know the reason." Now, if you remember that there is nothing whiter than snow, and no colour more indelible than scarlet, you will see what a fulness and force of meaning there is in the promise: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah i. 18); that is, as wool restored to its original undyed whiteness. Had the message declared, "Though your sins be as blue as the sky, or as green as the olive leaf, or as black as night," the figure would not have been so forcible. But when the word "scarlet" is used, signifying, as the Hebrew word radically means, *double-dyed*, and pointing to the deep-fixed permanency of sin in the heart, the very colour is mentioned which modern science, with all its appliances, finds indestructible. Thus we see how lovingly and bountifully God deals with us. The deepest sin He will remove, and make us as white as snow, as though the stain had never been.

Do not confound this cleansing by the blood of Christ with the cleansing which He imparts by the ministry of the Holy Ghost. This cleansing by blood is often mistaken for the cleansing by the Word through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who acts as the agent of Christ, and hence a confusion of ideas results. The one is our justification, the other produces our sanctification; the one changes our state, the other changes our character; the one gives a title to heaven, the other procures our fitness for heaven. In a subsequent paper the difference will become apparent. Meanwhile, remember that where there is the one cleansing there is always the other—that although they are two distinct facts in the Christian life which should not be confused, they are never wholly

separate. The cleansing by Christ's blood is instantaneous and complete; the cleansing by Christ's Spirit is gradual and progressive.

In another paper I hope to speak of Life's Clothing, or the Righteousness of Christ. But to-day our aspect is the blood of Christ, and I want you ever to remember the priceless value of His precious blood.

We have *access* to God through the blood of Christ. Our purest thoughts are stained with sin, and therefore we cannot draw near to God trusting in our own merits, nor can we make amends to God for our offences against Him. But when we come pleading the blood of Christ as our ground of acceptance, we glorify Him who, "by one offering, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." It is impossible for us to set a true estimate upon the blood of Jesus, but God knows its infinite value, and in the fulness of His knowledge He deigns to listen to and accept the persons of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ. The Apostle knew this; therefore he said: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, ... let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews x. 19).

We have *pardon* through the blood of Jesus. God said to the Israelites, on the night when the destroying angel smote the Egyptians, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." So there is shelter and safety for us in the blood of Jesus. Thus the Apostle declares "Being now justified"—that is, pardoned, acquitted, accounted righteous—"by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. v. 9). Is it, therefore, any wonder that Peter speaks of "the precious blood of Christ"?

We have *purity* and *power* to overcome through the blood of Christ. The blood of Jesus purifies as well as pardons. "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews xiii. 12). The same blood which puts away the guilt of sin is applied by the Holy Ghost to put away from believers the reigning power of sin. The blood of Christ has thus a sanctifying power. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all." The Holy Ghost is never said in Scripture to be made of God our sanctification, but Christ is said to be made our sanctification, and the Holy Spirit's office is to appropriate and impart it to all that believe. He acts as Christ's agent in our sanctification. Therefore, depend as much on Christ for growth in grace as for pardon of sin. Jesus is your all. He is your Saviour: lean on Him. He is your Teacher: learn of Him; imitate Him. He is your Lord: submit yourself unreservedly to Him. Cast yourself at His feet, crying, like one of old, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Hear His immediate reply, "I will; be thou clean."

"Jesu, grant me this, I pray,
Ever in Thy heart to stay;
Let me evermore abide
Hidden in Thy wounded side."

IS THE INTEREST IN FOREIGN MISSIONS DEEPENING?

BY THE REV. PROF. W. GARDEN BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D., MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

THERE can be no question that the interest in foreign missions has both deepened and widened immensely during the nineteenth century, and especially the latter part of it. Why, in 1792 missions were hardly known as part of the business of the Christian Church. It was in that year that William Carey founded the Baptist Missionary Society, and in the year following that he set out for India, the first Englishman that ever went to that country as a missionary. It was not till two or three years later that any missionary society was formed in Scotland, and in 1796 occurred the memorable debate in the General Assembly, when a proposal in favour of missions was thrown out, and missionary societies were denounced by a lay-elder—who afterwards became Lord President of the Court of Session—as political organisations, dangerous to the peace of the community. It is difficult now to believe that such things were said and done less than a hundred years from the present time.

The missionary enterprise, as prosecuted by our churches and societies, is now old enough to have lost the dew of its youth, the fresh interest which novelty gives to new enterprises, and has entered on what may be considered the more calm and sober period of mature life. A question which has been occupying the attention of some of its friends is: Has it not, with the dew of its youth, lost some share of its interest? Do not even Christian men and women refer to missionary work now in a more languid spirit than they used to do? Do they not think of our older mission-fields as somewhat dry and barren, destitute of new features, showing much the same state of things year after year, so that missionary reports might almost be stereotyped? No doubt there are always fresh subjects of interest in connection with the newer developments of mission work. But are not these fresh subjects of interest incidental and separable—not of the essence of the thing, not bearing directly on the work of converting men to God? John Paton, of the New Hebrides—is it not the adventure and peril of his

life that makes his autobiography so interesting? So with Bishop Hannington, and Mackay of Uganda. Then do we not find that when any new departure takes place in mission work, a great flow of interest sets in for a time in that direction? Medical missions and Zenana missions are but of yesterday; accordingly they are in the hey-day of popularity. The China Inland Mission is conducted on peculiar principles, and the Salvation Army has its own methods and machinery, and so men rush after them. Meanwhile, the friends of the older and more tried missions find it not easy to raise the money which is needed to maintain and extend them. Does not all this show something of a spurious feeling? Strip the cause of all its accessories and view it in its simplicity, as the work that seeks to draw men to Christ; can we say that the interest in it is really deepening?

I think that we can; and in this paper I will advert briefly to the chief considerations that seem to justify this conclusion.

1. *Travels and Researches.*—We know the globe better: we know better its contents, and the moral and spiritual condition of its people; we know what mission work is going on, and we know what parts are most in need and most requiring to be attended to. The globe is not now an unexplored Sahara, nor can we think of its remoter parts with aught of that romantic wonder with which our forefathers listened to the stories of Sir Walter Raleigh or Christopher Columbus. It is difficult to say whether, in the present age, Swift would have had the courage to imagine such countries as Lilliput and Brobdingnag. The world is mapped out into well-defined countries with something of the precision of a trigonometrical survey. Thibet may still be a *terra incognita*, but China is laid bare. This knowledge that we now possess of the world makes us look on the missionary enterprise, in all its magnitude, as much more feasible than before. And with so many missionary societies and churches, the idea of its conquest does not overwhelm us as unattainable. We see how, if they all hold on and a moderate degree of spiritual success is vouchsafed to each, the patches of light over the dark surface will go on enlarging, till they meet one another, and finally displace large portions of the dark colour by which, in our missionary maps, we denote the possessions of paganism. The enterprise loses its seemingly impracticable character, and we gird ourselves with more heart and hope to the undertaking. We recognise, too, the good which the home churches may derive from being engaged in such a labour of love. We see how their hearts may expand at the very thought of it, and how it may educate them to a higher and holier temper. That this elevating process has been going on in some degree and in some portions of our churches, we think is very certain. And it is not to be said that it implies a diminished dependence on the Holy Spirit to do the vital work, to strike the telling blow. It implies that the arrangements are going on whereby the Divine purpose will be realised to give Christ the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. We derive encouragement from the visible fulfilment of the apocalyptic symbol:—"And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe."

2. *Statistical Comparisons.*—These show the state of the various missions now and a few years ago, and furnish further proof of deepening interest.

Take, for example, the Church Missionary Society, founded in 1799. For the first twenty years no converts were reported; now there are 193,793 adherents. No baptisms took place; in 1889 there were 10,195. Native churches, independent of the Society, are springing up. In Sierra Leone there are sixteen parishes, with sixteen native clergy, self-supporting. In Tinnevelly there are sixty-four native clergy, who administer their own funds, and raise between £2,000 and £3,000 a year. In all, the Society numbers 286 native clergy. Of late years the Society has been adding new missions and enlarging the sphere of the old. It is but twenty-one years since Japan was entered. During the last fifteen years new missions have been formed (in Palestine) at Jaffa, Gaza, Nablus, Salt, the Hauran. Persia is a still more recent field; so is Bagdad. In Ceylon and in China there have been great advances. In North America the vast north-west has received great attention, and there has been much success among the Red Indians. As to the income of the Society, for the first four years it was but a few hundred pounds. In its thirtieth year it was but £3,046; in 1889–90 the ordinary income was £208,516, and the total cash receipts were £260,282.

Or, by way of change, take the mission of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland—a comparatively small body, of only some 600 congregations. One of the chief spheres of its mission work is Jamaica, and Jamaica is now virtually a Christian country. The following table shows the progress of the mission in recent years—

Year.	European Agents.	Money Contributions	Native Communicants	Native Pastors.	Raised for their Maint'nance
1840	—	£ 3,300	—	—	—
1849	—	12,800	—	—	—
1859	30	16,900	4,552	1	£ 2,090
1869	63	29,100	5,740	7	3,020
1879	81	32,300	9,187	13	6,500
1889	117	40,500	14,890	23	10,470

In the Free Church of Scotland, the difference between 1878 and 1888 is as follows—

Year.	Baptisms.	Native Commu'nts.	At School and College.	University Men.	Contrib'ns by Nat. Church's.
1878	497	3,317	11,779	376	£509
1888	1,355	6,279	20,341	1,067	£1,094

We give these statistics solely because they are most accessible to us, and we have no doubt that the results are similar in the case of the other missionary bodies, both great and small.

It may be convenient here to give a statement of the general condition of Protestant missions throughout

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(From a Photograph by Messrs. Lombardi & Co., 13, Pall Mall East, S.W.)

the world. The American Board of Foreign Missions estimates as follows; but all such estimates are liable to errors—

Countries.	Societ's or Churches.	Missionaries	Christians.	Income (Sterling).
Great Britain ...	23	2,658	1,361,028	£932,156
America	30	2,127	742,832	781,393
Germany and Switzerland	17	559	344,769	142,423
Other European Countries	8	96		23,427
Total	78	5,440	2,448,629	£1,879,399

3. *New Modes of Mission Work.*—For a long time missionary operations were all carried on round two great centres, churches and schools. Within the memory of some still living, colleges were added to these. In still more recent times the Medical Mission and the Zenana Mission have been added. And not only has the working efficiency of the missions been increased in this way, but special interest has been awakened towards them in two great classes — the medical profession, and the gentler sex. The Medical Mission naturally draws the interest of all medical men. Even in a scientific point of view it is interesting to the whole profession to hear of medical and surgical results in new races and under new conditions. Men who have little or no interest in missions pure and simple are drawn to read about them, and, perhaps, to become interested in them, as Augustine was drawn by the eloquence of Ambrose to attend his preaching at Milan. And this is a source of interest not likely to abate, but to go on increasing. We should deem it well worth the pains of any skilful medical missionary to send contributions of interesting professional cases to the medical journals, for, apart from the promotion of medical science, he may possibly draw other medical men into sympathy with the spiritual work.

Then as to Zenana missions: who can doubt that, since they began, the interest of Christian women has been immensely quickened? In all the recent history of missions, in fact, nothing is more remarkable than the development, in many ways, of the interest and activity of women. Female auxiliaries and branches are everywhere in operation; Christian ladies, of most admirable qualifications, are offering themselves for the service, and are at work in it. We do not forget in the earlier history such admirable labourers as the successive Mrs. Judsons. But these were the missionaries' wives, and, except in that capacity, there was no way for a Christian lady to help the cause. Now we have no end of berths for Christian women, as Zenana missionaries, teachers in schools, superintendents of orphanages, and the like. And in the United States the zeal and energy of women in collecting funds, as well as in furnishing agents, have led to a very large increase of mission work. We do not possess the latest statistics of any of the Female Missionary Societies in America; but we know something of the extraordinary vigour of their earlier years, and of the efforts of the movement both at home and abroad. As an American lady friend of ours remarked some years ago, "Not only have the gifts steadily increased, but the faith, the love and zeal of the women and the children of the Church, have been marvellously called forth. . .

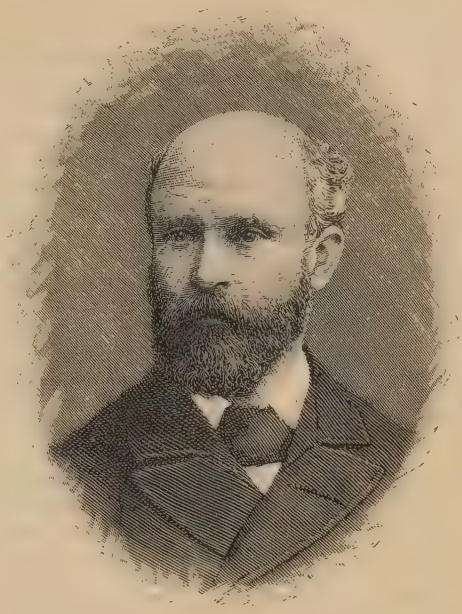
MR. A. H. BAYNES, F.R.G.S. (BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY).

(From a Photograph by Messrs. Debenham & Gould, Bournemouth.)

The *heart* of the Church at home has been touched as never before. The hearts of heathen women and children are being reached. . . The acknowledgment of the Son to the Father is being verified in these golden years: 'Thou hast made Me the head of the heathen; a people whom I have not known shall serve Me.'"

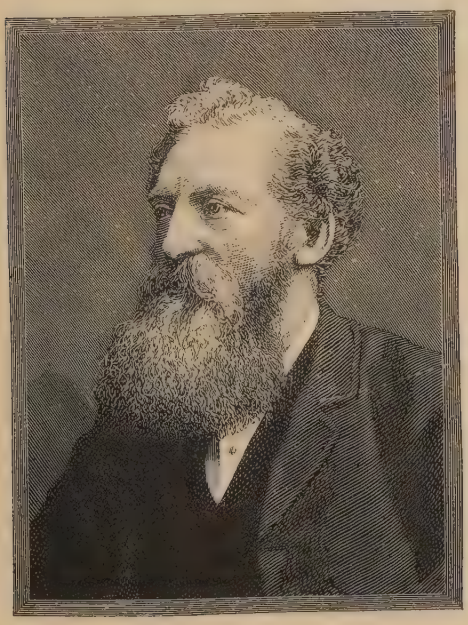
4. *Missionary Agents.*—It is the general testimony that whereas in former days there was much difficulty in procuring qualified persons to spend their lives in labour among the heathen, now there is little or none. Many most interesting facts in this connection might be referred to. The Church Missionary Society had the pleasure of reporting in 1891 that they had added sixty-six missionaries to their staff, of whom nineteen were graduates of Cambridge, four of Oxford, one of London, and one of Dublin; making seventy-nine University men in the last four years, of whom forty-eight were from Cambridge. Twenty-three ladies had been added during the year, making fifty-six in three years.

But by far the most interesting fact on this subject is the extraordinary success in the United States of America of "The Students' Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions." We have before us the Report of the first International Convention of this body, held at Cleveland, Ohio, in the spring of 1891. The movement began in 1886, at Mount Hermon, near Northfield, Mr. Moody's college for the education of young men. Between two and three hundred young men, from eighty-nine colleges, came together, at Mr. Moody's invitation, to spend four weeks in Bible study. Nearly a fortnight elapsed before the subject of foreign missions was talked of. An earnest young man from Princeton called those together who were thinking of the foreign field, and twenty-one met. Various addresses were subsequently made by Dr. Pierson and others, and further conferences were held; and before the end of the day the number of volunteers for foreign missions increased to 100; and of the remaining 151, several afterwards joined the movement. During the following year, Mr. Robert P. Wilder, of Princeton, visited, by appointment, 167 of the leading colleges and institutions of the United States, and the number of young men and women who took the volunteer pledge increased to 2,200. In 1887–8, 600 more joined; in 1888–9, Mr. Wilder added another 600, and in 1889–90, 1,100; while other agents made further additions, Miss Lucy E. Guinness, of London, spending three months among the ladies' colleges. The result was that at the time of the Convention the total number of volunteers stood at 6,200, representing 350 institutions of the United States and Canada. All the volunteers are under thirty years of age, and 70 per cent. are male and 30 female. The pledge runs thus: "We are willing and desirous, God permitting, to become foreign missionaries." At least 320 have already gone forth to the foreign field. It needs hardly to be said that this movement has given an extraordinary impulse to the cause of missions all over the American Continent. In all the colleges with which the young men are connected a new interest has been created in the work. And to the consciences of the laity in all the churches the appeal has come with extraordinary force, "Here are the men, ready for the work; will you provide the means of employing them?"



THE REV. R. WARDLAW THOMPSON (LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY).

(From a Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Co., 54, Cheapside, E.C.)



DR. GEORGE SMITH, C.I.E. (FOREIGN MISSION SECRETARY, FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND).

(From a Photograph by Mr. D. Whyte, Inverness.)

5. *Missionary Literature.*—The development in this direction in recent years is prodigious, and embraces books, journals, pamphlets, appeals—everything, from the massive encyclopædia to the tiny leaflet on pink or green for the benefit of very little children. The "Encyclopædia of Missions," published last year by Funk and Wagnalls, of New York, is in two large imperial octavo volumes, in closely printed double columns, extending to more than 1,300 pages. It embraces notices of all the missions, of all the countries, of all the missionaries, and of all the mission stations of modern times. Our missionary biographies are, many of them, among the most widely read of modern books. Every church has its record or journal of missions—many have more than one. Children's records, prepared for the use of the younger members of our churches, are widely circulated. And not only are there records for the different churches, but there are able comprehensive journals of a higher class, discussing mission problems as well as giving missionary information. More than that, we see that missions are finding a place in the daily newspapers: not, indeed, equal to that given to the Newmarket races, but enough to show that the subject is one of general interest. The latest edition of "Chambers's Encyclopædia" contains an article on Missions, both earlier and later, with a reference to some of the sources of information, especially as to missions of recent date. Should we not here make mention of the magic-lantern, that has often served so remarkably to throw interest into junior missionary meetings?

6. *Miscellaneous.*—Our space is nearly exhausted, and we must combine some matters of interest under this head.

Missionary Conferences.—By far the most important, most comprehensive and interesting of these was the conference held at Exeter Hall, London, in 1888. Such a gathering from all parts of the world had never taken place before, and the two volumes in which its proceedings are recorded are remarkable as showing not only the extent of the work going on, but the general agreement of view and harmony in working among all the evangelical churches taking part in the work.

"*Forward Movements.*"—Impelled by the growing spirit of obligation to the great Master, some societies have adopted a definite scheme for advanced work, implying, of course, greatly increased contributions. Conspicuous among these is the London Missionary Society. The directors have resolved to add, within the next four years, 100 missionaries, male and female, to their existing staff of agents, thus increasing it from 200 to 300. This will involve an additional expenditure of £25,000 a year—an addition of such magnitude as the directors would never dream of incurring were they not convinced that the tide is rising, and that ere long Christian men and women will acquire the habit of giving much more largely to the mission cause.

Unions for Prayer and Work.—Let one case suffice—that of the "Gleaners' Union," in connection with the Church Missionary Society. It was founded in 1886, being one of the offshoots of a movement which would have had a separate notice had space permitted—"Simultaneous Meetings" over the country. Its object is to promote a missionary spirit among the young. In October, 1887, the number of members was 7,623. In November, 1891, it was 36,000, of whom nearly 30,000 are active members, doing something to promote the mission cause.

Such are some of the materials which seem to us to justify an emphatic answer in the affirmative to the question, "Is the interest in foreign missions increasing?" Amid many things to be lamented in the spirit of the times, and not a few indications of a backsliding tendency, it is cheering beyond measure to find that the cause of foreign missions is manifestly advancing, and to read in connection with this the prophet's question, "Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?"

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

JUNE 19TH. REVIEW LESSON.

Golden Text—Nahum i. 7.

INTRODUCTION. Have had this quarter seven lessons from the Psalms and four from the prophet Daniel. The teachings of all summed up in to-day's Golden Text, which speaks of three things, viz.—

1. God's goodness to His people.
2. God's strength in the day of trouble.
3. God's knowledge of those who trust in Him.

We shall see how the lessons have taught this.

I. THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS. (Psalm i.)
God's *goodness* shown in their happiness.
They delight in His law; flourish like palm-trees.
God's *strength* protects them in day of judgment.
He *knows* and separates them from the wicked.
LESSON. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness."

II. THE KING IN ZION. (Psalm ii.)
God's *goodness* shown in sending His Son.
The heathen shall be brought to fear Him.
God's *strength* seen in crushing His foes.
All who *trust* Him are blessed.

LESSON. "O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be put to confusion."

III. GOD'S WORKS AND WORDS. (Psalm xix.)

His *goodness* extends to all the world.

Sun, moon, and stars tell of His glory.

His *strength* will keep His people from sin.

His law controls man's whole being.

In *trusting* Him there is great reward.

LESSON. "All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord."

IV. THE LORD MY SHEPHERD. (Psalm xxiii.)

His *goodness* gives pleasant pastures.

His *strength* preserves in all dangers.

Even death may be calmly faced.

LESSON. "Lead me in Thy paths, and teach me."

V. PRAYER OF THE PENITENT. (Psalm li. 1—13.)

God's *knowledge* has found out David's sin.

His *goodness* has shown mercy to the penitent.

His *strength* will restore him to former peace.

LESSON. "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

VI. A SONG OF PRAISE. (Psalm ciii.)

God's *goodness* shown in forgiving and satisfying.

God's *strength* in miracles of mercy to Israel.

God's *knowledge* of man's weakness moves Him to pity.

LESSON. "My song shall be of mercy and judgment."

VII. DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS. (Daniel i. 8—21.)

By God's *goodness* gained favour with king.

By His *strength* enabled to resist fleshly lusts.

By His *knowledge* they became wise.

VIII. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM. (Daniel ii. 31—49.)

God's *knowledge* enabled Daniel to tell the dream.

God's *goodness* gave the king the prediction.

God's *strength* seen in future triumph of Christ.

IX. THE FIERY FURNACE. (Daniel iii. 13—25.)

By *strength* from God the three kept from idolatry.

By His *goodness* delivered from the fire.

They *trusted* in Him, and were not confounded.

X. THE DEN OF LIONS. (Daniel vi. 16—28.)

Daniel, God's servant, *trusted* in Him.

God's *power* subdued the lions.

God's *goodness* saved His servant.

LESSON. (vii.—x.) "Who is he that can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?"

JUNE 26TH. MESSIAH'S REIGN.

To read—Ps. lxxii. Golden Text—ver. 11.

INTRODUCTION. This bright, joyful, and glorious Psalm was composed by Solomon. It is a song of peace and triumph—of deliverance and just rule—of blessedness and eternity. In it Solomon (whose name means "peace") describes what he desires his own reign to be, and then passes on to the future universal dominion of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

I. THE NATURE OF THE REIGN. (1—7.) A prayer for a wise and understanding heart.

Results. (*a.*) *Judgments* given in righteousness.

(*b.*) *Peace* and plenteousness in abundance.

The hills will yield fruit (Ezek. xvii. 8), and the whole land be tranquil and prosperous.

(*c.*) *Safety* will be secured for the poor.

The oppressor will be crushed.

(*d.*) *Fear* of God will spread far and wide.

Illustrations of this prosperity. It shall be—

Lasting as the sun and moon, the faithful witnesses in heaven. (Ps. xix. 1—4.)

Refreshing as showers on a newly mown meadow.

Fruitful as the earth after rain.

II. THE EXTENT OF THE REIGN. (8—12.) (See Exod. xxiii. 31.)

From Mediterranean to Euphrates, as promised.

Also in the future a boundless empire.

Different classes will pay homage, *e.g.*—

The wild sons of the desert will bow before Him.

Old national foes will prostrate themselves.

Kings from islands of the Western Sea.

Princes from Arabia and far-off Ethiopia.

Finally, the whole world will own His sway.

III. THE BENEFITS OF THE REIGN. (12—17.)

To His subjects.—The poor shall be fed—the needy helped.

The oppressed delivered—the helpless righted.

To himself.—A long life shall be assured.

Gold shall be given him in abundance.

Prayer shall ascend for him continually.

Praises and blessings shall follow him.

Population will increase, and also corn.

His memory and fame shall never die.

All nations shall be blessed in him.

All these things partly fulfilled in Solomon.

Justice. The two women and the child. (1 Kings iii. 28.)

Prosperity. Judah and Israel dwelt safely. (1 Kings iv. 25.)

Wisdom. Greater than all men. (1 Kings iv. 30.)

Riches. From distant countries. (2 Chron. ix. 14.)

Homage. From all surrounding kings. (2 Chron. ix. 26)—*e.g.*, the Queen of Sheba from Arabia.

But far more fulfilled in Christ. (18, 19.)

He cared for temporal wants of the people—giving food, health, sight, etc.

He cared for souls—giving sympathy, pardon to sinners, peace.

He shall reign over all for ever.

LESSON. "Thou art my King, O God; send help."

THIRD QUARTER, 1892. LESSONS FROM THE ACTS.

JULY 3RD. THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

To read—Acts i. 1—12. *Golden Text—Acts. i.* 9.

INTRODUCTION. First verse shows the writer to be St. Luke, author of the third Gospel. Addressed to same person, but intended for all Christians. The Gospel tells of Christ's personal work on earth—the Acts of His work carried on by His servants, the Apostles.

I. LAST DAYS OF CHRIST. (1—3.) Spent mostly with the disciples—sometimes appearing in the upper room at Jerusalem. (St. John xx. 19, 26.)

Sometimes in Galilee. (St. John xxi. 1.) How was the time spent?

1. He proved Himself risen from the dead. How?

He was seen by 500 disciples. (1 Cor. xv. 6.)

He ate and drank with them. (St. Luke xxiv. 42.)

He worked at least one miracle. (St. John xxi. 6.)

2. He taught them about the Kingdom of God.

How the Old Testament was fulfilled in Him. (St. Luke xxiv. 45.)

How all power in heaven and earth was His. (St. Matt. xxviii. 13.)

3. He gave them commandments.

To go and teach all nations. (St. Matt. xxviii. 19.)

To baptise in the name of the Trinity.

II. LAST WORDS OF CHRIST. (4—8.) Probably at Jerusalem. Various instructions given.

Personal. They are to keep together, and wait at Jerusalem for the promised Comforter.

Spiritual. They will receive the Holy Ghost.

Prophetical. They shall then have power from God.

Cautionary. They must not pry into things which it does not concern them to know.

Evidential. They are to be His witnesses throughout the world.

What does this teach about the Holy Spirit?

He is a living Person in the Godhead.

He gives power to those who receive Him.

He guides His people unto all truth.

LESSON. "Renew a right spirit within *me*."

III. LAST ACTS OF CHRIST. (9—11.) (See St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51.)

From the two accounts can follow each step.

The last *walk* from Jerusalem to Bethany.

The last *words*—blessing His disciples.

The last *act*—putting His hands upon them.

Then He ascended slowly out of their sight.

They worshipped, praised, were full of joy.

Were assured by an angel of His return.

Why did Christ ascend into heaven?

To plead for ever His sacrifice. (Heb. x. 12.)

To prepare heaven for us by being ready to receive us. (St. John xiv. 3, 4.)

To prepare us for heaven by the Holy Spirit.

LESSON. "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

JULY 10TH. THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT.

To read—Acts ii. 1—12. *Golden Text—St. John xvi.* 13.

INTRODUCTION. Ten days have passed since the Ascension. The Apostles still in the upper room at Jerusalem. During time of waiting have chosen Matthias (after prayer), by casting lots, in place of Judas.

I. THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST. (1—4.) Notice—

The day. Feast of Pentecost, fifty days after Passover.

Day on which the Law was given on Sinai, with sound of trumpet and lightning-fire. (Ex. xx. 13.)

Also Feast of First-fruits of Harvest. (Deut. xvi. 10.)

Type of ingathering harvest of 3,000 souls. (Ver. 41.)

The hour. Third hour: *i.e.*, 9.0 a.m.—time of daily sacrifice.

God's best gifts given to those who "seek early."

The place. Jerusalem, as Christ had foretold.

The manner. Sound of mighty wind—typical of power, and the Spirit's unseen work.

Appearance of tongues of fire—typical of spiritual light.

The effect. Began to speak with other tongues.

How is the Holy Spirit like wind?

It is invisible—works in man's heart.

It is purifying—cleanses the soul from sin.

It is powerful—changes whole nature.

How is the Holy Spirit like fire?

It melts man's hard heart.

It gives light and knowledge. (St. John xvi. 13.)

It warms with love, joy, peace. (Gal. v. 22.)

II. THE TIDINGS OF THE HOLY GHOST. (2—13.)

The news spreads—crowds assemble.

What did they see? Twelve fishermen of Galilee preaching.

What did they hear? The great works of God told each in their own tongue.

Who were they? Jews scattered abroad come to Jerusalem to worship and keep the feast.

Whence came they? Show map.

Parthians, from South of Caspian Sea.

Medes, from east of Assyria.

Elamites, from north of Persian Gulf.

Mesopotamians, between rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, all districts of Asia Minor.

Egypt, to south-west of Palestine.

Libya, the African continent.

Proselytes to the Jewish religion from heathenism.

Crete (modern *Candia*), island in Mediterranean.

Arabia, great peninsula between Red Sea and Persian Gulf.

All in excitement, wonder, and hesitation.

Some rejoiced, others mocked. But the fact remained. The Spirit had come. The disciples had new powers. Multitudes heard the words and saw the works of God, and believed.

LESSONS. 1. *The power of the Spirit.*

To stir the heart and incline towards God.

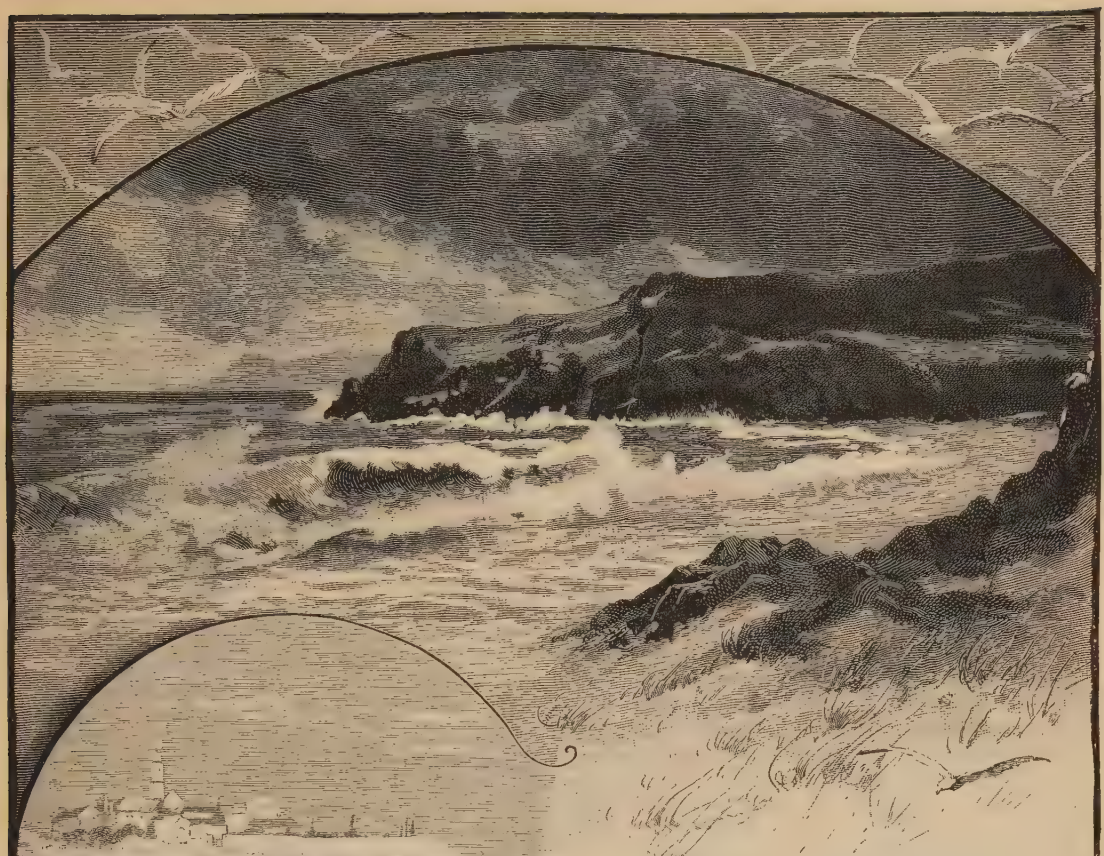
To teach the things of God to men.

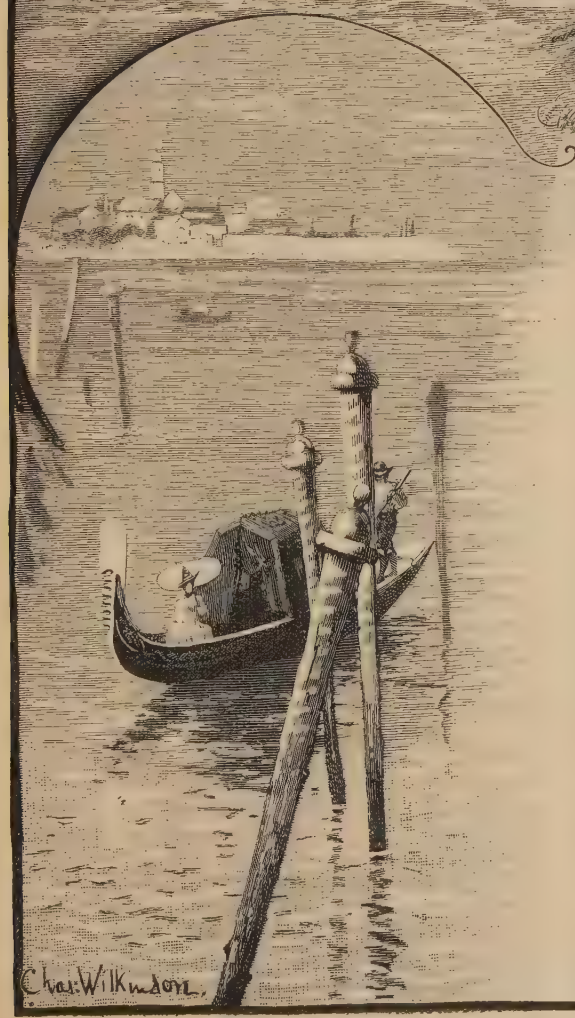
2. *The reception of the Spirit.*

To disciples and believers a blessing.

To others mockery, ending in destruction.

What effect is the Spirit having on us?





A SONG OF THE SEASONS.

WHEN rain lies grey along the sea, and winds are piping chill,
And drifts of cloud are rolling free, curled between hill and hill,
It's oh! my heart is fain to go, my feet are fast to run,
Where golden floods of sunshine flow beneath a southern sun.

When all the grass is scorched to brown, and all the brooks are dry,
And sheep upon the thirsty down gasp to the blinding sky,
It's oh! I'd seek the wild fen-shore where waves are cold and strong,
Where keen winds strike across the shore and shoot the showers along.

When spring is gone and June is past, and fires are lit in fall.
Wherein dead hopes like weeds are cast to burn and perish all,
It's oh! my eyes shall lose regret to look in yours, my dear,
Where lovely lights that linger yet make summer all the year.

M. C. GILLINGTON.

THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS.

BY FAY AXTENS.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ANTHONY listened in silence till Felicia had finished speaking; then, rising with an expression of stern determination on his face, he said—

"I fear there is little room for doubt, but God forbid we should judge anyone too hastily. If the ravings of delirium are at all to be credited, your brother is not the only guilty person—it may be he is the least guilty—but it is wholly impossible to say as yet. We can but conjecture. However, I am determined to find out the truth."

"But how?" said Felicia anxiously. "Richard is too ill to be spoken to."

"I know he is," said Anthony. "It is Rosamond who must give account of this. Miss Hardy, I think you have always had my confidence more or less There is something I should like to tell you. I noticed to-day that Rosamond was not wearing her engagement-ring. I asked her why, and she told me she had lost it."

Felicia gave a startled glance towards him, but said nothing. All through her narrative she had tried as far as possible to spare his feelings, and to suppress the true character of Richard's disclosures with regard to Rosamond. She herself was strongly of opinion that his ravings were founded on the substantial basis of solid fact, and did not question the existence of an understanding between them; but she could not, and would not, take upon herself too rudely and definitely to disillusion Anthony and rob him of his confidence in Rosamond. She saw with a pang how he winced even at the slight references she was obliged to make, and, naturally concluding that he loved Rosamond still, would not be the first to cast the stone which, sooner or later, must break and shatter the ice-surface of this mystery.

Anthony, however, had already had his confidence too rudely shaken not to feel the necessity of a strict and resolute investigation, however painful, into the discovery which Felicia had communicated to him. With the important document in his pocket, he set off at once for Lawley Manor, determined to speak to Rosamond before the day was over.

Since the awkward occurrence at Gayworthy Court on the previous evening, Rosamond's intercourse with the Lawleys had been of a somewhat constrained character. Lady Lawley naturally did not know what to make of it, and was extremely annoyed at the idle gossip and vague rumours to which the circumstance gave rise. As for Will, he maintained a gloomy and morose silence, avoided speaking to or even seeing Rosamond, and angrily disclaimed any knowledge of the cause when mildly questioned by Sir John.

Rosamond herself had spent the night in a state of terrible anxiety, perplexity, and dread. This new aspect of affairs was more alarming than anything she had ever anticipated. What was to become of her—what was to be the end of it all? At first she meditated immediate flight; but a little consideration showed her that this would be a foolish step to take, and one which would probably involve her in further troubles. There was nothing to be done but to face the consequences of her own actions whatever they might be; and, indeed, it was not long before her sanguine temperament got the better of her fears, and she persuaded herself that perhaps things might not turn out so badly after all. She would remain quietly for a few days, and see how Dick was. She could not desert him while he was so ill, but as soon as he was on the road to recovery, she would break off her engagement with Anthony, and go abroad again, whither Dick would follow her as soon as he was able. At any rate, their secret marriage was the only discovery Anthony would be likely to make, as it was very improbable the trial of Claydon would come on just yet.

Fortified by these thoughts, Rosamond was able to command her usual complacency as she went into the library that evening to meet Anthony, in accordance with his request. With the exception of a hurried and rather uncomfortable interview immediately on his arrival that day, she had not seen him since they parted in that room on the evening of his departure for London. It was only a few days ago, but, oh! how much had happened since then!

Anthony was already awaiting her. He rose and placed a chair for her as she entered, with cold and distant politeness. With that dark and awful suspicion on his mind, he could not feign the customary caresses. His manner frightened her. She sat down in a cold tremble.

"I have just come from the Rectory," he said. "Richard Hardy is very seriously ill. It is very doubtful whether he will get over it."

Rosamond's face grew a shade paler, but she tried very hard to look unconcerned.

"Yes, I heard about it," she said, in as light a tone as she could assume. "It is very sad for the Hardys. He ought never to have ridden that 'Flyaway;' Sir John prophesied he would come to harm."

Anthony gave her a keen, searching look, before which her eyes fell, and the guilty colour began to overspread her face.

"Do not speak in that light way, Rosamond," he said sternly. "This is surely no time for idle trifling."

"Has anything happened, that you look so angry, Anthony?" she asked. "I suppose you have been hearing some of the ridiculous things that were said at Gayworthy Court last night. I can't see how you can pretend to love me, when you are always listening to silly tales about me."

He stopped her with a gesture of impatience.

"I have never '*pretended*' to love you, Rosamond, and I never will." His eyes kindled with unwonted fire as he spoke. "I *did* love you once—how truly and deeply *you* can never know—and you have deceived me, basely, cruelly deceived me. There *is*

a boundary line at which Love stops short; there *are* depths into which no arts or allurements can drag him. Perhaps I seem to speak harshly and hardly; but you have deceived me in one thing—why should you not in another?"

"Anthony!" said Rosamond, pale with passion, "how dare you speak to me so? I will not stay to be insulted!" And, rising with a sweeping movement, she turned towards the door.

"Stay," said Anthony, in that commanding tone he knew so well how to assume, and which never failed to awe Rosamond even in her angriest moods. "Stay; I have a question to ask you before you go."

"I will not stay. You have no right to make such assertions."

"I make no assertions which I cannot justify. Be kind enough to come back, Rosamond."

She came back, and stood facing him like a lioness at bay.

"I want to know," he said, speaking with a quietness that cost him an intense inward effort, "how Richard Hardy came to be in possession of your father's will."

Rosamond never knew how she survived that terrible moment. For a few seconds the room seemed to go round and round with her; ghastly shapes and sounds floated about her; her eyes seemed ready to start out of her head, her limbs were devoid of sensation; her tongue refused to give utterance to sound. The instantaneous change that passed over her face struck through Anthony's heart a cold, dead despair. Was there now any longer room for rebounding hope? Was this the beautiful, innocent girl he had loved so fondly, and trusted so implicitly—this crushed, guilty, hunted-down, defeated creature who stood helplessly trembling before him, and gazing at him with wild, piteous eyes?

"Rosamond, Rosamond," he cried, in tones of impassioned entreaty, making a movement towards her, "say one word—only one word—I can't bear this. What is the meaning of it all? What is this man to you?"

He was holding her by the shoulders in a grip of iron. He was looking her straight in the eyes. Before that terrible earnestness and intensity of feeling, dissembling was impossible. With a flash of her old haughty, defiant spirit, she lifted up her white face and wild eyes, and, drawing the golden circlet from its place of concealment, she put it on her finger, and, holding it towards him—

"He is my husband," she said.

His hands dropped to his side. He started back, as if her touch would poison him. He drew a deep breath, and then a strange feeling of quietude came over him. Was it relief? He could almost fancy it was.

* * * * * *

Little by little the whole shameful story of treachery and guilt was brought to light. Rosamond, knowing that all hope of screening either Dick or herself was now dashed to the ground, made no further attempt at concealment. Her sin had found her out, and there was nothing to be gained either by denying the crime or trying to palliate its blackness. Nothing was left to her now but to abide by the consequences. The will had been found, and was in Anthony's possession; she might therefore consider herself virtually disinherited already. By her own act she had utterly and unalterably alienated herself from the only man to whom she might have looked for mercy and consideration. Her husband and lawful protector lay at death's door. There was no one to counsel or to aid her. Never had she felt so abandoned, so alone in the world, so overcome with a crushing sense of misery; but worst of all was the keen wound of conscience, the feeling of deadly shame, the consciousness of sin.

Strange as it might seem to others, strange as it did seem to her when the fierce light of truth lit up the dark recesses of the past—Rosamond had never had any very definite consciousness of the sinfulness of the deed she had consented to and assisted in. The temptation had been subtle and sudden. It had promised her the gratification of all her desires, without any real detriment to others. It had offered a simple solution to a complex difficulty.

Rosamond Wylde had been from the first a spoiled child. Consulted in every whim, indulged in every caprice, she had grown up with the firm belief that she must have whatever she wanted. She expected everything to give way to her, and everyone to contribute to her happiness as if the world had been formed solely for her gratification. She had no idea of taking a second place. Her beauty, her talents, her versatile powers of fascination, her gay and pleasing manners, all combined to give her the pre-eminence wherever she went, and consequently the ideas with which she had grown up, instead of being dispelled by her contact with the world, were only fostered by the attention and admiration she invariably commanded. Her father's second marriage, and ultimately the birth of an heir to his large estate and fortune, was the first blow ill-fortune aimed at her overweening ambition. With hot indignation and a burning sense of injustice, she beheld the usurper of her lawful rights. Her unreasoning anger knew no bounds. Had the child been a girl, she might have borne it, but a son—the idea was intolerable! The longer she thought of it, the more she brooded over it, so much the greater seemed the cruelty and injustice.

It was while Rosamond, too angry and indignant to remain in her father's house, was wintering at Rome under the protection of an elderly lady, that she first met Richard Hardy. His handsome face and gay spirits, together with his airy assumption of grandeur and superiority, completely took her fancy. Her inordinate vanity was gratified by his outspoken flatteries, so different from the oily courtesies of other aspirants to her favour. Deceived by his reckless extravagance and his large way of talking, she fancied him to be extremely rich as well as a person of very considerable importance. A friendship, or rather a flirtation, was immediately struck up. Richard was her constant attendant on the promenade, in the ballroom, or at the opera. Rosamond's *chaperon*, who was a rather vain and weak-minded lady, scarcely qualified for the charge committed to her by Colonel Wylde, was no check at all upon the lovely, wilful girl. Even had she had sufficient discretion to perceive that Mr. Hardy was not the most suitable person

to have for a friend, remonstrance would have been all in vain. She had always found it so in the past, for, where a flirtation was concerned, Rosamond naïvely considered that in wearing her engagement-ring she was doing all that Anthony could reasonably expect of her. She *must* amuse herself, she said, and meant to do so, whether her *fiancé* objected or not.

resentment. About this time news came of the death of Mrs. Wylde. Richard persuaded Rosamond to go to England for the funeral, and instructed her in her own interests to make what discoveries she could as to the provision her father had made for his young son and herself.

Rosamond, who was scarcely aware, in her petulant

"She did not notice Felicia's entrance until she came quite close to her."—*p.* 608.

Richard Hardy was soon made the confidant of all her woes and injuries. His keen, astute mind saw in the circumstances of the case a possibility of securing for himself what he viewed as a splendid prize in the lottery of life. He listened with great interest and attention to the story of her wrongs, and by his sympathy and indignation added fuel to the flame of her

and childish ignorance, that she was making a step out of the region of unacted thought into that of unconsidered action, obeyed all his injunctions. She imagined his motive perfectly disinterested, and admired him for his attachment to what she called her "cause." She was very anxious to introduce him to her father, but Richard was much too wary for this, and she was

obliged to accede to his very earnest request that his name should not be mentioned, on the ground that he foresaw unnecessary jealousy and curiosity from Colonel Wylde and Mr. Lestrange, which would perhaps put an end to their delightful acquaintanceship. This was about the last thing that Rosamond desired, so she made the promise, and, in so doing, unconsciously and fearlessly took the first step on the downward course of dissimulation.

CHAPTER XXX.

FROM that moment, all unknown to her, Richard Hardy was Rosamond's evil genius. Enveloped in that strong armour of self-consciousness and self-gratification, she could not see how, step by step, she was beguiled into further intricacies by the wily tempter. The seeds of discontent, sown in the first instance by pride, ambition, and avarice, sprang up in her path under this fostering influence into the rank, poisonous weeds of evil thoughts and desires. Her whole life became embittered with brooding over her wrongs, until presently she was fully persuaded that she was the most injured and hardly used being on the face of the earth.

At last there came a day when she and Richard Hardy stood face to face in her father's library.

"Rosamond," he said, "do you remember that night in Rome when I swore to devote my life to your service? I promised you faithfully that, for your sake, I would dare and do anything, whatever the risk might be. I am here to keep my promise."

It was a critical moment. A mind more evenly balanced, more susceptible to the promptings of conscience, less self-centred, less hardened by the world's superficial callousness to the natural affections, would have recoiled instantly from the deliberate act of wrong-doing suggested by the tempter. As yet avaricious desires had taken no definite shape. One look of scorn, one word of determined refusal, and the ugly phantom which was dogging her path might for ever have been crushed. But Rosamond, like a second Eve, dallied weakly with the temptation. It was but a little act, the mere appropriation of a paper which, according to her fixed belief, unjustly deprived her of her rights. It was an act wrong in itself, and culpable in the eyes of the law, no doubt, but not a sin which would leave a black mark on her conscience. It was a secret she could endure to live with, and to think of—a deed she could justify to herself, if not to others. It would do no real harm to anyone. It was not as if Richard had suggested the taking of an innocent life. Such a horrible thought as that her mind would not for a moment have been able to grasp, and certainly not to entertain. As it was, she would herself see that Bertram's interests did not materially suffer by the transaction. Usurper and intruder though he might be, it was not his fault, and she, as mistress of Wyldeholme, could and would afford to be magnanimous.

Again, it was an easy act, and the chances of detection were slight. Her father lay in his sick-room at the point of death. The doctors had told her it was impossible he should recover. Excepting the servants, there was no one in the house besides herself. Her lover was unavoidably absent. No one would interrupt them. She could easily get possession of her father's keys, and Richard would take away the will in his pocket. When the theft was discovered, as of course it would be, no one would dream of suspecting Richard, who was an absolute stranger; and she, of course, would pretend entire ignorance.

That moment of hesitation was fatal. Richard's arguments were very plausible, and the advantages which would accrue to her seemed great in comparison with the smallness of the deed.

"It's your only chance, Rosamond," said Dick. "Give me the keys, and shut your eyes, and in half a moment I'll secure you good fortune for a lifetime."

Still she hesitated.

"I am afraid it is a very wrong thing to do. I don't know what Anthony would say if he knew. You'll stand by me, Richard?"

"To the very end. I swear it to you, Rosamond. And as to Anthony, if you don't let him know you had a hand in it, he'll think it a fine joke, no doubt. Upon my word, I think I am very disinterested."

"Yes, I know you are," said Rosamond hurriedly. "Well, there are the keys. I shall turn my back, for I really can't look on while you do it."

But, though Rosamond might object to witness the proceedings, another person did not. Just as he had carefully examined the will, and was about to put it in his pocket, Richard looked up suddenly, and discovered a pair of curious eyes fixed on him. It was Colonel Wylde's valet, Claydon, who had noiselessly opened a door concealed by a curtain, which Rosamond had forgotten and he had overlooked, and was about to enter, unaware that anyone was there. Observing that the room was occupied, he would have retired as noiselessly as he came, but the unusual proceedings arrested his attention, and he was consequently discovered before he could beat a retreat.

The disturbance put a new complexion on the matter, Rosamond nearly fainted away with fright, but Dick, who was gifted with a remarkable amount of *savoir faire*, and whose cool intrepidity was not to be daunted, soon compelled the intruder to become an accomplice in the deed. As his pockets at that time were unusually well lined, he had small difficulty in offering a good earnest for the substantial promises of the future, and Rosamond was easily induced to acquiesce in all Dick's suggestions. This, then, was the part which Claydon played in the transaction. Curiosity had made him a witness of the deed, and cupidity had rendered him a sharer in it.

That night Anthony Lestrange arrived, to find his *fiancée* in a state of great agitation. The suddenness of the temptation, her weakness in resisting it, the irretrievableness of the act, and the inevitable consequences of its discovery, all tended to fill her with conflicting emotions. She had not as yet had time to accustom her mind to the thought; she had not yet hardened herself against the voice of conscience. That she had done wrong, and that she might get found out, were the two thoughts that filled her mind. How to get herself out of future possible difficulties and avoid all suspicion was the one idea that taxed all her faculties, and absorbed all her powers of ingenuity.

She could not endure the sight of Claydon, and the man himself felt his position to be an extremely uncomfortable one. Though both Hardy and Miss Wylde were completely in his power, he felt that Richard was using him as a tool to serve his own ends. To say the truth, he would have been far too much afraid of Richard to expose him, for he was a coward by nature, and valued his own insignificant life too well to venture to brave his tyrant's wrath. On the other hand, he was also afraid of Anthony, and dreaded the straight questions which would be put to him as well as to the rest when the discovery was made. Unfortunately, he had already incurred the suspicion of Mr. Lestrange, having been so nearly caught by him in the ante-room, whither he had ventured, though with much trepidation, in the hope of overhearing some information that might be of use to him. In this he was successful, and being now extremely anxious to make good his escape before any disclosures were made concerning the missing will, he determined to intercept Anthony's letter to the solicitor—an act which his position in the house rendered it easy for him to do. On the death of his master the following morning, he was able to seek and obtain his dismissal from Mr. Lestrange. He at once left the country, assumed a different name, and waited to see what the upshot of the whole affair would be.

It was scarcely surprising, under the circumstances, that Rosamond, left alone to face the ordeal—for Richard wisely kept in the background and held no communication with her—was so wrought upon, that she became really ill.

Her lover naturally attributed it to grief for her father. He therefore treated her with the utmost tenderness and consideration, and would not allow her to be troubled with more cross-questioning than was really necessary. The consequence was that Rosamond's tearful protestations of ignorance of all that had happened got her off very easily; and when, soon afterwards, she went abroad for change of air, she went without a shadow of suspicion, as far as her friends were concerned, of having had any hand in the abstraction of the will.

Rosamond had good hopes that the matter would end there; but Mr. Lestrange had different intentions, and for some months she had a very anxious time of it. At last, however, it appeared to have dropped into obscurity; and as she had already been absent from England for a considerable time, she felt obliged to yield to Mr. Lestrange's persuasions and accept the invitation from Sir John and Lady Lawley to spend the summer months with them at their country seat. As this invitation also included her young brother and Mr. Lestrange, she felt it would be very unwise to decline, especially as she had no good reason for doing so; but she consented all the more willingly on learning of the close proximity of Richard's home to Lawley Manor.

Under present circumstances she was able only to communicate with Richard through the post. She was afraid to see him, lest any suspicion should be excited, for she was travelling with people who had been friends of her father, and who were also intimate with Mr. Lestrange. If she went to Lawley Manor, she would have an opportunity of meeting Richard in an ordinary way, for he had promised her to spend at least a few weeks at home. Now that he had in part attained his ends, and had got his victim in his power, Richard made no attempt to keep up the disguise he had at first adopted. Rosamond was perfectly aware of the character that he bore in Carsthorpe; she knew a good deal of his previous history, and was also well acquainted with his impecunious condition. As it was utterly impossible for her to break her connection with him, she wisely considered that it would be better to establish their acquaintance on a different basis, and, arrangements having been made between them, Rosamond accepted Sir John's hospitality and set out for England.

Scarcely had she done so when she received the very unwelcome information that Claydon had returned to England, and, being unsatisfied with the arrangement made for supplying him with the money he was to receive quarterly as the price of silence, he had determined on an interview with Miss Wylde, and, hearing that she was about to visit Lawley Manor, had travelled as far as the adjacent city of Greychester in order to arrange a private meeting. He had chosen to go to Greychester partly because he was unknown there, and partly because he believed Anthony to be in London, and therefore thought to avoid being seen. In great alarm and consternation, she immediately reported the news to Richard, and before sending any intimation of her arrival to her lover or her friends, awaited his reply. This, then, was the meaning of Rosamond's sudden and very slightly explained advent at Lawley Manor. Acting on Dick's advice, she had made arrangements to meet Claydon at Greychester, at which meeting, much to the chagrin of the latter, who had purposed otherwise, Richard himself also managed to be present. It was at the close of the interview, when Dick and Rosamond were parting with the valet on the steps of the hotel where Rosamond was to stay the night, that Anthony and Will Lawley came upon them, and missed, through so slight a chance, bringing the whole affair to light. Had Will mentioned to Anthony his fancied recognition of an old friend, or had Anthony confided to Will the cause of his extreme interest in Claydon's movements, some disclosure must inevitably have been made; but each having good reasons for reticence, the matter had been allowed to pass without discussion.

This painful story, with the subsequent events culminating in her marriage with Dick, was extracted little by little from the unhappy girl. For her sake and his own—for the sake of the innocent and grief-stricken sister and father of the chief conspirator in the intrigue—Anthony Lestrange would fain have kept it a secret from the world. Could he have done so, he would gladly have restored the recovered document without a word of explanation, even though by so doing he should bring down upon himself unjust and dishonouring suspicions. His love for Rosamond had received a shock from which it could never recover; but his tender, compassionate nature could not witness unmoved the crushed and abject shame and misery of the once proud and beautiful girl, nor hear without a profound feeling of pity her useless and feeble

attempts to screen the man whose influence had ruined her life. But Anthony knew full well that so complicated an act of wrong-doing was not to be set right by that simple, single act. It was a matter which had occupied his solicitors for many months; they had actually taken proceedings against a suspected person, and had already taken preliminary steps against him. It was not reasonable to suppose that those who had been engaged in the work of investigation would be satisfied with such summary proceedings.

Painful as the duty was, Anthony therefore decided to confide the whole matter to his friend, Sir John Lawley, who, as kinsman to the young heir, had a right to give advice and to share responsibilities.

It was some time before Anthony could make Sir John understand the full import of the communication, but when at length he grasped the situation, he was filled with horror and dismay. It was such a deeply laid plot, such underhanded, treacherous dealing from first to last; and the fact that it had been going on under his own unsuspecting eyes, in his own house, made the enormity of it all the greater. That Dick should have been found out in such a crime would have grieved him inexpressibly, though it would scarcely have surprised him; but to learn that Rosamond, the seemingly innocent, high-spirited, light-hearted girl, who for so many months had brought gaiety and sunshine into his household, was, on her own confession, a willing participator in the sin, seemed a fact almost too awful to be credited.

"Eh dear! eh dear!" said he. "Who would have thought it? Well, well, we had better go and talk it over with the Rector. Poor fellow! what a blow for him! He knows, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Anthony briefly, too sick at heart to waste idle words. He dreaded the sight of the strong man's grief. He feared to intrude upon his noble degradation; yet shame and sorrow were his as well, and the evil day was not to be averted.

So they went together.

Since the day when Sir John found his friend bowed to the earth with the disgrace of his son's expulsion from college, a conference so grave and painful as that now held by the three men had never taken place in the Rector's study. It would be difficult to say which felt most keenly the shame and dishonour which had come upon them.

Felicia was spared this trial. She had done her part, but anxiety and suspense were still hers. She heard Sir John and Anthony come in, and stole away to her own room for a few brief moments to still the tempestuous throbbing of her pulses as the dreadful possibilities of what might be came crowding in upon her brain.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FOR many days Richard Hardy lay between life and death. Felicia nursed him with unremitting assiduity, with unwearied tenderness and endurance. Day and night she continued at her post, giving herself but scanty rest, and then only when Mr. Hardy was able to relieve her; for she dreaded lest her brother in his wild ravings should disclose to others the terrible secret which seemed to haunt his visions. Since that awful night he had never spoken coherently and directly about the will, but Rosamond's name was perpetually on his lips, and, in the light of the revelation made by Anthony to her father, it was easy for Felicia to guess the drift of the wild, wandering words, the threats, the entreaties, the confessions, the promises. She therefore rejected with quiet decision all offers of assistance, assuring her friends that, as she was perfectly well and strong, the additional tax upon her strength would do no harm. Although her pale face, heavy eyes, and spiritless manner belied her words, no one—not even Janet or Martha, who noticed more than anyone the unusual weariness and listlessness in their young mistress—dared urge their solicitude for her health, for Miss Hardy had an air of dignity which baffled idle questioning and repressed undesired interference.

But at last one morning the patient awoke, weary and weak, but quite sane and sensible. The fever had left him, and Dr. Leigh congratulated Felicia upon the propitious turn of the malady, and assured her that there was now little need for anxiety.

Felicia, however, thought differently, for now that Richard was fairly on the road to recovery, the worst anxiety of all was about to begin.

The affair of the will was still in abeyance. It had been thought best that a written statement of what had taken place in the library at Wyldeholme should be drawn up; and this, having been read over to Rosamond in the presence of Sir John Lawley, Mr. Hardy, and Lestrange, had been duly signed by her and by them, and now only needed the confirming signatures of the other two accomplices. As yet nothing had been said to any other person; but Anthony had requested Messrs. Russell and Grimsby to withdraw the charge against Claydon, and to stop any further investigations pending a communication which he should have to make to them.

In the meantime, Rosamond remained at Lawley Manor in accordance with Sir John's wishes; for, indeed, she had no real home to go to. Fortunately, Wyldeholme was not yet disposed of, the negotiations for the sale of it not having been concluded when Rosamond, in compliance with Anthony's request, wrote to her solicitors to withdraw the matter; but though she was still in the eyes of the world the possessor of that estate, she was well aware that her reign was over. Too ignorant of business matters to know, and too overwhelmed with shame to inquire, she could not realise her present position, or comprehend what her resources were. So she made no objection to the plan Sir John proposed, that she should remain at Lawley Manor until Richard was sufficiently recovered to be able to make definite arrangements for the future; but her position in the household was a very different one, and she felt it keenly. After that long, trying interview with Anthony in the library, she was seen no more flitting like a bright vision through the house and shedding smiles and sunshine wherever she went. Abandoning herself to despair and self-reproach, she shut herself up in her own rooms, to which her maid alone had access. At first she seemed to be deserted by all her former friends, for Lady Lawley was so inexpressibly shocked and horrified at what had

taken place that she absolutely refused to go near her. But before long she conquered the first harsh feelings of repugnance, for she had a mother's heart, and she pitied the utter loneliness and friendlessness of the girl. She therefore went to her with such kind professions as she could honestly make, trying to persuade her, for her husband's sake, to restrain the wild and passionate grief which was really injuring her health. But Rosamond would not listen to such persuasions, and though she expressed her thanks for her hostess's kind solicitude, Lady Lawley felt little encouragement to continue her well-meant but somewhat timid and diffident ministrations.

The day following the change in Dick's condition, however, she had another visitor. Although Anthony had been every day to the Rectory to inquire for the patient, Felicia had not seen him again. Since she had learned that Rosamond by her marriage with Dick had given him his freedom, she had experienced a strange dread and diffidence about meeting him. She was afraid of herself—afraid lest a tell-tale blush or downcast looks should betray her sense of his altered position; for she knew that, however much she might deny it, the long hours of watching, the busy days and nights of scanty sleep, the agony and suspense which she had been through, had wrought upon her mentally and physically, so that she could no longer trust her own powers of self-control and self-possession. So she avoided Anthony, and forced herself to be content day by day with listening longingly for his step on the gravel and the sound of his voice as he entered the hall. But now that Richard was really so much better, she had no longer any excuse for refraining from seeing him; and so that morning, when her quick ears caught the first sound of his entrance, she snatched a hasty glance into the mirror, with true woman's instinct, gave a dissatisfied sigh over her pale face and tired eyes, and went down-stairs like a noiseless shadow to meet him.

A look of pleasure lighted up his face as soon as he saw her. She could not help noticing it, and a vivid blush mantled her cheeks. For a brief moment they were both too embarrassed to speak to each other. Anthony was the first to recover himself, and his polite but ordinary inquiries for her health speedily restored Felicia's composure.

Their conversation was of the most trivial and commonplace description. Each feared to touch on the dangerous topic of their mutual trouble, lest a chance word or look should reveal the undercurrent of emotion that stirred in their hearts as their hands and eyes met once more. Painfully conscious of their own susceptibility, miserably unconscious that it was mutual, they veiled their inward feelings under a mask of studied calmness and reserve. They did not say how glad they were to see each other once more, but Felicia allowed her hungry eyes to feast themselves on the face she loved more dearly than any on earth, while Anthony, gazing at her with a new admiration, saw, with a feeling of pain, the strange, troubled expression in her eyes, and became conscious of a burning desire to take her in his arms and kiss the smile to her lips and the colour to her cheeks.

Yes, he knew it now—it was Felicia whom he loved—not Rosamond. He felt he had loved her all along with a deep, true love that had its roots in the firm ground of honour and esteem, only it had been hidden away so deeply in the innermost recesses of his heart that he had not known or discerned it. No wonder that evanescent, unsubstantial, unsatisfying passion, which had so long passed muster for love, had been waning in dim light; for now the full sunshine of a perfect affinity flooded his soul with undreamed-of radiance, blotting out all memory of the unsatisfied yearnings of the past.

Reflections such as these were occupying his mind when he was abruptly brought back to his senses by Felicia's inquiry—

"How is Rosamond to-day?"

"I fear she is making herself ill with fretting," he replied, with a look of anxiety; "but I can't tell how she really feels. I only know what I am told."

"I was thinking," said Felicia thoughtfully, "that Dick might see her to-day if she would come. But I won't say anything to him until I know."

"I fear she would not like to come here. Yet she must be anxious to see her—your brother."

"Do you think it would be of any use for me to come and ask her? She will understand that I could not do so before."

"Ah! if *you* ask her, that will be very different. Will you indeed come?"

"Yes, certainly. If you don't mind, Mr. Lestrange, I will walk back with you at once. I don't think we ought to keep them apart a day longer than is really necessary."

So Felicia put on her cloak, and she and Anthony had a quiet but happy walk together to Lawley Manor. Being afraid lest Rosamond should refuse her admittance, Felicia would not have her arrival announced, but, throwing off her cloak and hat, went quietly into Rosamond's bedroom with the familiarity of an old friend.

She found the unhappy girl still in bed, though the morning was far advanced. Exhausted with crying and sobbing and bemoaning her hard fate, she was lying motionless, with her face buried in the pillows, her lovely golden hair tossed in luxuriant disorder about her shoulders. She did not notice Felicia's entrance until she came quite close to her.

With a startled expression, she sprang up at the sound of Felicia's voice.

"Why are you here? What do you want?" she cried passionately, when she had recovered from her first surprise. "Have you come to taunt and reproach me?"

"No, Rosamond; it is not for me to reproach you," replied Felicia gently. "Don't think I come on any such errand as that. I fear you have thought me unkind in not seeing you before, but it was not my fault."

"I did not expect you," said Rosamond moodily, turning her shamefaced head from Felicia's kind but serious regard. "You have never liked me."

"I don't think you have any reason for saying so," said Felicia, flushing, for she felt the arrow had hit very near the mark. "I am sorry if I have shown any want of kindness. Rosamond dear, there must not be

"Happy days were these for Anthony."—*p.* 611.

any reserve between you and me now. I want to be a sister to you, and help you all I can."

The ready tears rushed into Rosamond's eyes. She had never known the love of a sister, and Felicia's words and tone touched her inexpressibly. She lifted her flushed face from the pillows and stole a look at her visitor.

"I thought you would have been very angry with me. You would not have done it yourself."

"No, a thousand times, no. I could not have sullied my soul with so base a sin," was the hot reply that rose to Felicia's lips; but she checked the words. "It is not for me to say. I have never had the temptation," was her quiet answer, after a moment's pause.

Rosamond sat up in bed at this, and surveyed Felicia with unfeigned astonishment.

"No; you would never have done it. I always felt you despised me for my idle, selfish life. You mean it kindly, I know, but you need not pretend you don't despise me more than ever now you know all. I wonder you can call me your sister."

"I do not forget, Rosamond, that my unhappy brother is as much and more to be blamed than you. Do you think that his sin, black as it is, makes him any the less my brother?"

"Don't call it by so dreadful a name!" said Rosamond, shuddering. "We did not mean to do anything very wrong. Dick would never have done it if he had not loved me. He could not bear to see me unhappy. Anthony never loved me so much as that."

"God forbid!" said Felicia earnestly. "He loved you too well; but how is it possible for you to

understand such a love as his——" She broke off abruptly. "Forgive me, Rosamond, I am talking idly. What is past is past and beyond retrieving. We have the present to think of now, and I came to-day to ask you if you would come and see Dick. He is very much better, you will be glad to hear, and the doctor says he may see one or two visitors."

The hot colour came and went in Rosamond's cheeks at this announcement, but she sat perfectly still and said nothing.

"He will be anxious to see you. He has been talking of you incessantly all through his illness."

"Has he?" said Rosamond eagerly. "Poor Dick! I *do* want to see him; but, Felicia, I *can't* come. I shall never be able to look your father in the face again after that awful night."

"You need see no one but Dick and myself if you wish; but, Rosamond, the sin is not against my father. You need not fear that he will judge either you or Dick too harshly."

And then Felicia went on to point out, in the kindest and most sisterly way, the real sinfulness of the act which now the poor girl so bitterly repented, and the true source from which she must seek forgiveness, and from whence alone she could obtain pardon and consolation.

As Felicia came out of Rosamond's chamber, Will was lurking about in the corridor to see if he could get a chance of speaking to her. The discovery of Rosamond's duplicity had come upon him with overwhelming force, but so great was the fascination she exercised over him that he could not even now free himself from the spell. He had been most anxious to know how she fared, but he dared not question his mother, and no one else had been admitted into her presence. With an instinctive trust in Felicia's generosity, as soon as he heard she had arrived he determined to speak to her; but when he saw her coming down the corridor with her stately, serious air, her delicate pale face glowing with the reflected loveliness of the noble truths she had been endeavouring to impart to the unhappy girl she called "sister," he shrank from intruding himself upon her notice. Before the noble purity and loftiness which so unconsciously pervaded her, he felt, with a new sense of shame, his own insignificance, his utter inability to reach the level on which she stood. He moved back in silence into the shadow of a doorway, and she passed him by unrecognised and unobserved.

Next day Rosamond made her first visit to her husband's sick-room. Dick had a very shrewd suspicion, from various circumstances, of the disclosures which had been made during his illness, but it was not till Rosamond came that he knew the whole truth. They had a long interview, and when Rosamond came out of the room her eyes were red with weeping. Felicia was half afraid of the result for her brother, but she found him very quiet and uncommunicative.

It was not until that night, after she had put everything in order before retiring, that he made any allusion to the subject. Just as she was quitting the room, he raised himself on his elbow and remarked, with a meaning look—

"You and Lestrange can have each other now, Floy. There's nothing to hinder you. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

SIX months of wintry weather—when mist and rain, frost and snow, biting cold and clinging damp, in turns held undisputed sway—had gone their dreary round, and now the brave, cheerful sun, which for a month past had been assiduously forcing its way, in spite of opposition, through the heavy mist and rain-clouds, had succeeded in awakening all nature to the fact that springtime was coming, and that she must put on her holiday garb to come forth and meet him.

It was May, and such a May as poets love to sing of. The trees were once more in full leaf and the birds in full song. Blue and clear was the sky overhead, and green the grass on lawn and meadow, while all between was bathed in a delicate liquid haze of blended light and shadow that changed and trembled with every motion of the fresh, health-giving breeze.

In Felicia's garden the spring flowers blossomed into beauty under the magician's wand, and filled the air with perfume, as in the sweet, innocent days of old; but Felicia herself no longer moved amongst its haunted pathways with the buoyant, lightsome step of former times, nor was her clear voice any more to be heard carolling snatches of song with the old careless gaiety born of the blithe influences of spring. It was a merry childish voice that made all the music in that garden now, and the ring of childish feet that made the old paths re-echo, while Felicia sat, in still and absorbed silence, watching the child at his play. It was not that she was unhappy, or that the weight of care and trouble she had of late been called upon to bear had entirely crushed the brightness out of everything. Far from it; but for her, life had assumed a different aspect and acquired a new meaning, the full mystery and depth of which she was not yet able to fathom. She went about her daily duties like one in a dream, and, though the bright smile was not a complete stranger to her face, her habitual expression was that of settled seriousness. It had been a very grey, dark winter, and the gloom and cheerlessness of it still clung about her; but who could tell what golden vistas might not open up in the future, now that the icy bands of care were gradually melting beneath the genial sunshine of rest and peace?

For the misery and wretchedness of those long, anxious days that followed Richard's convalescence was fast becoming a thing of the past, never to be forgotten, yet never to be lived through again. As soon as it was possible for him to be moved, he and Rosamond had crossed the Channel. Their exile, both from choice and necessity, was likely to be a permanent one, for the world at large was not in ignorance of the circumstances under which Bertram Wylde came to be heir to the vast fortune and extensive property left by his father.

It was a great relief to Lady Lawley when Rosamond was gone, for, though she pitied the girl, she could never forgive her deception or feel towards her as she

had done before. Of course, the whole affair caused a great scandal in the neighbourhood, where Rosamond was so well known and so universally admired; and as nothing was so repugnant to Lady Lawley as to feel herself or her household to be the subject of inquisitive gossip, it was hardly surprising that, before the month was over, Lawley Manor was again closed, while Sir John and his wife went to spend the winter in the south of France. Will had taken himself off long before, for the associations of the place had become very painful to him. The spell Rosamond had woven about his heart was far stronger than he had fancied, and he could not break it off all at once.

As for Anthony, he returned almost immediately to his chambers in London, no longer made merry and cheerful with the presence of child-life. At first there seemed a great blank in his life now that he had not Rosamond's interests to think of, or her pleasure to consult. He was free, also, from the anxiety of the business which had so long occupied his mind. The proceedings against Claydon had been abandoned, and that personage discharged; but though he got off a good deal more easily than he might have expected, he had soon to realise the truth of the homely proverb that "honesty is the best policy."

The departure of the inhabitants of Lawley Manor made life at the Rectory very quiet and sombre. The sudden and complete cessation of all festivities brought the dead monotony of the old life into startling contrast with the excitement and gaiety of the past few months. Both Felicia and her father were, however, very glad of the quietude of the winter, for, unlike Sir John and Lady Lawley, they were not able to turn their backs upon the pitying glances and whispered conjectures of the little world of Carsthorpe. There were few visitors at the Rectory in those days, but one there was who, with unremitting assiduity, made excuses week by week and day by day for calling on the Hardys. Dr. Leigh had seen a great deal of Felicia during Richard's illness, and the consequence was that he had fallen more deeply in love with her than ever. He found it very hard when Richard went away to discontinue his visits, and therefore found any excuse better than none to catch a glimpse of the one face that made the whole day bright for him. Mr. Hardy, whose observant eyes soon detected the meaning of these frequent visits, by no means discouraged them, for he had a great respect and liking for the young man; and if Felicia in any way reciprocated the attachment, much as he dreaded losing her, he would on no account have stood in the way of her happiness. But Felicia did not encourage Dr. Leigh. She knew that her heart was already irretrievably lost, and she was too true a woman not to do all it was possible for her to do in checking the very palpable attentions of the young doctor.

Maurice Leigh, however, was a determined man. He had made up his mind, if possible, to win this girl for himself, and was not to be daunted by her indifference. One morning, finding her alone, he took advantage of an opportunity all too rare, and then and there avowed his love, and asked her to be his wife. It was impossible for Felicia to listen unmoved to the honest, manly words, or to reject without a keen feeling of pain and regret the proffered devotion of a true and faithful heart. It was the first time that a confession such as this had ever been made to her, and it was but natural if her woman's heart was stirred within her as she realised the meaning of those simple but unfamiliar words. But her perfect self-possession, her gentle but unmoved dignity, soon showed Maurice Leigh how hopeless was his suit. "I do not love you, Dr. Leigh," Felicia said in reply to his passionate entreaty for the reason of his rejection; and he knew she was not a girl to marry one to whom she had not given her heart's affection. He went away sad and disappointed, yet conscious that no one was to blame but himself. How he envied the man whose happy lot it would be to break down the icy barrier of reserve, to enter the enchanted palace of her heart, and awaken with a warm responsive kiss the slumberer, Love.

Alas, for Felicia! too well she knew that Love no longer slumbered in her heart; but he whom she loved came but seldom to the Rectory. Various motives kept him away. The consciousness that he loved Felicia with an intense and complete love such as he had never known before made the old friendship between them, sweet as it had been, quite impossible now. Not altogether despondent, nor yet over-confident that his love could ever be returned, he was yet determined to use every possible endeavour to gain the one treasure which his lonely, incomplete life so earnestly desired. He feared, however, to be too precipitate. The dissolution of his engagement was still so recent; and, besides, he shrank from intruding himself upon her notice at so troublous and trying a time. Little did he dream how much pain his silence and seeming diffidence cost her, or with what mingled feelings of hope and dread she looked forward to their meetings.

But at last, in this lovely month of May, Mr. Hardy one morning received a letter from Lestrange, saying that he pined for a breath of the country air, that he wanted to see Bert, and, in short, that he intended coming down to spend a few weeks in the neighbourhood. Whereupon the hospitable Rector at once invited him to Carsthorpe for as long a stay as he was able to make.

Happy days were those for both Anthony and Felicia—long, happy days, spent from dewy morn till dusky eve almost entirely in each other's society. No discordant element now marred the harmony of that delightful intercourse. Each hour seemed sweeter and shorter than the last. There was little reserve between them. Almost insensibly the barrier of restraint which had hitherto kept them from mutual confidence melted away. Although no word had been spoken, they both felt instinctively that the esteem and regard which had always existed between them had overstepped the border-line of this everyday world, and brought them, though through devious ways, into the magic kingdom that lies beyond.

The last evening of Anthony's visit arrived. They had been out all the afternoon in the woods, and now Felicia had gone, as her custom was, to say "Good-night" to Bertram after he was in bed. Anthony stood alone by the open window in the drawing-room, awaiting

with feverish anxiety her return, for the words which had been hovering on his lips all these days must be spoken to-night. He could not go away without knowing his fate. How long seemed the moments when she was absent! With difficulty he restrained his impatience. Mr. Hardy might be in at any moment, and then his chance would be gone.

Presently, however, Felicia noiselessly entered the room, and came and stood beside him at the window. It had been a lovely evening, but now a light mist was beginning to rise on the rich carpet of green that stretched away before their view. As the twilight closed in, a hushed silence fell on all things, broken only by the sighing of the fitful breeze that made the leaves shiver, and stirred Felicia's soft, waving hair. Beside the pathway a glowworm lit up his tiny lamp as if to emulate the stars which one by one were peeping out from behind the dark curtain of blue.

"To-morrow night, Felicia," said Anthony presently, breaking the charmed silence, "I shall be very far away."

"Yes," said she, with a touch of sadness in her tones.

"I am very sorry that it must be so. These last few weeks have been the happiest I have ever known."

She made no answer, though she knew he was waiting for her to speak. Only she steadfastly avoided his earnest eyes.

"It will be very hard to say good-bye," he went on, after a moment's pause; but still she made no reply.

He took her hands in his, and she became aware, with a strange responsive thrill, that, strong man as he was, he was trembling with suppressed emotion.

"Felicia, I am not in any way worthy of you, but if I could ever be to you all that you are to me we would not part again."

She raised her face to his, impelled by the magnetism of his ardent gaze. For one long moment they looked into each other's eyes, then, without another word, he took her in his arms and kissed her.

"My only love!" he whispered, as he clasped her to his heart. "Can you forget the past? Can you—will you love me just a little?"

"No, no!" she faltered, hiding her bright face, flushed with happiness, on his shoulder, "not a *little*, Anthony. I never could do that."

Tenderly he lifted the soft, dark head, to read in her eyes the meaning that her words implied. She smiled at him through the gathering mist of tears that dimmed the radiant brightness of her glance, and as their lips met again in a long, sweet kiss, he realised, with a deep sense of joy, how full, and true, and lasting was the love that made their hearts one for ever.

THE END.

RAINBOWS, AND COLOURS IN BIRDS.

(GOD'S HANDIWORK IN THE BOOK OF NATURE.)

"My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky;
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die."—WORDSWORTH.

MAY, with all its glowing flush of colour and fragrance, has come and gone, and golden summer has taken one more step towards the fulness and perfection of its beauty. Hill and valley, woodland, roadside, and meadow, are all crowned with flowers, "the jewels of His handiwork," says quaint old Fuller, "that each season hath of its own, and that come to us with new lustre as every new year is born out of the old." And what strikes one most is the infinite variety and wealth of colour. The very grass on either side of the woodland path has a purple beauty of its own that blends with the lilac and grey of the wild scabious and the tawny yellow of the bedstraw, the deeper red of the clover, or the still darker tint of the clusters of glowing sainfoin. Earth, air, and sky seem to be crowned with light and splendour; the song of birds, the hum of insect life, the murmur of innumerable leaves, the soft rustle of the breeze all along the winding pathway through the wood, the glory of the sunshine, and the flying shadows of the cloud—all make up the glad and happy beauty of a summer day, which He who alone is the spring of all brightness and perfection has ordained, but which all may enjoy.

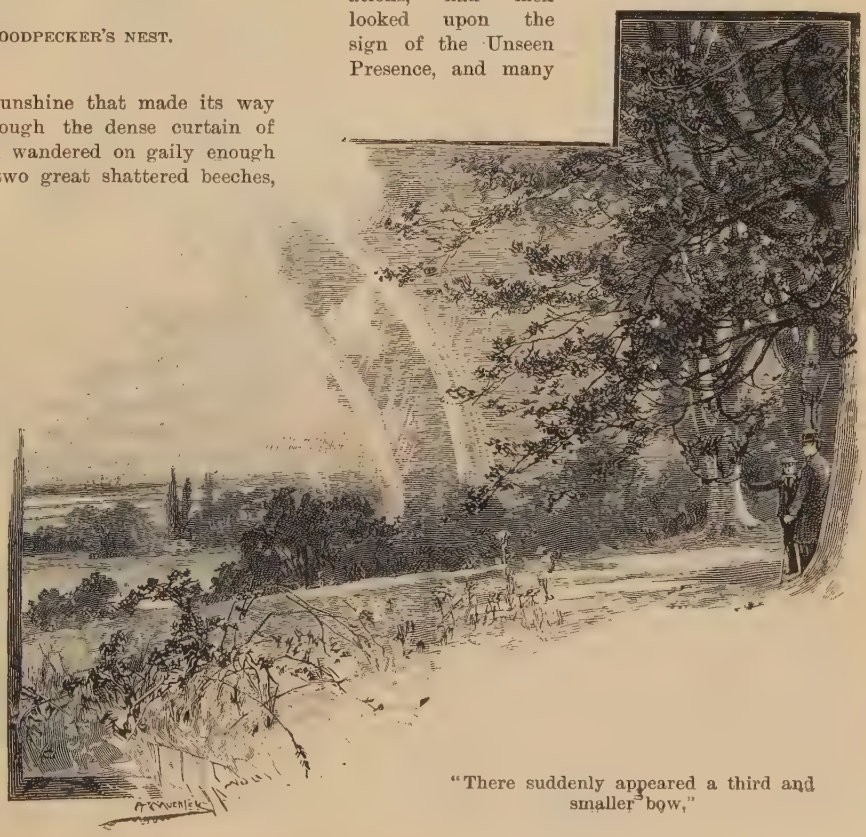
We had been hard at work for a couple of hours, Frank and I, and he was looking out of the study window with longing eyes, when I said to him, "Pack up your books, my boy; you have done a good day's work. We will have a good run down through the Beechwood, and look for the woodpecker's nest that we tried to find a week ago. A great bank of cloud is coming up away there to the south-west; but a thunder-storm will clear the air, and we will run the risk of a wetting." And so away we went. After half a mile of dusty turnpike road, it was very pleasant to pass through the park gates and stroll across the cool green sward, down into the shade of the long avenue of beeches. We were in deep shadow, crossed here and there by

THE WOODPECKER'S NEST.

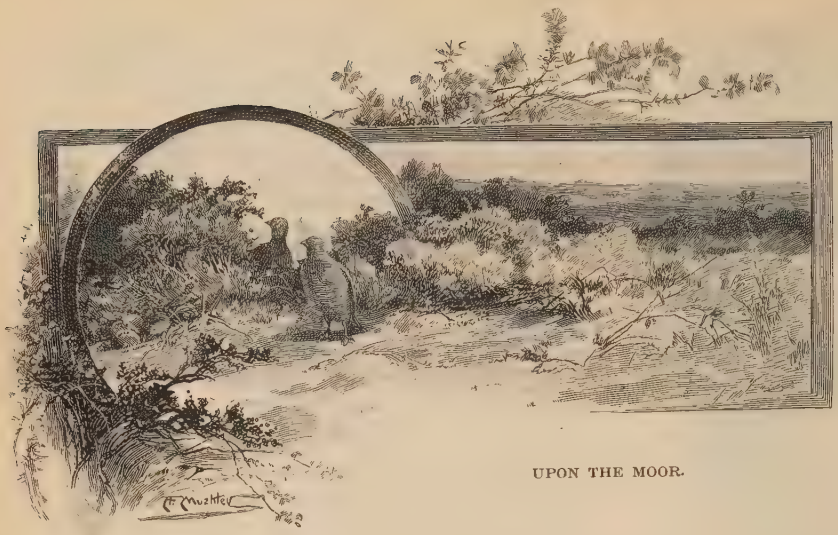
patches of bright sunshine that made its way now and then through the dense curtain of leaves overhead, and wandered on gaily enough till we got to the two great shattered beeches, among whose curiously tangled branches we had watched the woodpeckers busily at work but a few days before. Not a sound or sign of any such bird to be heard or seen; not a single tap against the hollow trunk, not a glimpse of green or scarlet feather.

Presently we came out into an open glade of soft turf, sloping far away up into a thickly wooded hill, behind which now rose a bank of heavy clouds; and across this bank suddenly swept a shower of summer rain, that drove us to take shelter under a spreading beech. As we looked across the woodland glade and watched the great mass of shining drops melt slowly away, the clouds broke, and a bow of glowing colour spanned the whole domain of sky. The tints were unusually vivid, and, strangely enough, the red at the outer edge of the arch was hardly visible, being entirely swallowed up by a double blaze of orange. This lasted for more than the usual time, and I had watched it, unchanged, for at least five minutes, when a second bow appeared within the first—smaller, of course, in span and in breadth, and divided from it by a broad band of deep blue cloud, but without the regular gradation of prismatic colours, and entirely composed of bright rose-colour, fading into lilac against the dark sky.

Anything more lovely in the way of colour I had never seen, when, to our utter surprise and delight, there suddenly appeared a third and smaller bow, of a still deeper radiance than the second, and the whole vision became more splendid than ever. For a few minutes the shower grew to be of finer, thicker rain, the sun shone out through a broken rent in the sky, the prismatic colours of the outer bow became more and more intense, and as I looked up at the arch of heaven there came to me the grand old words, "*I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token between Me and the earth,*" as it were with triple beauty and with force threefold. Age after age, and for countless generations, had men looked upon the sign of the Unseen Presence, and many



"There suddenly appeared a third and smaller bow."



UPON THE MOOR.

a time to recall its happy message; and evermore and always was its radiance unchanged, and evermore flashed across the sky the living words of hope.

> "Still, as of old, across yon stormy cloud,
> Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow
> Shoots up immense, and every hue unfolds
> In fair proportion, running from the red
> To where the violet fades into the sky."

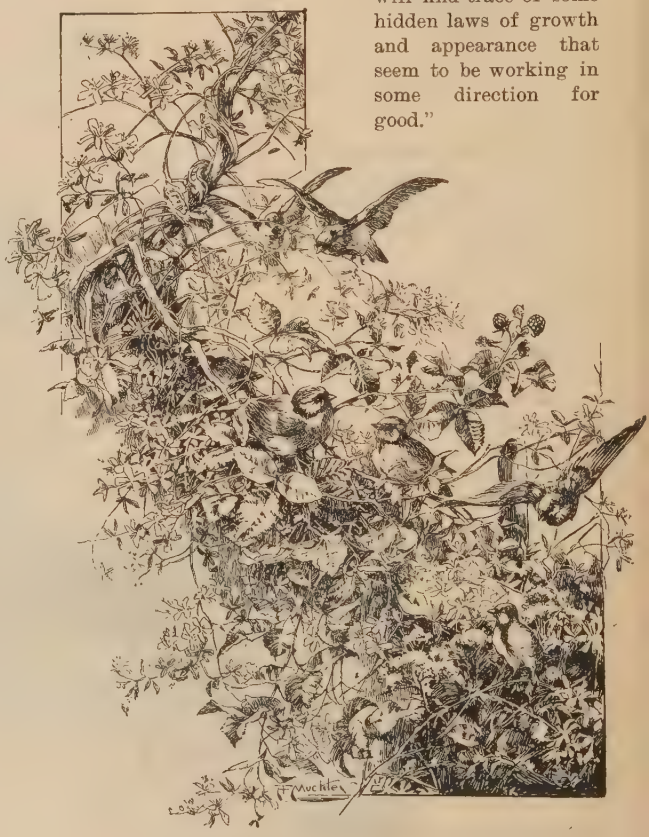
A second or double rainbow is not at all an uncommon occurrence; but in ordinary cases the second is generally outside the primary bow; and though both are bands of prismatic colours arranged as in the solar spectrum, yet the usual order of arrangement is inverted in the second arch. The lower edge of the interior is violet, and the upper edge red; while the lower edge of the exterior is red and the upper violet.

"Our rainbows, then," said Frank, "are not like the common ones; and how is it that the two inner bows are all of that bright rose-colour?"

"That," said I, "is a mystery which I cannot explain. You must go to Dr. Huggins, or Professor Crookes, or some other learned man of science; though I am not sure that even they could explain it. All I know about rainbow colours is that they are just those of the ray of light shining through a prism of glass, and always in this order—*violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red.* As to lunar rainbows, they are almost always white, or, if tinted, only in the faintest colours. The curious circle of light which sometimes surrounds the sun or moon—called a halo or corona—is caused by rays of light falling on the star-shaped crystals of ice which often fill the air before they unite into flakes of snow."

Presently the rain cleared, and we made our way to the head of the glade, where, across a tangled brake of thorn and bramble, the wild clematis and white lichen had woven a network of pale grey. In and out amongst this network a host of tiny birds were creeping in search of food. Nearly all were "tits" of some kind or other, and all of a bluish, grey, and yellow hue—hardly to be distinguished from the lichen. Many of the tits in this neighbourhood use this lichen in building, like that bottle-tit's nest we once found in the old grey apple-tree, and could hardly detect, even when close to it. And all this, no doubt, the old bird contrives and arranges for the safety of her young, taught by the same wise instinct which God has planted in so many of His tiniest creatures for their life and continuance.

"Look where you will," I said, turning to Frank, "all through the wide range of life in hedge-row, field, and wood, and you will find trace of some hidden laws of growth and appearance that seem to be working in some direction for good."



"Nearly all were 'tits' of some kind or other."

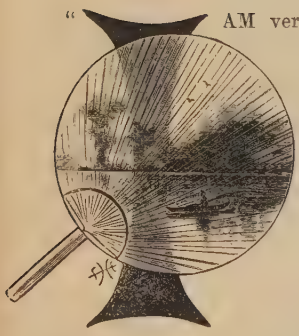
As it is with birds' nests and the choice of materials for building, so the colour of the eggs and the plumage of the different birds often seem by degrees to grow like that of their surroundings.

Thus the young pewit that we found not long ago, lying crouched up in a small hollow on the ground—which served for a nest—was all of a reddish-brown and grey, exactly matching the colour of the surrounding soil, and so most difficult of detection. We must have passed and repassed it a dozen times before discovery, while the old bird was hovering about us in such a wild state of alarm.

So again, away upon the wide moor, the same law prevails. The red grouse among the ling and heather builds her nest of purple and brown materials, so cunningly and deftly mixed as to defy almost the closest inspection, and so blended as to become part and parcel of the surrounding tints. Even the eggs in the nest are of a reddish ash-colour, spotted and blotched with tawny brown of the very same hue. Thus—as He Who created them and all living things at the first has ordained—the eggs lie in greater safety, and the young birds grow up in a fitting plumage, with greater chance of escape against many enemies, in accordance with "*a law which cannot be broken*": not, as some wise men would have it, by the creature's own education of itself, or by gradual improvement of the race, but by His wisdom and His teaching Who gave them life and being in the first Garden of the world.

B. G. Johns.

WITH A STEPMOTHER'S BLESSING.



"I AM very sorry, Mr. Gunn—very sorry indeed," repeated Miss Agatha Dale with some emphasis, "but it's no use thinking of it. Such a thing is quite out of the question."

"For what reason?" demanded the young man on the other side of the field gate. He was a minister, by his long-skirted coat, but his expression at this moment was scarcely in keeping with his attire.

"Reason!" echoed Miss Dale. "Well, I think it's hardly necessary to go into all the reasons: for one thing, I have no vocation for being a parish minister's wife, Mr. Gunn. I never liked the idea of being poor; besides, I am perfectly content to remain with my father for the present. It would make a considerable difference to him if I were to leave home."

"Yet such things have happened; daughters have been known to leave their fathers."

"That does not affect my case: the circumstances are altogether different," said Miss Dale rather stiffly.

"Very well; I will not urge you any further," said Mr. Gunn, flinging away the switch he had been twisting out of all shape, and taking his arms abruptly off the gate. "I was not asking you to share poverty exactly, Agatha. I could have given you all, and more than all, that was needful; and if you had been a poorer woman, I would have asked you long ago—and had you, too."

There are times when flight is the better part of valour. Miss Dale was standing the near side of the gate; she put her hand through the bars rather hesitatingly. "I hope you won't let this make any difference in our acquaintance," she said, tacitly declining further controversy. "My father thinks so much of a chat with you."

Mr. Gunn regarded her very gravely for a minute. "I shall see him occasionally, I daresay: it is hardly possible to do otherwise; but even you must admit that such meetings are not likely to be a source of profound pleasure to me."

And then the conference broke up, and they went their separate ways. The Reverend John Gunn marched soberly across his field, with bent brows, and without a trace of the kindly temper that made him such a popular character with young and old in his little parish; Miss Dale, with a flush partly of annoyance, partly of some other feeling, crossed her field. At the point where it merged into the high road, she paused and looked back. There was the gate where they had held their talk—Agatha would never pass by it again without recollecting that fact; and here was she by herself, and there was he, disappearing behind the pollard willows that mapped out the course of the sluggish stream West Duns dignified with the name of river. "The River"; no other designation was needed. The Thames, the Trent, or the Mersey might stand in need of titles to distinguish them from their smaller brethren; this river stood apart on its own merits, for the West Duns inhabitants; and for the rest of the country—well, it was a little doubtful if any other place recognised its existence at all.

Miss Dale went briskly down the road to a square, handsome house, standing in the midst of a carefully tended garden. It was laid out in geometrical beds of blue and scarlet and yellow. Not a stray daisy peeped through the velvety turf, not a blade of grass through the rolled gravel walks; yet the young lady eyed it rather coldly, as she went up the steps to the front entrance. "It takes up a great deal both of time and money," she said to herself, half aloud; "and I am not at all sure that plain grass and a couple of big trees would not look far better. I know Stephen Garroway always thinks so.—Has papa come in yet, Jane?" turning suddenly to the trim housemaid who was holding the door open.

"No, ma'am; but here's a note from him, just come up from the station."

It was only a line or two. Miss Dale read it as she walked up-stairs—

"Don't wait dinner: I may be detained in town."

"That makes the fourth time within this last fortnight," was her comment; "he must surely be specially busy just now. I don't like dining by myself so often."

Nevertheless, it had to be. Miss Dale sat in solitary state at the head of the long table, and kept up the dignity of the household unsupported. Many girls would have excused the performance altogether, but Agatha was rather particular about exacting due observance of all forms and ceremonies; it was good for the servants, she explained, and prevented them from lapsing into careless habits.

She put a light wrap about her head, and wandered out into the mathematical garden afterwards. The dusk was beginning to tone down the vivid colours in the ribbon borders, and the air was full of the fragrance of mignonette. Under that dense cloud on the horizon might be the din and turmoil of the northern Cottonopolis, but no disturbing echoes reached this peaceful haven among the level fields and drooping willows. By-and-bye, through the silence came a click at the gate, as someone passed in—a tall, good-looking man, with a heavy dark moustache and languid manners. Miss Dale, with a little touch of shyness, drew back into the porch as he sauntered up.

"You are doing quite right," he said encouragingly, as he shook hands; "it is a great deal too fine a night to be wasted indoors. If there was but an avenue of beeches overhead, instead of those wretched poplars, it would be simply Paradise out here."

Agatha glanced regretfully at the despised poplars; she would have agreed to thorns and brambles if Mr. Garroway had chanced to approve of them. "Papa has not come home yet, so it is little use asking you to come in," she said. "He seems to stay in town very often just now."

"Great are the fascinations of the cotton bales!" laughed Mr. Garroway; "still, I have found you at home. Matters might have been worse."

He did not come in, but he lingered beside her in the porch and talked; Mr. Garroway was undoubtedly gifted in that way. Agatha sometimes told him he ought to go into Parliament for the sake of the influence he would be certain to wield over the House. How or by what means he was to get there, or to what ends the influence was to be wielded, were minor details.

He stayed on till the light faded entirely, and the hall clock striking behind them, roused Miss Dale to a tardy sense of the proprieties.

"How the time slips away!" she said hastily; "I had no idea it was so late. Oh, there is papa."

They could not see the gate, but they heard it swing to with a resounding clang; another minute, and a short elderly gentleman loomed forth out of the twilight, and ascended the steps.

"Ah, it's you, Garroway? I couldn't make you out by this light. Aren't you coming in?"

"Not now, thank you. I'll look in another evening, when you are keeping earlier hours."

He took his departure after a few polite inquiries into the state of the cotton market—an institution he held in some contempt, though it had to be tolerated for the sake of possible fortunes to be evolved therefrom.

Mr. Dale and his daughter passed on into the dining-room; he was a little absent and restless to-night, Agatha thought once or twice, looking up from her book at some jerky movement of his newspaper. She was not reading very attentively herself; that scene with Mr. Gunn was running in her mind, and whether she ought not to tell her father about it. He would be sure to notice that something was wrong, and he would be pleased to know that she had no intention of deserting him: for a time, at any rate.

"Papa," she began presently, putting down her book, and going round to the side of his chair.

He looked round at her. "Ah! that's right, my dear; bring your chair over here. There is something I want to speak to you about."

A sudden guilty colour flamed up in his daughter's cheeks. Had he guessed already? Perhaps Mr. Gunn, or perhaps—someone else had been interviewing him. Involuntarily she moved her seat a little further into the shade of the lamp. "Well, papa?"

"Well, Agatha, I daresay you have noticed I have been away oftener in the evenings of late?"

It was a curious way of introducing the subject. "I suppose you have been busy," she said indifferently.

"Well, it was not exactly business, my dear. The fact is, I have been visiting some friends at Oxford Crescent."

"Yes?"

"And the long and the short of it is, Agatha, I have made up my mind to marry again. The lady is thoroughly suitable in every respect, clever and good-looking too; she will be quite a companion for you as well as for myself."

The flush died out of Agatha's face, leaving it dead-white; it was a contingency the possibility of which had never once crossed her mind. Daughters married—often, as Mr. Gunn had hinted that afternoon—but fathers! "Are you in earnest, papa?" she gasped.

"Earnest! of course I am. Do you think I should be likely to jest about it, Agatha? I have thought the step well over, and feel sure that it will prove a wise and judicious one. I could not have hoped to meet anyone better qualified for the position."

"But have I neglected you? Is not the house as well managed as any house can be?"

"My dear, was I implying anything to the contrary? I have a perfect right to please myself in this matter. The house is surely large enough to hold the pair of you comfortably, and without any upset about it."

It was large enough, certainly, but the comfort would be another story. Agatha listened to the rest of the account, with a dull foreboding of coming disaster that was quite a new sensation, and not a pleasant one. The wedding was to come off immediately—a few weeks at the latest, she was told; and Mr. Dale had arranged that she, Agatha, should go over to Oxford Crescent the next afternoon, and make Miss

"'For what reason?'"—*p.* 615.

Gertrude Whalley's acquaintance in the character of the coming stepmother. Agatha got away and slipped up to her own room, as soon as she decently could. She said nothing about the episode with Mr. Gunn—had forgotten it, indeed; all minor interests were swallowed up in this overwhelming calamity.

It had come so unexpectedly. To think that after all these years of absolute mistress-ship, both of her father and his house, her kingdom was to be taken from her, her sceptre transferred to an interloper! It would never be home again; and she had been so proud of it, had magnified her office, and treated other girls of her own standing with a certain patronage and importance on account of it; and now she was to step down among the rank and file, and see another in her place. Little wonder if Miss Dale's eyes were heavy, and her face pale, when she appeared at the breakfast-table the next morning.

No reference was made to it on either side, till Mr. Dale got up to go to the station. "Don't be later than four, at Oxford Crescent, Agatha," he said, as he brushed his hat. "I will be round about six, and we can come home together."

The house managed itself that day. The mistress took little notice of anything till it was time to set forth on that unjoyful expedition. The train was behindhand; trains generally were behindhand on this line. It was a standing grievance with all the West Duns business men, who wrote to the *Daily Examiner* at regular intervals, threatening to take up their abode in some more punctual locality, and leave West Duns to perish for lack of their countenance.

Agatha sat on the one bench, and waited with great patience. She was in no hurry to be at her destination, and would have heard very cheerfully that the train had collapsed entirely.

She reached Oxford Crescent nearly an hour after the appointed time, and was ushered into a spacious

drawing-room, where two ladies, one elderly, one not much older than herself, sat at work together.

"Miss Dale," said the elder one, coming across the room, and clasping Agatha's hands effusively. "My dear, I am very glad to see you. Let me introduce you to my niece, Miss Gertrude Whalley. Your father will have told you all about her."

"Not quite all," corrected the younger lady; "fathers don't usually give too many particulars—enough to begin with, perhaps, and we shall soon cultivate a closer acquaintance."

Miss Dale made some response to the effect that she had no doubt of it, and then she took the opposite chair at the window, and looked across at her future stepmother in the pauses of the conversation.

A handsome woman, some years under thirty, with rather pronounced features, and a mouth that indicated a fair amount of will-power. For the rest, she was richly dressed, and endowed with a pleasant manner and great self-possession; she would be quite equal to the generalship of the house at West Duns, decided Agatha, with a sinking heart. Half-unconsciously she had been entertaining a forlorn hope that Miss Whalley might perhaps be relegated to the ranks of the weaker brethren, and treated somewhat in the light of a cipher; but this was a lady as capable of asserting herself as was her future step-daughter, and who would have the balance of power in her favour besides.

Mr. Dale made his appearance after a time, and they adjourned to the next room to dinner. It was not a particularly cheerful repast. Agatha felt that her presence acted as a check upon any freedom of speech, and by no amount of effort could she make her few remarks easy or natural. It was an unmistakable relief when it was over, and she found herself in a cab with her father, on the way to the station again.

CHAPTER II.

THE wedding took place a month later, and Agatha, in conjunction with the bride's sister, Miss Theresa Whalley, occupied the honourable position of bridesmaid, and duly congratulated her new mother—or said she did, which answered the same purpose. The happy pair proceeded to the Lakes for a brief honeymoon, and Agatha went home to West Duns, accompanied by Miss Theresa; it had been decided that the young lady was to bear Miss Dale company till the travellers came home.

"It will be a change for you, and keep you from feeling dull," said Mr. Dale, when he first mentioned the plan. "I daresay she will put in a good deal of her time with us, one way or another, till she settles down on her own account. She has money, so that's not likely to be far distant."

Agatha was perfectly, if rather frigidly, polite to her guest during the fortnight they were left together. She walked her out, down the lanes and country roads, duly introduced her to Mr. Gunn and Mr. Stephen Garroway, and had the satisfaction of perceiving that the latter gentleman met with the young lady's cordial approval.

"I suppose he is quite a regular visitor here?" she remarked to Agatha one morning. "It is most considerate of his father to live so near at hand."

"No, very irregular," was the answer. "When he is at home, he sometimes comes in to see papa in the evenings, but he is often away travelling."

"Ah! and when he is at home, is it papa or papa's daughter he comes to see?"

Agatha looked up with a quick flush of annoyance. "That is a question we have not discussed, Theresa."

Miss Whalley laughed. "Well, my dear, I don't blame you for being cautious: it is always a mistake to count one's chickens before they are hatched."

Agatha's head was hidden behind her newspaper; she passed by the remark in contemptuous silence. Time was when she would have promptly given the offender to understand what were her sentiments on the subject; but now she was tongue-tied. Her freedom was fettered already; and what it might be later on, Agatha almost feared to think.

That was soon decided. Mrs. Dale speedily took the management, when she came upon the scene. The travellers arrived late one evening—too late for anything but a little desultory talk, and private observation. Mr. Dale looked portly and important, fairly proud of his wife, and eager to get back to his beloved cotton bales. The wonderful fascination hidden away in those bales was another mystery Agatha had never been able to grasp. She and Mr. Garroway had laughingly speculated about it many a time.

Agatha came down a little earlier than usual the next morning, prepared to discharge her farewell duties with impressive dignity and punctuality. Alas! Mrs. Dale was in the field already, busily catechising the housemaid.

"Ah! you are an early riser, Agatha," she said, glancing round at her step-daughter. "I am only issuing the instructions about breakfast yet."

"I attended to all that last night," remarked Agatha, in some surprise.

"Exactly: but there were some details open to improvement, I thought. Now that it is my department, I wish it to be quite irreproachable."

Agatha sat down by the fire and listened grimly. Mrs. Dale went on with the catechism, in no way disturbed by her presence. When it was ended, and Jane dismissed, Mrs. Dale came over to the hearth, and stood looking critically round at her new domains.

"It is always wisest to begin right at the outset," she observed. "There are generally some little disagreeables to be faced at first, but time and patience will soon put things on a proper footing."

"I am sorry that you find so many faults to put right," returned Agatha stiffly.

"My dear, I am finding no fault: naturally, I prefer my own system of management. It was not to be expected that you should understand it by instinct. Have you the keys at hand?"

Agatha laid them—the last insignia of office—on the table without a word. Mrs. Dale counted them over briskly.

"I shall ask you after breakfast to show me the

different places; and then you will have no further trouble, Agatha."

That was the inauguration. The after course was shaped on much the same lines. Agatha soon found that it was she who was the cipher in the establishment. Mr. Dale saw no difference: the domestic wheels rolled very smoothly in his presence; in his absence too, in one sense, for there was no discussion or altercation over the change. Miss Dale was quietly and firmly set on one side, and Mrs. Dale reigned supreme. Theresa preserved a kind of neutral ground between the two; in truth, she was not greatly interested in her sister's generalship. Gertrude had always taken the lead of affairs since their nursery days; was it likely that she would begin to brook any rivalry now? Very possibly Agatha might not altogether like it, but that could not be helped. Theresa shrugged her shoulders and betook herself to the tennis club, where, by some unexplained coincidence, she was sure to encounter Mr. Stephen Garroway.

That was another variation of the compass, Agatha noted with puzzled eyes. Mr. Gunn was not given to variations; fresh faces or lapsed prestige in no wise affected him. Meet him how or where she would, Agatha was sure of one steadfast friend. It was curious that she no longer felt the same confidence in Mr. Garroway. His visits, as she truly declared, had never been discussed. Nevertheless, she had felt pretty sure in her own mind what would be the upshot of them; and Mr. Garroway being a great man in the neighbourhood, and in his own estimation, she had contemplated the prospect with some complacency. Now, as the months went by, it began to be borne in upon her that it was Theresa who was quietly appropriating his attention. She had the charm of novelty, which counted for a good deal with that gentleman; and she was not deterred by any inconvenient scruples from making the most of her vantage-ground.

Poor Agatha wandered about the solitary fields in these changed days, wondering what had become of all the joy and gladness that used to fill her lot. Once, standing beside a weed-grown gate, half unconsciously she put out her hand and touched the top bar, where John Gunn's arms had rested that sunny afternoon. Agatha went soberly back over the ups and downs—chiefly downs—of her career since, and owned to herself that she had made a great mistake.

"If I had only known!" she said to herself—"if I had only known! but I didn't, and now it's too late. He would think it was because all else had failed me, and I should never respect myself again."

And yet, even with that alternative before her, Miss Dale's feet often carried her back to that same gate. It was a relief to get away from the house, though the fields might be damp and misty, and she laying-in a sure and certain store of rheumatism, and kindred aches, for after-years. There seemed to be absolutely no corner at home where she could be out of reach of her stepmother's interference. Not that Mrs. Dale meant to be actively unkind: she had been quite prepared for trouble with Agatha, and she was by no means disposed to concede one iota of her own lawful rights. One of them had to be mistress; and the more perfectly Miss Dale was made to understand that, the better. It was chiefly with a view to thoroughly grounding her in this fact, that Mrs. Dale refrained from consulting her in the smallest detail; but grounding is not the pleasantest portion of one's education, and Agatha declined to see either right or reason in the process.

"And to think it is to go on like this for always!" she cried out in despair one day. "No hope of anything better. This has been the very longest year I ever had."

But to the longest year there comes an end at last; and the end of that year brought a son and heir to the Dale household. That meant a considerable fall in Agatha's reputation as an heiress, though her mind was too much occupied with the present, to realise remoter grievances. It was at this season that she reached her low-water mark.

Mr. Dale's birthday fell exactly a month after his little son's, and it chanced that that day Agatha set off for a long tramp across the meadows to East Duns, to lunch with an old acquaintance. She stayed there till after dark, and had to go back by train, in consequence. As usual, the train was behindhand, and she get home only a minute or two before the dinner-hour. Mrs. Dale particularly objected to unpunctuality at meals, so Agatha did not wait to make any toilet. What was the use? No one would notice her; she was in the background now, and sombre tints best became the position; so in her rough serge dress, and with half-brushed hair, she ran down the stairs and into the drawing-room.

It was one blaze of light. Her father stood on the rug, talking to Mr. Stephen Garroway. Theresa, radiant in white and gold, sat close by, looking up at them in reverent admiration: a perfect Saint Theresa for the time being; Mrs. Dale, in lavender satin, was chatting with Mr. Gunn, who shared her sofa; Master Dale, in flowing embroidered robes, was on exhibition, carried round by his stately nurse to the little groups of faultlessly attired people scattered in various parts of the long room. Agatha stood still in sheer surprise for one moment; the next she collected herself, and, with burning cheeks—the only symptom she could not control—she went round and said a word or two of greeting to the guests.

"Late again, Agatha," smiled Mrs. Dale. "Well, we must excuse deficiencies, in consideration of the potent attraction elsewhere."

There was no space for any explanation; the gong was already sounding, and Mrs. Dale was marshalling her forces into the dining-room. Crossing the hall, Agatha found herself beside Mr. Gunn, who had been told off to someone else.

"Was it an accident?" he asked, in a rather puzzled voice; he knew Agatha's expression well enough to see that she was struggling with some strong feeling.

"No," returned Agatha curtly, "it was insult. I had not an idea that anyone was here, till I came into the room."

It would have been judicious if Mr. Gunn had endeavoured to suggest some palliating circumstances to account for this high-handed proceeding; instead,

he lost his presence of mind, and made use of a decidedly forcible expression.

"It was despicably mean," he said, with a good deal of repressed energy: "it was low!"

Somehow Agatha felt that he had exactly stated the case. She kept up a brave front, she sang when it was suggested that she should, talked quite brilliantly to anyone she chanced to be thrown in contact with; once—it was the first time for many weeks—she found Mr. Stephen Garroway beside her. Agatha lifted her brows in much surprise.

"Off duty?"

"For the present," he placidly returned. "Seriously, Miss Agatha, are you qualifying for a convent? It looks uncommonly like it."

Agatha glanced down at her serge gown with a little laugh. "Seriously, you cannot imagine what a superior feeling it gives one to be the one sober exception in such a gay gathering. Try it, Mr. Garroway."

Mr. Garroway shrugged his shoulders. "Tastes differ. Miss Whalley would not agree with you, I fancy."

"She found Mr. Stephen Garroway beside her."

"Oh, Miss Whalley," Agatha began, then stopped short—"*is* Miss Whalley."

After that there seemed no more to be said. Agatha found herself wondering what they had found to talk about in days gone by, and presently, when Theresa quitted the piano, she was rather relieved than otherwise to see Mr. Garroway drift away in that direction. She could hardly wonder at him; Theresa was a much more attractive object. "Birds of a feather," reflected Agatha grimly. "It is given to

very few of us to be quite independent of our surroundings. . . .

"Are you going already, Mr. Gunn?" she said, turning round with a little start, at a light touch on her arm.

"Yes, I am afraid I don't understand this fashionable style of music; and I have to go up to London by the early train to-morrow; so it's good-bye for a time."

He held her hand in his strong warm grasp. Agatha had deteriorated in dignity so far that she was looking at him almost gratefully.

"It may be a long good-bye," she said, lowering her voice. "I am going away for a time, too; I'm not growing any better here."

For some unexplained reason Mr. Gunn must have concluded to postpone his departure for a little; he drew up the chair Mr. Garroway had vacated, and took possession of it with the air of a man who meant to remain.

"Agatha, is anything else quite out of the question still?" he demanded abruptly. He was leaning forward, his elbows on his knees, not even looking at her, for fear of attracting attention. Agatha was carefully tracing out a pattern on a flower-pot with a stray paper-knife. A crash of chords filled up the pause.

"Yes," she answered huskily. "I would not agree before of my own free will; I will not be driven into it now."

"And am I to count for nothing?"

"If you counted for less, I might be mean enough to say 'Yes,' but——"

"Then that settles the matter," said Mr. Gunn, suddenly sitting bolt upright. "I'm not at all too proud to take you, with your stepmother's blessing, and I'll respect her for ever for the way she has bestowed it."

"But——" began Agatha, completely swept away from her bearings.

"Hush! you can't argue with all these people about," interrupted Mr. Gunn authoritatively. "I shall go into town and have a talk with your father at the warehouse to morrow. London can stand over for a season."

"But you must listen. I'm not nearly so rich now," gasped Agatha. "I was the heiress then, and now——"

"Ah! I ought to have remembered that," was the grave answer. "Never mind, Agatha, we'll go on with it to the bitter end; I'd have had you long ago but for that miserable money in the way: it tied me hand and foot."

Mrs. Dale was a little surprised at the warmth of Mr. Gunn's adieux that night; it had been a delightful evening, he assured her, and the music was an education in itself. Mrs. Dale had always cherished some suspicion that he was more Agatha's friend than her own, and, from the talk she had observed under the shadow of the palm, had decided that he was receiving an account of her persecutions. After all, there must have been some magnanimity about the girl to have made the best of it this way. Mrs. Dale unbent so far as to make some reference to her tactics after the visitors had gone.

"Such a pity you had no time to dress, Agatha! I meant to have warned you at lunch, but you did not appear, and we had no idea where to send for you."

"It's not of the slightest consequence," said Agatha cheerfully. "You and Theresa were smart enough to keep up the credit of the house. Good-night."

"But, Agatha, I don't wish you to get into the way of neglecting yourself," said Mr. Dale rather uneasily. "If I have a son, you are still my daughter, and I did not like to see you in that plight all the evening."

"It was not my doing, papa," she answered quickly. "I knew less than the servants of what was going on."

Agatha fancied, from the general demeanour at the breakfast-table next morning, that there had been some discussion on the subject after her departure, but she made no remark. Minor grievances had vanished like mist in sunshine.

The wintry fields were bright with beauty that day; even the creeping haze that shrouded them later, had a tender grace of its own, and when the lamps were lighted down the station road, West Dunns might have passed for Venice—on a very small scale.

It was Mr. Dale who was late for dinner that night, and he was unusually silent when he did come. After the servants had gone down, he wheeled his chair about, and looked across at his daughter.

"So you are going to leave us, Agatha?"

"Going to what?" demanded Mrs. Dale quickly.

"Going to leave us. Well, my dear, I could not wish you in safer hands. There are few better men than John Gunn."

"So that was what you and Mr. Gunn were settling away in that window corner last night," broke in Theresa. "And you in that dingy gown; oh, Agatha, how trying it must have been for you!"

Agatha smiled. "Perhaps he thought more of me than the gown, Theresa."

"I'm sure I hope so: and is it to be soon?"

"He spoke of next month," said Mr. Dale. "Agatha, my dear, I hope you are not going on account of any fancied difference here? he told me he had spoken to you more than a year ago on the subject."

"I was very conceited in those days, and thought you could not do without me," said Agatha, with a little unsteadiness in her voice. "I'll make him a great deal better wife now. I had everything my own way then, and perhaps it wasn't altogether good for me."

"Still, there is no need to rush to the other extreme. However, there is every prospect of happiness before you. and you have my blessing, for what it is worth."

"And my stepmother's?" Agatha could not help it, remembering Mr. Gunn's sentiments on that point last night.

"Why, certainly," said Mrs. Dale composedly. "Why should you doubt it, my dear? I shall always be pleased to aid you in any way."

"It was very kind of her," was Mr. Gunn's comment afterwards, "very kind indeed; but all the blessing that was necessary had been given already."

SARAH PITT.

Awake, Sweet Harp of Judah!

Words by Henry Kirk White, 1806.

Music by Philip Armes, M.A., Mus.D.
(Organist of Durham Cathedral.)

mp *cres.*

1. A - wake, sweet harp of Ju - dah, wake! Re - tune thy strings for

cres.

Je - sus' sake; We sing the Sa - viour of our race,

dim.

The Lamb our Shield and hi - ding - place. A - men.

2. When God's right arm is bared for war,
And thunders clothe His cloudy car,
Where—where—oh! where shall man retire
To escape the horror of His ire?

3. 'Tis He—the Lamb—to Him we fly
While the dread tempest passes by:
God sees His Well-beloved's face,
And spares us in our hiding-place.

4. Thus, while we dwell in this low scene,
The Lamb is our unfailing screen;
To Him, though guilty, still we run,
And God still spares us for His Son.

5. While yet we sojourn here below,
Pollutions still our hearts o'erflow;
Fallen, abject, mean—a sentenced race,
We deeply need a hiding-place.

6. Yet courage—days and years will glide,
And we shall lay these clods aside;
Shall be baptized in Jordan's flood,
And washed in Jesus' cleansing blood.

7. Then pure, immortal, sinless, freed,
We, through the Lamb, shall be decreed;
Shall meet the Father face to face,
And need no more a hiding-place!

"BUT ONCE."

AN ADDRESS TO A VILLAGE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

BY A. L. SOMERVELL.

"I expect to pass through this world but once; if, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

E are all apt to value most highly things that come seldom. For instance, there are three hundred and sixty-five days in a year, but a child thinks a great deal more of the one day that is its birthday than he does of any other day. Why? Because it only comes once in a whole year. I remember when I was a child feeling quite sorry when my birthday was over, because the time looked so long till next year, when I should have another.

There is our Sunday-school treat, too. If we had one every Saturday we should get not to think so much of it. You would not much mind if you had to go away, or were kept at home, or sent a long errand. You would say to yourself, "Never mind; I dare say I can go to the treat *next* week." But as it is we have only one treat in a year, and so we look forward to it, and talk about it beforehand; and if any scholar is absent or ill when the day comes, it is a great disappointment. It comes so seldom that we don't like to miss it.

A birthday, and Christmas Day, and our Sunday-school treat, only come once in every year. Now I will tell you of something that happens only once in *thirty* years.

Have you ever reared a plant from seed or from a cutting? For a few weeks you took care of it, watered it, and put it in the sunny window; and before long it budded, and soon the buds opened out into beautiful flowers.

Now I once knew an old gentleman who had a garden and a little greenhouse, in which he took great pride. If one happened to pass by, there he was, with his coat off, working away, hoeing or raking, or weeding or watering his plants. He had many pretty plants in his greenhouse, but none so curious as the night-flowering cereus, which is curious in this way: it only flowers once in *thirty years*, and then flowers at night.

How long he had kept the plant I don't know; but he was growing old when, one day, to his delight, he discovered that it was going to flower. Can't you fancy he was now more than ever careful of his plant? He would not forget to keep the door shut, for fear the cat might come in and break the precious bud off with her long tail. He would not neglect to give it water and sunshine, and a little fresh air, and day by day to watch and tend it. If anyone had wanted him to leave home just then, he would have said, "No; I have only one chance of seeing this wonderful flower, and I cannot miss it. I shall not have the chance again." He sent word to his neighbours and friends one day that they must come that night if they too wished to see it. He lit up his little greenhouse, and there he watched the bud unfold into the beautiful scarlet petals of the flower; and many came from far and near in the dark night, for it was their *one* chance of seeing the flower they had heard so much about.

Let us look again at the words we read just now: "I expect to pass through this world but *once*." Look at the infant class. How old are those children? four—five—six? Perhaps next year some of them will be moved up into the next class. Will they ever go back to be in the infant class again? Will any of the boys of the first class or the older girls go back to be taught among the little ones again? No; that part of their life is over for ever.

"I expect to pass through this world but *once*." Life is like a journey: sometimes a long one, with some only very short. But for all it is alike in this—that it can only be travelled *once*. A baby in its mother's arms has begun to travel, and our journey lasts just as long as we live. It is alike for us all in this, too—that we can never retrace our steps, or travel one bit of the road over again.

I reminded you just now how much we value what only comes to us *once* in a year, like a birthday or a school-treat; how much the plant that flowered once in thirty years was cared for. Now I want to remind you how much we ought to value each week, each day as it comes, because, once passed, we can *never* again have just the same chances or opportunities it brought us.

"I expect to pass through this world but *once*. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer [put it off] or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

To whom must we show kindness? "To any fellow human being." That means any man or woman or child. We have thousands of "fellow human beings" all over the world. Many of them are living in great sin and misery, and dying sad deaths, because they have never heard about the one great Father who loves and cares for us all, or about our Saviour.

When the missionary meeting is held, there will be a chance of showing a little bit of kindness to our "fellow human beings" in heathen lands. I know boys and girls have not much money to give, but anyone who puts even a copper into the collection instead of buying sweets for himself will be really showing kindness. Halfpennies and pennies help to send out Christian men and women to teach the heathen.

But we have day by day more chances of showing

kindness in our own village, and, most of all, in our own homes.

Johnnie comes running home from school, and pops his head in at the door to see if his dinner is ready. It is *not*, so he thinks he will just have time for a few minutes' play if he slips quietly out again. But the baby is crying in the cradle, and his mother is too busy to take it up. What is to be done? Shall he go to his play, or come in and nurse baby? Here is a chance for him to show a "bit of kindness."

Mary has been teasing mother for a new hat. The other girls have had new hats for winter, and she says, "I don't see why I shouldn't have one too!" It is true that her mother has rheumatism, and really *needs* the money a hat would cost to buy some flannel for herself. Mary knows that, but still she wants to have her hat. What is to be done? Here is a chance for Mary to show a bit of kindness: let her tell mother she does not mind wearing her old hat, and let mother get the warm flannel for herself. Don't lose one chance: we pass through this world but once; we shall not pass this way again.

I read a story long ago of a boy who was playing in the room where his little brother was lying in bed, poorly. The child was feverish and thirsty, and kept asking for a drink of water, until Johnnie was out of patience, and spoke crossly to him and told him not to be so troublesome. By-and-bye their mother came in and sent Johnnie out; and she nursed her sick child all night, but he grew worse and worse, and died. Can you fancy how Johnnie felt it? He had been unkind to his brother the last time he saw him; he never had another chance.

"Well," someone says, "I don't mind doing a turn for our neighbour, for she always gives me a trifle for myself. One often gets a bit of gingerbread, if it's nothing more." Now I hope you will all agree with me that it is not worth calling a kindness if we only do it for what we may get. We must learn a better way.

Jesus Christ came down and lived on this earth as we live. He began the journey at the same place we begin—by being a baby. He lived in a cottage home, not in our village, but in another. If we want to learn how to show kindness to our "fellow human beings," we must learn of Him, and ask Him to show us how. Remember, Jesus Christ has travelled the journey Himself, and knows all about it. He will teach us and help us.

We begin a new week to-day. Shall we alter our sentence a little, and repeat it all together?—

"I expect to pass through this *week* but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

"SEA-LAVENDER."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

"UNCLE JACK! Uncle Jack!" shouted his niece, dragging Mr. Hamilton through the orchard gate, "me and Miss Coverdale have been sitting here ever since breakfast, working and talking;" and Bessie picked up a dilapidated doll, and scrambled to the rustic seat by Olivia's side.

"There's plenty of room for you too, Uncle Jack. I've been telling her all about the children, and different things. She's never made a cake in all her life, and mother let me mix one, and butter the tin, and put it in the oven, and everything, last Monday, because it was my birthday. I had such nice presents—seven: just as many as I'm old, you know."

"It happened to be my birthday too, Bessie," said Olivia, smiling.

"Oh, how nice!" said the delighted Bessie. "How old were you, Miss Coverdale?"

"Twenty five, dear," said Olivia.

"And did you get twenty-five presents?" asked Bessie, with wide-open eyes.

"No; I didn't have any at all, love. Nobody thought about it."

"Oh, how *dreadful!*" said Bessie. "I never forget Uncle Jack's, or Aunt Rachel's, or any of the children's; and I should have given you something very nice if I'd known. Did you cry very much about it?"

"No, not very much," said Olivia, kissing the earnest little face.

"Uncle Jack, put your ear down. I've got a new sixpence, and you're to spend it for her when you go to market. I'll write it on a piece of paper, like mother does for father, and you won't forget," whispered Bessie, very audibly.—"You shall keep your birthday to-morrow instead, Miss Coverdale, and I'll ask Aunt Rachel to think of a treat for you, and she'll let you choose just what pudding you like best."

"What shall I have, pussy?" asked Olivia, stroking Bessie's curls.

"Treacle-layers!" was the prompt answer. "It's a lovely pudding!—Now, Uncle Jack, hold dolly, please, whilst I fit on her new pinafore, and you can be telling that pretty story you said to me yesterday.—It was about a lady, Miss Coverdale; she was a princess, really, and she'd her crown and jewels—that's brooches and necklaces, you know—but nobody could *see* them, because their eyes were dazzled, just the same as when you try to look at the sun, because the princess had yards and yards of beautiful golden hair, all in crinkles, and up and down like the waves when we

went on the river one day, and the wind began to blow."

"And what happened to the beautiful princess, my pet?—It sounds, Mr. Hamilton, like one of Hans Andersen's tales," turning to Jack; but he pulled out his watch, and said hastily—

"Do you think so? Bessie, you had better come in directly, if you want to write that paper for me. I ought to have started half an hour ago."

"It's a secret, the paper is; but you shall know at breakfast to-morrow," said Bessie consolingly, as she ran off at a great rate.

* * * * * *

The next morning was a still, sultry day, though August was nearly over. The last loads of corn were coming in from the harvest fields—it was a late season—and thatchers were busy in the stack-yard. Olivia stood at the hall door, looking out over the glowing country, and watching some gleaners in sun-bonnets and broad hats, as they went merrily along the lane beyond the moat.

"Miss Coverdale," said Bessie, seizing her white dress, "*now* you may come in to breakfast. There's such surprises for you!"

"'Happy returns' in jessamine sprigs, you see, miss, please," said Athaliah, coming forward, her face beaming all over. "And if you'll please accept this shell box from Martha and me to keep your ornaments in. There's a red velvet pincushion in the lid."

"And this china plate from me: it was my great-grandmother's!" said Rachel, with a kiss.

"And the bread, please, miss," said Athaliah, placing a huge quartern loaf on the table, "is from Sam Smith's mother: it is made from the gleanings, the first batch baked, with her respects."

"How very, very kind! Thank you all: dearest Rachel, and Athaliah, and Martha, and Mrs. Smith, too. What a splendid loaf! and such pretty shells! But, Bessie, what *can* this square parcel be?"

"It's the secret," said Bessie mysteriously; "but I've wrote a paper at the top: that tells you." Olivia read, "A box of chocklet, my owen munney. Unkel helpt bye it."

"That last clause shows Bessie's extreme honesty," laughed Jack, who was tying up a bunch of clove carnations.

"Because it cost a shilling, and I'd only got six-pence," explained Bessie. "I don't think you ought to eat any *before* breakfast, but you may just look at them now. That pink one *was* a little broken, so I ate the piece up, Miss Coverdale."

"My darling pet, how kind of you to spend all your money for me!" cried Olivia, smothering the child with kisses.

"But you haven't said 'Thank you' to Uncle Jack for the pretty red carnations," remonstrated Bessie.

"They are beautiful, Mr. Hamilton: my favourite flowers," said Olivia, smiling.

"I shall sit next you," said Bessie, placing her high chair by Miss Coverdale's side. "Aunt Rachel says you may have treacle pudding for dinner. I asked her. And now about the treat: are you too grown-up to go to the Zoological Gardens?"

"Yes, dear, I'm afraid so," said Olivia.

"Jack says he could take us all on the river this afternoon," said Rachel. "I will drive you and Bessie

"Coming back with his hands full."—*p.* 626.

down to the beach. It's only three miles, and he will meet us there with the boat. You will enjoy the salt breeze."

"That will be charming, Mr. Hamilton!" exclaimed Olivia. "You could not give me a nicer treat. I must say good-bye to all the friends I can manage to see," she continued, a little sadly. "This letter tells me that my uncle is very ill, and expects to be in town on Saturday. I must leave to-morrow, and be there to receive him. My aunt seems very frightened and anxious.—How quickly these three months have passed, Rachel!"

"We shall all miss you so much!" said Rachel, regretfully. "Shan't we, Jack?"

"Very much indeed," was the brief answer.

"You must come back for your birthday next summer," suggested Bessie; "and I'll come and stay with Aunt Rachel too!"

"We must tell Athaliah to put her things together. But she will soon be ready; ever since she heard she was to be your maid, she has been a different creature, working early and late to have more time to wait on you," said Rachel. "Perhaps you won't find her as wearing as I have done."

"She will make a capital little maid, with a few lessons from Ferrers," said Olivia. "I am very hopeful about Athaliah. But I must be busy this morning."

"Don't tire yourself," said Rachel anxiously. "I will help you pack; but oh! I only wish it was the first day, instead of the last."

"Thank you, dear Rachel," said Olivia.

"Let's make believe that it is," suggested wise Bessie, "and then we shan't spoil Miss Coverdale's nice birthday."

Olivia had several times been driven down to the river-side, Rachel firmly believing in the health-giving properties of the breeze which blows salt and fresh over the open marshes. These "saltings," as they are called, are generally well stocked with cattle: one usually sees some over-worked or broken-kneed horses out there for the benefit of their poor limbs and muscles, and active cattle stand for a while like sentries on the sea-wall, suddenly plunging down the slope, and making a wild rush over the meadow.

The boat was drawn up on the shingle (I prefer not to call it mud, though of course there is a *slight* coating), and Mr. Hamilton was waiting to open the last of the gates as the pony trotted over the grass.

"We must give up all hope of a sail," he said: "there isn't a breath of wind. I'll row you to the island, and we'll get Miss Coverdale a bunch of sea-lavender; it ought to be in blossom now. Rachel, will you steer?"

"Oh, this is charming, Mr. Hamilton!" exclaimed Olivia, turning to him a grateful look of evident enjoyment as the boat was pushed off, and a few powerful strokes sent it into the middle of the channel. "I had no idea that a tidal river could be half so beautiful. Look at that quaint old town, with its red roofs, and the windmills and the splendid open stretch of sky and country. It's like some parts of Holland, surely!"

"Yes, I often thought so. I was there for skating with Lynton last Christmas," said Jack.—"What have you got in that screw of newspaper, Bess?"

"Some little pieces of meat; and Martha has tied them on strings for me to catch some crabs with, uncle.—They are such pretty green things, Miss Coverdale; I thought you would like to take some to London with you."

"We'll catch them first, dear," said Rachel, laughing.

"There's another church among the trees!" said Olivia. "Why are all the towers so square and massive, Mr. Hamilton?"

"They were no doubt used for defence and refuge in the old days, when Danes and marauders used to sail up the river to pillage and burn wherever they landed," returned Jack, resting a moment on his oars.

"There's the island!" shouted Bessie. "Look! with a house, and trees, and stacks on it."

"Why, yes; there seems to be a large farm!" exclaimed Olivia.

"The sea-lavender is in blossom," said Mr. Hamilton.

"What is it like?" asked Olivia.

"It is a sort of everlasting flower," said Rachel. "Haven't you noticed the large bunches of it in the hall? It gets very pale by the winter, but when we first cut it, it is a lovely delicate lavender tint."

"Ah! I see it now, growing close by the water; how pretty! I feel so lazy and comfortable, I'd rather stay in the boat with Rachel, whilst you and Bessie cut it."

"No; I shall stand and fish for crabs," decided Bessie, as she was lifted out.

"Don't splash Miss Coverdale's pretty white dress!" entreated her aunt.

The scent of clover came from the shore, and faint sounds of lowing cattle, and the crowing of a cock from the stack-yard; a butterfly hovered for a moment over Olivia's crimson carnations.

"Here is your sea-lavender, Miss Coverdale," said Jack, quickly coming back with his hands full.

"How strange and pretty!" said Olivia; "and I can keep it always to remind me of this happy afternoon."

"We ought to row back now, I'm afraid, Jack," said Rachel. "But don't pull too hard; it is so hot and still—the river is like a mill-pond."

"Do you remember 'The Lotos Eaters?'" said Olivia, beginning to repeat—

> "'In the afternoon they came unto a land
> In which it seemed always afternoon.'"

Jack stopped rowing to listen to the low voice.

"How beautiful!" said Rachel, with a little sigh, breaking the silence which followed the conclusion of the poem.

"What made you sigh, auntie?" asked Bessie.

"Because she is like Jessica—never merry when she hears sweet music, Bessie," said her uncle, taking up the oars, and pulling harder than ever.

"Yes, Tennyson's verses are certainly musical," said Olivia thoughtfully, dipping her hand in the water, and watching it ripple through her fingers. They were all silent until the boat grated on the pebbles; it was made fast to a pile, and Olivia carried off her bunch of sea-lavender, whilst Jack was loaded with the very unnecessary bundle of shawls and wraps without

which it is never considered proper to venture on the river, even on the hottest day in August.

Sam was waiting with the pony-carriage. The sun was setting behind the trees, and Olivia could not resist the temptation to walk across the meadows and lanes, and through the sweet old churchyard for the last time. She would rather have been alone, but Rachel took it for granted that she would lose her way without Jack's help. It was possible for Mr. Hamilton to be silent for half an hour, she reflected; and, indeed, she was the first to break the long stillness, which, somehow, neither felt to be oppressive.

"I wonder if I shall be longing for this quiet and peace to-morrow evening?" she said thoughtfully. "*You*, I daresay, would like stir and change; you haven't reached the middle-aged yearning for stillness and rest."

"Perhaps I have; I am quite satisfied with the present," said Jack, pausing a moment as he took a key from Olivia's fingers.

"Rachel gave it me, in case we should be home first. It is the back-door key. The servants are out; we must go through the kitchen. Ah! what a splendid fire! I shall sit here and warm my fingers. What a fine old room it is, Mr. Hamilton! I can fancy the Stanborough ladies in the old days spent pleasant hours here, making preserves, and concocting mysterious washes for the complexion."

"Olivia—Miss Coverdale," began Jack, "I *must* speak, whatever happens! I can't let you go away from us for ever, and not tell you that I love you with all my heart and soul—as no man could ever have loved a woman before!"

Olivia stared at him in amazement. The tall eight-day clock swung its heavy pendulum, and a burning piece of wood fell noisily on the hearth.

"Mr. Hamilton, I never even thought of such a thing!" she stammered at last.

"Would it be possible to live in the same house three months, and hear your voice, and *not* love you? Olivia, *why* is it such a dreadful, impossible thing? Are you angry that I should have spoken to you now? I meant to have gone to your uncle on Monday—may I? Don't answer me yet; I have startled you."

But Jack's mention of her uncle had conjured up a vivid mental picture, and Olivia seemed to see his haughty, surprised face, and to hear the disdainful sarcasm of her aunt and cousin. A blunt young farmer her suitor! She saw him loading barley, and working as hard as any of his men, only this morning.

"It is *impossible!*" she said firmly. "I had never thought of such a thing, and could not have given you the slightest encouragement to address me in this way."

"I know," said Jack, setting his square jaw, "that some people would tell me it was great presumption in me to love Lady Coverdale's niece; but all that is exploded nonsense. Of course you, in your beauty and refinement, are infinitely my superior. I'm not fit to touch the hem of your dress. The question is, whether Olivia Coverdale loves John Hamilton: love knows nothing of absurd differences of class and caste."

Now, Jack had been born and brought up in Essex, and put a broad "r" in "class" and "caste," like the rest of his neighbours. It jarred on Miss Coverdale's sensitive ear.

"But there *are* these differences, intangible though they may seem," she said, with great dignity. "And these silken threads of custom and family tradition——"

But Jack interrupted her.

"Then because I do not put on a dress-coat in the evening——" he began hotly.

Olivia looked at him with large grave eyes.

"*I* did not say that."

"Well," said Jack, taking a deep breath, "the Olivia Coverdale who has been enshrined in my heart all these happy weeks——"

"Jack! Jack! what are you saying?" cried Rachel, putting her hand on his arm. "I have been looking for you everywhere. What *is* the matter?"

Her brother was strangely white and haggard, whilst Olivia's face was deeply flushed and offended.

"I will leave Mr. Hamilton to explain," she said, walking off proudly, pulling her shawl over her slim shoulders, and letting the bunch of crimson carnations fall unheeded on the kitchen floor.

* * * * * *

"Uncle Jack is so busy that he had his breakfast quite early, before you came down, and it's raining like great tears because you are going away, and everybody's miserable," announced Bessie next morning.

"Run away to Martha for a little while, dear," said her aunt. "Can you spare me a few minutes, Miss Coverdale?"

"Rachel!" cried Olivia, "*you* do not blame me, surely? No thought that your brother could possibly care for me had even crossed my mind. Oh, don't let this miserable business make you hate me! I've so few friends, and am so lonely—so very lonely!"

"How could I blame you—or him either?" replied Rachel, sighing. "It is not wonderful he should love you; he has told me everything. Oh, if it were but possible! Nobody knows how faithful and true he is; and you are the only woman whom I could ever endure the thought of his loving. But, of course, *I* see the differences between us: look at your hand and mine."

"Oh! but, dear Rachel, he will forget me after a time."

"No; we Hamiltons do not love so easily. Hush! here comes Athaliah, asking about the luggage. I must go; and talking will do no good—only make us more unhappy."

When Miss Hamilton came back to the dining-room a few minutes later, the fly was waiting at the hall door, and Olivia, in her travelling dress, was standing at the table. She did not see that Jack was following Rachel.

"I think you will find that right," she stammered, not raising her eyes, as she handed Rachel a pink slip of paper.

Jack caught it out of his sister's fingers.

"Miss Coverdale!" he exclaimed, drawing himself up to his full height. "You might surely have spared us this humiliation. Allow me to return your

"Jack looked at Olivia steadily."—*p.* 630.

cheque. Send it, if you like, to the Agricultural Benevolent Society. You are like a good surgeon—you cut sharp and deep. You think, perhaps, the wound will heal all the quicker for it."

"If you please, 'm," said Athaliah, all excitement, "the flyman says we shall lose the train. Good-bye, Miss Rachel, and thank you for all your kindness."

"Good-bye, Athaliah," said Miss Hamilton. "I hope you will be happy."

"I can't help being, miss," said Athaliah, with an adoring glance at her new mistress.

"And don't forget my doll, will you, Miss Coverdale?" cried Bessie—"a baby doll, please, with the things to take off and on."

And with a distant bow from Jack, and hurried tearful kisses from Rachel, Miss Coverdale and her maid drove away.

"I am to be Martin in future," Athaliah was heard to say to Sam. "It's the custom in high families for ladies' maids to be called by their surnames."

"Oh, Uncle Jack!" said little Bessie; "look! Poor Miss Coverdale has left her bunch of sea-lavender behind. How sorry she will be when she remembers! Where shall I put it?"

"On the fire in the kitchen, Bess," said Jack, with an odd laugh.

* * * * * *

"What a relief it must be that Miss Coverdale has gone!" exclaimed Mrs. Burton, the next time that the sisters met. "It would fidget *me*, I'm sure, to have such a fine lady sitting about doing nothing, or stringing currants with a fork. Such nonsense! I wonder Jack put up with it. By the way, how wretched he looks! Slouching along: I positively hardly knew him. I laughed when Mrs. Hobson talked about Daisy, but really there must have been something in it, Rachel!" she cried, as a sudden idea struck her. "Surely he had never taken a fancy to Miss Coverdale!"

"You must never breathe a word about it, Ellen," entreated Rachel, looking quite frightened.

Her sister sat silent with amazement.

"I never thought of *that!*" she said at last. "And of course, she wouldn't have a word to say to him. He surely has taken leave of his senses. You must

have felt inclined to shake him, Rachel! Imagine her mistress of a farmhouse like this, with the dairy and poultry, and curing bacon and hams! Well, I should never have thought a Hamilton would have been such an idiot! What *could* he have seen to like in her?"

"She is the sweetest, most lovable woman," protested Rachel; "and, as Jack says, one wants something besides cabbages in a garden. Her influence seemed to be felt all through the house, Ellen. As to work, I would willingly, gladly, do all that for her, if only she could bring herself to love Jack."

"Really, Rachel," exclaimed Ellen, much annoyed, "I never knew that you could be so sentimental and silly! You've spoilt Jack. You were always dreading he would fall in love; and now that he fancies he has, you make yourself miserable because Miss Coverdale doesn't care a straw for him. This will be the best thing in the world for Jack: he's had everything his own way, and is so opinionated and dreadfully Radical, that it's only fair he should fall in love with a member of the aristocracy. Oh! he'll soon get over it. Edward Burton seemed in an awful way at first, you know. Not but what you could have him now by holding up your finger, Rachel; William often says so!"

"Jack is not Edward," returned Rachel, with some scorn.

"Edward would make you a capital husband, though," said Mrs. Burton. "Well, I shall send Georgy and Willy over to you for a fortnight: they will give you something else to think of. If you had a teething baby, fractious all night long—bless him!—you wouldn't worry like this about Jack's love-troubles."

* * * * * *

The harvest fields had twice been cleared since Olivia Coverdale left the Manor; it was on a dull November afternoon that she once again found herself in the old hall, welcomed by a bright wood fire and Mrs. Burton's comely face. "This is really very kind of you, Miss Coverdale; I did not think you could possibly come until to-morrow; Rachel is so much better. Come into the dining-room a moment. Take Miss Coverdale's things to the red room as quickly as possible, Athaliah, and then you can go to Martha in the kitchen. I frightened you," continued Ellen, seeing Olivia's agitation. "Sit by the fire whilst I tell you about it. Rachel is asleep, and will not want me: my brother is with her."

"How did the accident happen?" asked Olivia, trying to compose herself.

"Jack *will* drive such skittish young horses," said Ellen. "They were both thrown out of the trap as he was driving from Lyttleton; Jack hadn't a scratch, but Rachel was stunned, and badly bruised. She has never been ill before in all her life, and we were dreadfully scared to see her lying so still, just moaning sometimes: and when she did begin to speak, she was always calling for you; nothing but, 'Olivia, come to me!' over and over again. The doctor said she must be kept quiet, and so at last I was obliged to send for you, though really, seeing her so much better last evening, I should have sent a telegram to say you needn't trouble yourself, only unfortunately, Martha has told her you were coming, and she expects you."

"How *can* you speak of troubling me?" said Olivia reproachfully. "Dear Rachel! I cannot bear to think she was wanting me and I knowing nothing of it. Why didn't you send for me directly?"

There was a tap at the door, and Martha appeared.

"Oh, Miss, we are so glad to see you!" she said, setting down her tray, and grasping Olivia's outstretched hand.

"Mistress seemed better directly I told her you had been written to. I knew you would come; and your room is all ready. I was to bring you some hot coffee, and to say you were to be sure not to over-tire yourself. Let me unfasten your cloak; and take something, to please Miss Rachel, ma'am."

"How kind of her, Martha! Is she awake? May I go up-stairs?"

"My brother is coming down to tell you when she is ready," said Mrs. Burton stiffly.

And presently Jack came in. He looked older and graver, Olivia thought.

"Rachel is awake, and very anxious to see you, Miss Coverdale; she is so much better, and will do well now, Dr. Jones says. I'm afraid Ellen's letter alarmed you," he continued, detaining her hand a moment in his warm grasp.

"I was very much frightened," she said, wiping her eyes as she hurried away.

"I didn't think she could cry like that," remarked Ellen, with some astonishment, as the door closed. "She always seemed such a proud, icy creature! Here comes Athaliah—I beg her pardon—Martin. How she is smartened up!"

"How are you, Athaliah?" said her former master.

"Good-evening, sir," said Martin respectfully; and, turning to Ellen, "If I can make myself useful here, ma'am, I should like to stay; or I can go at once to my mother's, Miss Coverdale says."

"You can go home, then, during the evening."

"You would like a chat with Martha first over old times," said Mr. Hamilton.

"If you please, sir—and anything I can do for dear Miss Rachel I'm sure would be a great pleasure, and a load off my mind to hear she is better."

"And you like your place, I suppose?" asked Mrs. Burton.

"Nobody could help loving Miss Coverdale," replied Athaliah, with all the old fervour. "Not but what there are things to put up with, as in all stations of life. The house is small, and not a cupboard in it or a scrap of garden; and Miss Edwards—that was Miss Coverdale's former governess, and lives with us—is dreadfully fidgety."

"I thought Miss Coverdale still lived with her aunt after her uncle died, Athaliah?" said Mrs. Burton, with interest.

"Oh dear no, ma'am; *I* couldn't have put up with that arrangement. She and the young lady were so proud and haughty! No, ma'am; they've both settled in Scotland these two years. Miss Emmeline was married almost directly, to a gentleman they had met abroad, and Lady Coverdale lives with them. So my Miss Coverdale took this house and Miss Edwards,

which her aunt insisted on, as not being proper without—and dull she must find it, I often think. We have everything very nice, and elegantly served, ma'am; but, gracious me! the supper that's set out in this kitchen to-night would last me and cook for a month! Miss Coverdale takes me into her confidence; and if we didn't live as quiet and careful as we do, she wouldn't be able to give so much away, and dreadfully imposed on, as I often tell her—not a word of truth in half their stories!" concluded Martin, with a toss of the head.

"Miss Coverdale must have started directly she had my letter," said Mrs. Burton, watching Athaliah collect her mistress's things.

"That she did, ma'am!" was the emphatic answer. "I had one myself by the same post from a friend, and I had just run up to tell her—for she always asks most particular for every scrap of news of you and Miss Rachel, sir, or little Miss Bessie, and Sam writes a very good letter, and regular—and when I told her about mistress lying there all still and bleeding, I thought she would have fainted away on the spot. 'I shall go to her directly!' she says," continued Athaliah, quite enjoying the evident interest shown by her audience. "'Oh, they surely will not be angry with me now!' says she, clasping her hands like this. Then I recollected that I had brought up your letter, ma'am, which, in my excitement, I had clean forgotten; and of course we packed up what was necessary, and started at once."

"I daresay you are pleased to be back in the village again, Athaliah," said Mr. Hamilton, after a pause.

"That I am, sir! As we drove up the street it gave me quite a turn to see the old familiar church standing there, just as usual. Then I'll put out Miss Coverdale's things, and walk home about eight, if convenient, ma'am."

* * * * * *

"William has just sent me a note; he wants me to go home this morning, if possible," said Mrs. Burton to Olivia, three days after her arrival at the Manor. "Rachel has the Hamilton constitution, and is getting well quickly. She can't bear you out of her sight, so I'm really not much use; and you kindly say you can stay a little longer."

"I can stay just as long as Rachel would like to have me," said Olivia gently.

"Thank you," said Ellen; rather ungraciously adding, "You are certainly a very good nurse. And Jack will bring Rachel down to tea this afternoon. Yes, I really must go home. He is a good brother, wonderfully altered and improved these last two years. Mrs. Hobson thinks him heart-broken over the Daisy Benson affair," continued Mrs. Burton, with a keen glance at Olivia, who was kneeling before the fire. "But anyhow, he has quite got over it, whatever it was. I suppose you have heard that the farm belongs to him now, and a good sum of money to carry it on; our uncle in Australia——"

"Oh, I am sorry!" said Olivia, with crimson cheeks. "I mean," she stammered, "I am so sorry you should have lost your uncle."

"Oh, thank you; but you needn't be sorry. My uncle's not dead; he was far too sensible. He made a large fortune on a sheep-farm, and came over to see us all about a year ago. Jack was always his favourite, though of course he did not pass over the rest of us: he liked his pluck and business ways, and bought the farm for him. My brother is an important man in the county, I can assure you. He has an invitation to dine with Squire Stanhope to-night; Rachel has at last persuaded him to leave her, and go. Why, there is William, I declare! And he said he should not be here before twelve," cried Ellen, bustling off in a great hurry.

"Olivia, it is so sweet to have you here!" said Rachel fondly as they sat together in the twilight. "I don't think I can ever part with you again. I did not know until you had left us how you had crept into my heart; and Jack—ah! here he comes. Now, Olivia, isn't a dress-coat more becoming than that dreadfully old shooting-jacket he is so fond of wearing?"

Jack looked at Olivia steadily; Rachel wondered what could have made them both so embarrassed.

"No; I like the shooting-jacket best," said Olivia, with an evident effort.

"I see, you are like me, and do not easily change your opinions, Miss Coverdale," returned Jack, very quietly and bitterly. "Good-night, Rachel."

"Olivia," whispered Rachel, as the hall door was shut with a bang, "what made Jack so angry?"

"Oh, Rachel, he didn't understand me in the least," said Olivia, busying herself with the fire, and trying to hide her burning cheeks. "Olivia dear——" began Rachel, hesitatingly; and though she was not allowed to say anything more, and Olivia gave no explanations, these two women seemed perfectly to understand each other.

Jack had had a delightful time, he told his sister next morning; she was quite vexed he could have enjoyed himself so much. And when he began to describe Mr. Stanhope's pretty daughter, just home from boarding-school, and added that she and her mother were coming to call at the Manor in a few days, Rachel was certain she should not feel well enough to see them. Jack went off to report progress to Ellen, humming—

> "Shall I, wasting in despair,
> Die because a woman's fair!"

How she detested that song! Jack was too provoking; she was glad he was gone. Then, as the hours went by, and the rain splashed against the windows, and the wind howled dolefully down the wide chimneys, she of course pictured the most awful tragedy, and longed to have him back again. Olivia, trying in vain to cheer her, was at last driven to suggest that woman's refuge a cup of good tea, and was rather glad to go herself to the kitchen for it. The servants were busy in the dairy. Olivia had just finished making a second slice of toast, and the kettle was beginning to boil, when there was a step on the stone flags which made her drop the toasting-fork in a fright, and Jack came in.

"Tell Sam to clean my gun, Martha," he said. —"Miss Coverdale! I beg your pardon."

"Rachel will be glad to know you are safely home,"

began Olivia; "she thought you would have been back by two o'clock."

Jack laid his gun and a brace of partridges on the table, and came to the fire.

"Let me lift the kettle for you," he said gravely.

"Rachel is over-tired, and I was getting some tea for her a little earlier than usual," said Olivia, whose cheeks were hot from her toasting operations. "That's quite enough water. I must butter the toast. How is dear little Bessie, Mr. Hamilton?"

"Miss Coverdale, this is the first time I have seen you alone," said Jack, putting down the kettle, "and I must not lose the opportunity to thank you for coming to us in our great trouble." He stopped a moment. "I don't think you have forgotten our conversation here two years ago. When I remember what I said to you then, I wonder at my own presumption—not that I have changed my opinions about the nothingness of class distinctions!" with a slight smile. "After your remark last night, I had determined never to mention the subject to you again, but—but I should be almost happy if I knew you had forgotten—forgiven me, at least! Olivia," he said, coming a little nearer, as he saw that Miss Coverdale was pouring some tea into the cream-jug.

"You didn't understand what I meant about the shooting-jacket," she said, suddenly turning her sweet blushing face to him—"and I don't *wish* to forget the last time we talked here together—Jack!" she added, in a low voice.

It was found necessary to make some fresh tea for Miss Hamilton.

So Jack Hamilton had his own way, after all, and Mrs. Burton is obliged to acknowledge that Olivia makes him an excellent wife; for as she has had everything to learn of the Hamilton recipe for curing bacon and ham, she holds no heretical opinions on this and other important subjects. Rachel was the cause of some dissensions among her brothers and sisters, being claimed by every member of the family, whilst Jack and Olivia insisted that her home was, of course, with them. But at last they have been obliged to withdraw these claims, and Olivia is triumphant—for another John Hamilton now reigns at the Manor—"a hairless, toothless despot," as his proud young father lately called him, introducing him to Mrs. Hobson.

"As if he were not your living image, Jack, bless him!" was the indignant rejoinder.

ZACCHÆUS AND JESUS.

BY THE REV. J. TELFORD, B.A.

(ST. LUKE xix. 1—10.)

IT was our Lord's last visit to the famous city of palm-trees. The closing days of His ministry had come; His disciples had just heard from His lips that solemn saying which was laden with thoughts of trouble and parting: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted upon; and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again." Never again should Jericho see the Christ of God.

If the disciples were unaware that the night "when no man can work" was hastening on, it almost seemed as though others were awake to the fact that opportunities were growing few. Our Lord's journey to Jerusalem was like a triumphal progress. He resembled a magnet which possessed unfailing power to attract the sick and needy from every quarter. Bartimæus was even now in His train, glorifying God, whilst all the crowd who gazed on that living monument of the might and mercy of the great Galilean Prophet added their chorus to His thanksgiving, giving praise to God.

One man in Jericho would by common consent have been excluded from all share in the blessings brought by Jesus. Zacchæus was "chief among the publicans; and he was rich." The city was a great centre for trade with the Gilead country in myrrh and balsam. The balm produced there was sold in all countries of the world. Besides this source of trade, Jericho lay on the caravan road between Perea and Judæa. Zacchæus held chief place among the colony of publicans who levied toll on this stream of commerce.

No one can read this story without being struck by the man's isolation. He stands alone, without a friend. His very wealth gave point and emphasis to the popular indignation, for his riches were, rightly or wrongly, regarded as standing evidence, which no one could dispute, of dishonesty and oppression.

Zacchæus had formed a strong desire to see Jesus. He had no doubt heard that the Prophet was the friend of publicans and sinners. That was one of the facts about Christ which was canvassed in every circle. The wonderful parable of "The Pharisee and the Publican," which showed that Jesus looked deeper than outward profession, and read the secret heart of every worshipper, had been spoken shortly before this visit, for it is given in the preceding chapter. The inefficacy of the Pharisee's vainglorious soliloquy, the prompt and gracious answer to the publican's "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," must have been full of inspiration for such a man as Zacchæus. Doubtless, also, he knew that one of his own class had been expressly chosen as a disciple by the great Rabbi. Levi, who had left the receipt of custom to follow Jesus,

was now one of the favoured Twelve whose hands handled the Word of Life.

The Jericho publican felt that his opportunity had come. Perhaps he did not know that this would be his last opportunity. Yet even had he heard the solemn revelation which the Master had just made to His disciples of trouble and death awaiting Him in Jerusalem, Zacchæus could not have been more prompt and earnest. St. Luke's record seems almost like a photograph of the events of that day. The publican found a dense crowd packed round Jesus. The enthusiasm aroused by the miracle wrought on Bartimæus had drawn all Jericho out to wonder and give thanks.

The publican's shortness of stature robbed him of every chance of seeing that face and form on which he longed to gaze. He tried again and again, but only to be disappointed. Had there been any respect for Zacchæus, someone might have helped him to catch a glimpse of Jesus, but his neighbours despised and hated him. The quaint picture of his failure and success almost makes us smile. He formed a happy device for accomplishing his purpose. Sycamore trees grew by the roadside, up which the boys delighted to climb, that they might look down on the passers-by. Zacchæus determined to use some such method, for he had resolved not to lose his opportunity. He hoped to preserve the memory of that rabbi's face, to find in it some clue to the strange catholicity of Jesus of Nazareth, to study the parables and miracles which were a common topic of conversation in every circle, through the light thrown upon them by the sight of the Master Himself. What a revelation of the man's zeal as a "seeker after God" lies in St. Luke's quaint record! It was springtime, when all the trees were thick with foliage. Perhaps Zacchæus thought he should be bowered by the leaves, so that his neighbours need never know of that memorable climb into the sycamore tree.

He ran with speed to carry out his ingenious plan. Safe on some stout branch beside the road, the publican waited with beating heart. He watched the crowd draw near, he saw his happier neighbours mingling in the throng, he discerned the disciples and friends of Jesus in the centre of the crowd. How eagerly his eyes sought for the Saviour Himself! No doubt the glimpse repaid him for all his eager effort.

> "Pity Divine in Jesus' face
> He saw, adored, and loved."

Zacchæus was, however, to find a blessing of which he had not dared to dream. He learned that not only was Jesus a magnet that never failed to attract the humble and needy, but that desire and need were a magnet that never failed to attract Jesus. Looking upward, Christ met the earnest gaze of the publican. He who knew what was in man, and needed none to reveal to Him the thoughts of the heart, saw that of all men in Jericho Zacchæus most needed Him—saw that in his house He should find the most sincere and congenial welcome. There was a colony of priests at Jericho who found it conveniently near to the sacred city, where they had to serve their appointed term of ministering every year. Among them Jesus dared not hope to find a welcome. It was the bitter sorrow of His life that "He came unto His own things, and they that were His own received Him not." The Jews had been made a nation that they might hasten His coming; the Temple and the city had been prepared to receive him; yet, though all these were His own, those who were in possession as priests and ministers refused to open the doors to the Lord of the Temple. There was no welcome for Jesus in the priestly homes of Jericho.

As our Lord looked upon that wistful face, framed in the foliage of the sycamore, He said, "Zacchæus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house." The publican is to be the host of Jesus. We who know what the presence of the Master had done for the home at Bethany can understand the greatness of the publican's blessing. Little did Martha think, some months before, what fruit was to follow her deed of love when she received Jesus into her house. There sat at the board the gracious reprover, who taught her to rise above mere anxious care for many things, and seek the one thing needful; there sat the Master who poured into her sister's heart the light and grace which made her one of the first saints of the Kingdom of heaven. Nor was this all. He who was the Resurrection and the Life returned to that home in its hour of deepest sorrow to wipe away the mourners' tears and restore Lazarus to his sorrowing sisters. The love and desire that shone in Zacchæus' heart had made him also a sharer in the same blessedness. He also was to receive under his roof that Prince of Peace whose coming means salvation and heaven for the lowliest heart and home.

The multitude grudged Zacchæus such recognition. Hate flamed up in their hearts, for they were no strangers to that passionate national prejudice which classed the publican with the most rapacious beasts of the forest. His presence was an outrage, his wealth an injury. Such thoughts made them resent the honour done to their fellow-townsman. It is true he was "a son of Abraham," but he had degraded himself in their eyes below the meanest of their race by a calling which emphasised the fact of their servitude, and opened the door to endless deeds of oppression and plunder. The murmuring was universal. It seemed like an insult to their proud city, which ranked almost next to the capital itself, that Jesus should seek hospitality under such a roof. "He has gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner."

The jealousy of the crowd did not move our Lord. We search the ages in vain for any mere man who has risen superior to all prejudices of age and nation. Jesus Christ is the one true, just, and perfect Man. In Him there is no trace of bigotry or prejudice. He is the Friend and Saviour of our whole race. Of that blessed fact the Gospels give repeated illustrations. In the conversation with the woman of Samaria, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, in the call of Levi, in the gracious acceptance of that deed of love wrought by the woman who had been a sinner, in the whole life of Jesus, what glorious illustrations of boundless love and mercy do we find! He is not moved for a moment by the murmurs of the men of Jericho.

Before He could reply to the crowd, however,

Zacchæus stepped forth. We do not regard his touching little address to Jesus as a vindication of the past, but rather as a pledge for the future. Up to that hour he had not been all that he wished. The presence of Jesus had revealed many things to him. But if the past was in any sense unworthy, henceforth he would lead a new life. In the fulness of his gratitude he promised half his goods to the poor, in recognition of the mercy that had stooped to enter the home of a publican. Nor was this all. He would make ample restitution for that which he might have taken by false accusation. The law only required that it should be restored with one-fifth added, but Zacchæus will not be content till he has restored it fourfold. Charles the Fifth once visited the great Augsburg merchant, Anthony Fugger. His host entertained the emperor magnificently. During the banquet Fugger rose, and said, "I feel myself so amply repaid by the honour of this visit, that this bond now becomes useless." He immediately put into a fire of cinnamon the bond for 800,000 florins, which he held as surety from Charles. It was a princely recognition of a royal visit. But Zacchæus made a grander acknowledgment. He had received mercy, he would show mercy; he was forgiven and honoured, he would cleanse his hands from sin by ample restitution, and by walking henceforth in newness of life. God cannot dwell in hearts impure. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.)

Zacchæus' words are a glorious proof of the wisdom of Jesus in this act of condescension. As He looked on the man's face and listened to his words, our Saviour saw in this man's heart of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. The work of salvation had begun in another breast. The leaven of grace had found a fresh field for its miracles of purity and love. To the crowd of murmurers Jesus had made no answer, but to Zacchæus He spoke words which sealed his blessing. "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." It is a wonderful thought. Salvation coming into a house to subdue all passion, to open all eyes to God, to prepare every inmate of the home for usefulness, holiness, and heaven. As His own words unlocked His breast, Christ added other words which seem to reveal His inmost heart: "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." That is the very reason of His advent and His ministry. The crowd may murmur because He stoops to such as Zacchæus, but Jesus is only doing His Father's will and accomplishing His own mission. The publican's penitence and resolve showed that He had not stooped in vain.

Salvation still comes where Jesus enters. Open wide *your* hearts to take Him in; for does He not say, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me"?

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

THE FRIEND OF THE YOUNG.

It is a mistake to think that there are no trials and difficulties in the lives of young people. The transition period of youth has its peculiar cares and anxieties, which are all the more difficult to bear because those who have outgrown them tell the young that these cares and anxieties do not exist, and that if they are not perfectly happy, they ought to be. When smarting from such unsympathetic criticism the young should go to Him who, seeing a young man in a difficulty, but wishing to do right, is said to have "loved him," and who always wished when on earth, and wishes now, that young people should come to Him.

WHY HE WAS CHEERFUL.

A certain bishop struggled through great difficulties without repining or betraying the least impatience. One of his friends asked the prelate how he was so cheerful in such circumstances. "My secret," replied the old bishop, "consists in nothing more than making a right use of my eyes." His friend asked him to explain, and the bishop did so as follows: "In whatever state I am, first of all I look up to heaven, and remember that my principal business here is to get there; I then look down upon the earth, and call to mind how small a place I shall occupy in it when I die and am buried; I then look abroad into the world, and observe what multitudes there are who are in all respects more unhappy than myself. Thus I learn where true happiness is placed, where all cares must end, and what little reason I have to repine or complain."

THE VIRTUE OF A YOUNG MAN.

Once when Socrates was asked what was the virtue of a young man, he said, "To avoid excess in everything." If this virtue were more common, how

much happier the world would be! Before he died, Lord Northington, Chancellor in George III.'s reign, paid the penalty which port wine exacts from its fervent worshippers, and he suffered the acutest pangs of gout. It is recorded that, as he limped from the Woolsack to the Bar of the House of Lords, he once muttered to a young peer, who watched his distress with evident sympathy: "Ah, my young friend, if I had known that these legs would one day carry a Chancellor, I would have taken better care of them when I was at your age." He knew, from bitter experience, the pains and penalties of an ill-spent youth.

PRAYER IN THE DESERT.

PRAYER.

Sunrise or sunset is the signal for the Arabs to leave off their occupation—no matter what it may be—to pray. With Christians the practice is similar: they pray on rising and on going to rest, in church and before meals. In this way a healthful *habit* of prayer is maintained. We must, however, always be on our guard against mere formality—lip-service, and not the service of the heart; and, whilst we should thank God for our daily bread, it may be that we ought to thank Him still more when He withholds it. If we render thanks only for what we have, it simply develops one side of our character. Unfortunately we are prone to grumble, and think ourselves hardly used, when what we most wish for we cannot get. Let us cultivate the habit not only of thankfulness, but of watchfulness when benefits are withheld, lest we miss the blessing that otherwise would be ours.

ONE VIEW OF A SAINT.

Someone, upon being asked, "What is a genius?" replied, "A being who pays attention to trifles." Almost the same answer would do if we were asked, "What is a saint?" In a Christian country, public opinion and the fear of being imprisoned force people to respect and observe most of the Ten Commandments, so the test of our desire to serve God is our willingness to obey Him in reference to what the world considers trifling and unimportant parts of duty. The saint pays attention to trifles. He does not neglect the day of small things. When careless people are saying, "Oh, it does not matter," and "We must not be too particular," the saint feels that the smallest thing which displeases God matters very much. He concerns himself about the smallest and most secret part of duty, for he knows that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle.

"PREACHERS OF THE AGE."

Who would, or could, deny the title to any one of the three men whose contributions to Messrs. Sampson Low and Co.'s excellent series are before us—C. H. Spurgeon, Canon Knox-Little, and Principal Reynolds? Of the volume from the late pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle its author wrote to the publishers, on January 12th last, "Call the volume 'Messages to the Multitude,'" and, he went on to say, "I will write three or four pages of preface." The title is the one he selected; but, alas! the preface is by another hand; for though he lived to correct the greater part of the proof-sheets of the

work, Mr. Spurgeon was called away before he could commit the promised preface to writing. The book is made up of two hitherto unpublished addresses on special occasions, and ten sermons. The ten sermons, all of which have been published in sheet-form before, we believe, were selected because of their representative character. The first was preached in the Royal Surrey Gardens Music-hall in November, 1859. The fifteen hundredth and two-thousandth of the published sermons are also included in this selection, together with that preached on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mr. Spurgeon's first sermon in the Tabernacle. The most recent of the discourses is one delivered on April 12th last year. Like a voice from beyond the grave come the final words of this sermon, which forms the last chapter in the book. They are commonplace enough, but as one reads them they almost bring back the earnest, genial tones in which Mr. Spurgeon himself would have said, "The Lord bless every one of you, for His name's sake! Amen." So, characteristically, ends Mr. Spurgeon's volume; and we put that down and take up Canon Knox-Little's contribution to the same series, with the title "The Journey of Life." In many respects how different the two men were! But in how many, also, were they similar. Both have been long famed for the possession of an oratorical power far beyond the ordinary, and an earnestness we wish were more universal. But such points of manner are necessarily largely lost when a preacher's work is transcribed for the printed page. Unlike Mr. Spurgeon's, the Canon's sermons are undated, so it is impossible to trace in the volume any process of growth. Few of our readers will be able to agree with our author's special views, but all must recognise in this volume that same high tone which was so noticeable in his book on "The Christian Home," which we referred to when it was published last year. Dr. Reynolds, the principal of Cheshunt College, who gives his volume the title of "Light and Peace," has for many years been more widely known as a trainer of preachers than as one himself. But his wide scholarship and vast experience give a special value to all he says and writes. In his preface he explains the object of his volume as being "to show that the law of the spirit of life, the laws of surrender, of growth and sacrifice, and the standard of union among Christians, are derived from the best light that has been given us touching the very character and nature of God Himself." To each volume is prefixed a portrait of its author, and a bibliography of his writings is always added at the conclusion, and gives a special value to each volume of this most useful series.

IT TAKES TWO TO QUARREL.

It is a wise saying that if one will not, two cannot quarrel, and nothing is more praiseworthy than self-restraint exercised for the sake of peace, and in order not to tempt another to sin while in a bad temper. Think of Socrates, who, when his wife Xanthippe concluded a fit of scolding by throwing at him a bucket of water, quietly remarked, "After the thunder comes the rain." And when she struck him, to some friends who would have had him strike her again, he replied that he would not make them sport, or that they should stand by and say, "Eia, Socrates; eia, Xanthippe," as boys do when dogs fight—animate them more by clapping hands.

A FIRST AND LAST THOUGHT.

"Here hath been dawning
Another blue day;
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away?"

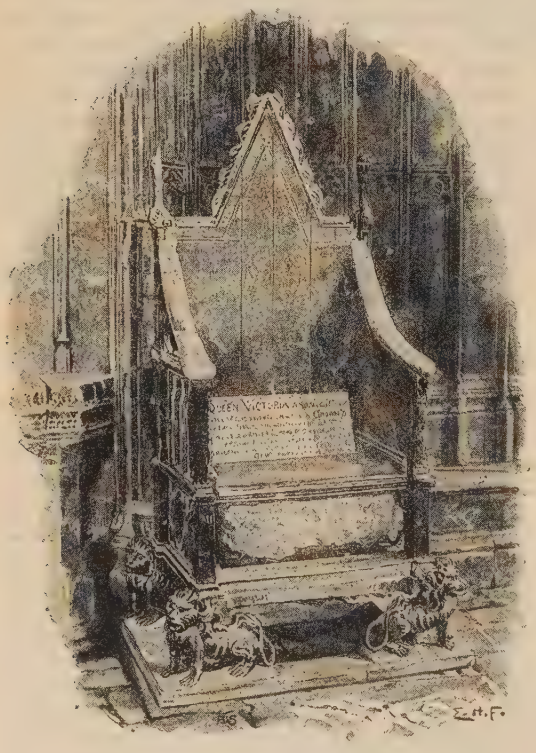
This is what we should say to ourselves each morning on opening our eyes; and if when we lie down to rest at night we cannot remember having done any deed of love, we may well feel remorseful, for we have lost a day. Alas! Some allow not only single days, but their entire lives, to "slip useless away."

"MY OWN MASTER."

In the "Life and Letters of the late Prince Consort," by Sir Theodore Martin, it is recorded that the Prince wrote, on being declared of age (June 21st, 1839), "Now I am my own master, as I hope always to be, and under all circumstances"—a grand sentiment as he used it, a ruinous one as many use it. To be "his own master," as the Prince used it, meant his having rule over himself, having himself in hand, having an "I" which from its higher region ruled all that belonged to the lower, regulating what was lawful, casting out what was suggested but was unlawful—it was his not allowing himself to be run away with by impulses, by appearances, by excitements, by mere "self" in anything apart from principle and calm deliberation and thought, and, we doubt not, religion too. The Prince looked upon self-mastership for purposes of self-government and restraint. But what a different meaning would these selfsame words have in the mouth of many a young man when he comes of age! He glories in the false freedom into which he has come. "Now I am my own master!"—"Now I'll do as I like!"—"Now no one shall restrain me!"—"Now I'll have my fling!" and he, too, would add, "I hope always, and under all circumstances, to be my own master." Never had a man a harder taskmaster than his own evil self, as many and many a one has found out. No man ever has been his own master from the beginning; too often he is but the slave of his desires and of the devil. And even in worldly matters many a man has found out that his ungodly mastership has come speedily to an inglorious end, and in poverty and dependence he has found a master in every person and thing that would give him even bread. See, good friend, what you mean when you say, "Now I am my own master, and I hope always to be, and under all circumstances."

"STEER STRAIGHT.

Some men were out for a sail, when a mist came on, and everything grew dim. It thickened into a fog, and soon nothing could be seen but the edge of the water against the boat. "I'd give five pounds to know where we are," said one of the men. Suddenly a far-off sound was heard. It was the custom in that fishing village, when the fathers and sons were out in their boats and a fog came on, for the women and children to gather on the shore and sing high and clear. They were doing it now. "Steer for the voices," said the owner of the boat to the man at the rudder. He did so, and they were saved.—Some years ago a fisherman was out in a fog all by himself. He was in danger of running upon rocks, and began to think that he must be lost. At length he heard the cry of a small voice. He thought he knew it, and listened again. Then he heard clear, "Steer straight for me, father." It was the voice of his little daughter. He called, and she replied again and again, "Steer straight." He passed the rocks, he stepped on the shore, and caught her in his arms. His little daughter had saved him. Some months afterwards he *lost her*. All was dark in life now, but after a time he remembered what she had said, "Steer straight for me, father." She was safe on the heavenly shore. How was he to join her there? Then he heard another voice in his heart cry, "Steer for Jesus Christ! Steer for Jesus Christ!" He did it.



THE CORONATION CHAIR.

(From a Sketch in Westminster Abbey.)

IN HEAD, BUT NOT IN HEART

"I have made a maxim, my lord," Swift once wrote to Bolingbroke, "that should be writ in letters of diamonds, that a wise man ought to have money in his head, but not in his heart." Money is, as every thoughtful person knows, a great power for good or evil, and what Swift seems to have meant is that we may, and we ought to, plan and contrive for the acquisition and wise spending of money in our heads, but that we ought not to allow a love of it for its own sake to enter our hearts.

A CHEERFUL PATIENT.

A French general lost his leg at the battle of Leipzig. After he had suffered amputation with the greatest courage, he saw his servant crying, or pretending to cry, in one corner of the room. "None of your hypocritical tears, you idle dog!" said his master; "you know you are very glad, for now you have only one boot to clean instead of two." If people who make no profession of religion are sometimes able to do without health and strength and other advantages not only patiently but with high spirits, how much more ought those to be able to do so who believe that their Father in heaven does in all cases what is most expedient for them, and will without fail give them a happy issue out of all their afflictions!

THE CORONATION CHAIR.

In our April number we devoted an article to "Some Curious Chairs in our Ancient Churches." We were obliged by the pressure on our space to omit an illustration of the Coronation Chair, which is in itself, for all British subjects, undoubtedly the most interesting of the seats in all our churches. The sketch that we reproduce this month shows not only the chair, but the Scone stone round which such a strange legend has fastened.

THE "ALL-MAN'S" BOOK.

"A noble book!" said Carlyle; "All man's book!"—and that is what the Bible is. It is for all sorts and conditions of men, under all circumstances, and at all times. As Augustine said, "The Bible has depths in which an elephant can swim, as well as shallows in which a lamb can wade." As an excellent preacher of our own time has said, "It is not a puzzle for wise heads, but a lamp for the wayfaring man." As a poor old woman in London said, "What should I do without my Bible? It was the guide of my youth, and it is the staff of my age. It wounded me, and it healed me; it condemned me, and it acquitted me; it showed me I was a sinner, and it led me to my Saviour; it has given me comfort through life, and I trust it will give me hope in death." Soldiers, statesmen, poets, men of science,

merchants, old men, young men, children —all sorts and conditions of men, learned and unlearned, have found it to be what Carlyle called it, "the All-Man's Book." And this it has been found to be all the world over. Human nature is the same everywhere; and so, deep down, are human wants also; the Bible is the universal book that meets them all. To one man there may be one kind of want, and to another man another—the wants are the wants of humanity; and for human nature the Bible has its being. A missionary read the first chapter of Romans to a heathen congregation, and when he had finished they came round him and said, "You wrote that chapter for us." And in China, when a missionary, after assuring an intelligent Chinaman that the Bible was very old, gave him a specimen of it in this same Rom. i., he was met afterwards by the Chinaman with a look of triumph and accusation as he exclaimed, "You told me your book was very ancient, but that chapter," pointing to Rom. i., "you have written yourself since you came here and learned all about Chinamen." And this is just one of the reasons why the Bible is, as Carlyle says, the "All-Man's Book." It is the book for human nature in all its aspects—and man is only human nature in flesh. And if it be a book for all men, it is a book for *you*, and it will be for you to see how you have used it, what you have made of it; ay, and turn that last sentence round—what it has made of you!

EVENING.

EVENING.

How often we say, on a very fine day, that if the weather holds we shall have a beautiful evening. We always keep before us the fact that the evening is the natural outcome of the day. What a lesson is this of life, whose declining is constantly spoken of as its evening, and how it should prompt in each of us Wordsworth's prayer:—

> "Help with Thy grace, through life's short day,
> Our upward and our downward way;
> And glorify for us the west,
> When we shall sink to final rest."

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED.

Factory girls are commonly regarded as an intractable race. But everyone who knows them is aware that they respond very readily to appeals of the right kind. Just now, for example, a correspondent tells us of the marked success the Factory Girls' Letter Guild is enjoying at Leeds. Indeed, the success is a little too much for the organisation. The aim is to provide each girl with a lady correspondent, who, once a month, will write her a letter of pleasant advice and sympathy. But the supply of ladies has fallen far short of the demand for their services. At present there are fifty or sixty young girls, teachable and open-hearted, all clamouring for lady correspondents. Who will volunteer? The cost is nothing, and even an invalid can discharge the task well. Miss Porter, Normandy Villa, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, will be delighted to enrol recruits.

AN APOSTOLIC PIONEER.

Dr. Young, the Bishop of Athabasca, has put on paper some account of his work during the year 1891. The narrative suggests the apostolic journeyings of St. Paul rather than the more stately procedure commonly, though often erroneously, associated with bishops. He tells us of a perilous canoe voyage of fifteen days, when the episcopal retinue extended only to his crew of two. He tells us of simple pastoral ministrations, such as to a single Indian hunter met by the way. He describes in cheerful detail his suffering during a solitary ride, when, at the end of a tiring day, he could find no water, and had to lie down, without a fire, without

water, and "too thirsty to eat." He tells us of perils in crossing the Peace River, when horses and mules, harnessed to a "dug-out," stampeded for the shore. It is a story of pioneer work amongst a scattered people, told with all the simplicity of one who forgets self in the joy of the work. The Bishop does not omit, it is fair to add, the reminder of how many things his vast diocese and its poor Indians lack.

BOOKS FOR EVERYBODY.

It is nearly sixty years since Charles Simeon died, but his name is still held in high repute among all schools of evangelical thought. He exerted a wide-spread influence over his day and generation by reason of his saintly life and character, and there are many who reverence his name who know little or nothing of the man who bore it. The Rev. H. C. G. Moule has written a very pleasing "life" of Simeon for Messrs. Methuen's series, "English Leaders of Religion," that supplies a felt want and places within easy reach all that it is really essential to know of the great teacher.—Among present-day defenders of the purity of our faith Sir S. A. Blackwood stands in the front rank, and any work of his must claim attention. Messrs. Nisbet have just published in a little volume a series of seven addresses by him upon truths contained in the "Te Deum." Everybody knows the wording of the chant so well that there is a danger of forgetting the height and depth of meaning which those words enshrine. Sir Arthur has done good service in enforcing them.—Messrs. Cassell have just completed a new and cheaper edition of their "Heroes of Britain in Peace and War." Heroes whose laurels were won in spreading the Gospel at home and abroad, and in carrying out its precepts among the poor, the neglected, and the destitute, are included in the roll along with those whose heroism was displayed in travel, in war, or discovery. The two volumes in which the book is completed are fully illustrated, and we can imagine no more generally acceptable addition to a Sunday-school library, or wish for no more agreeable a book to present to a boy. To "Cassell's National Library," in its new neat blue cover, there has been added a very pleasant volume of "Selected Poems" by Wordsworth. It is just the book to serve as an introduction to the poet's work.—There are few writers whose work is more generally popular with children than Mrs. Molesworth, who has done so much to deserve the approbation of her little patrons. Her latest book is a prettily-told series of "Stories of the Saints," specially told for children, and published by Messrs. Longmans in dainty dress. We have also to acknowledge the receipt from Messrs. Lang, Reid and Co. of a new metrical version, by the Rev. J. Neil, of the first canto of the Song of Songs, under the title of "The Bridal Song." The poem deserves attention for its own sake, but its exquisite attire would command it under any circumstances.—Messrs. Macniven and Wallace, of Edinburgh, send us a manual for the Communion under the title of "Let us Keep the Feast," which has won high commendation from several of the most eminent of our Presbyterian friends.—Mr. Elliot Stock sends us a second edition of "Everyday Thoughts for Everyday Children" and the Church of England Temperance Society a little book on "How to Make a Temperance Speech," by the Rev. H. E. Legh. The first chapter, at least, ought to be read by *all* would-be speakers.

"KEEP IT TO YOURSELF."—"OUT WITH IT." WHICH SHALL I DO?

These are two different pieces of advice, and they are diametrically opposite to each other. Well may many a puzzled man say, "Which shall I do?" In a general way the last; only, of course, in a proper way; but sometimes it must be the first. There are undoubtedly some things which we must never let go beyond our own keeping. They may be secrets which were entrusted to us, or matters not concerning us, which we have come by the knowledge of accidentally; or some things which, if known, would be the ruin of the man concerned in them. We are not called upon as a matter of duty to speak of them; and though it is very unpleasant for us to have to do with them at all, the word concerning it is, "Keep it to yourself." But there are ever so many things concerning which the word is, "Out with it." If you keep it to yourself, it will set up inflammation; your injuries and wrongs will all grow bigger and bigger the more you think, and they will be all one-sided—your side of the matter—whereas if you had some friend to talk or to write to about the affair, you would have had someone to share it with you—you would probably never have been allowed to sit as a broody hen on eggs which, when hatched, would give you in every fresh thought a chick that would only magnify your troubles ever so many times over. And this is just one of the uses of a good, sensible wife—that you can talk over so many matters with her; and with the help of her eyes you will often see things in a new light. And this is one of the uses of a sensible friend, too. Anyhow, you may be sure that if you "nurse your wrath to keep it warm" it will probably roast you, or broil you, or boil you, or do something very hot to you before it has done with you; but if you let it out, the chances are ten to one that it will catch cold and die.

SEEKING AND FINDING.

Saul went to look for asses, and found a king. A great number of people look for a king, and discover the other sort of animal. They think that their friends are heroes, and worthy of all praise, for a short time, and when the reaction comes they cannot see any good in them. If no one is a hero to

his valet, is not this because the valet himself is unheroic? Goodness discovers and attracts goodness, and that is why the presence of Jesus Christ was and is so hopeful and inspiring to His disciples.

"ON THE BOOK."

A few days ago, in a tramcar in Birmingham, a man was heard talking to a fellow-passenger about a large number of bad half-sovereigns that had been found in that town. He said that a certain man whose habits were very mysterious had been accused of coining them. The man never would allow anyone to enter the two rooms where he lodged. He made his own bed, and used to take his meals from his landlady at the door of his room without allowing her to enter. After relating these and other points of evidence, the man in the tramcar exclaimed, "Yes, I think they have got him on the book." He meant by this rather vulgar phrase that the authorities would be able to trace the man and bring him to book. The expression makes us think of God's book of remembrance, where every thought, word, and deed, not only of poor coiners, but of each one of us, is recorded.

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from March 24th, 1892, up to and including April 27th, 1892. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver*" *Waifs Fund:* A. B., Wallington, 7s. 6d.; J. J. E., Govan (54th donation), 5s.; A Friend, Shrewsbury, 10s.; A Glasgow Mother (24th donation), 1s.; Maude, Fallowfield, 2s. 6d.; W. N., Cheltenham, 5s.

For *The London Aged Christian Society:* A Friend, Shrewsbury, 10s.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

85. What words of the prophet Nahum set forth God's watchful care over His people?

86. Quote words from the Book of Psalms which set forth the extent of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

87. What places are referred to in the words "Tarshish and the Isles"?

88. Quote words which tell us of the peace and prosperity of Israel during the early reign of King Solomon.

89. What wise men are mentioned as contemporary with Solomon?

90. What declaration did Christ make of his Godhead just before His ascension?

91. What is the last recorded act of Christ on earth?

92. What reason have we for supposing the Acts of the Apostles were written by St. Luke?

93. What two great events are associated with the Day of Pentecost?

94. Who were the Cretes mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles?

95. What important event connected with the Apostles took place between the Ascension and Pentecost?

96. What proof have we that the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost took place in the early morning?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 559.

73. It is well known that all feathered creatures gain fresh strength after moulting, and, as the eagle is the strongest of birds, the Psalmist means that the knowledge of God's mercy and forgiveness is the source of greatest strength to sinful man. (Ps. ciii. 5.)

74. By the picture of an earthly father's love—"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." (Ps. ciii. 13.)

75. From the year 606 B.C., when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, afterwards King of Babylon. (Dan. i. 1.)

76. He was trained at Babylon (whither he had been taken captive) in the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans, who were famous for their knowledge of arithmetic and astronomy. (Dan. i. 4—6.)

77. He refused, as a captive, to partake of the meat and wine provided by the king for him and his companions, because it was contrary to the law of Moses to do so. (Dan. i. 8.)

78. In understanding all visions, and in the interpretation of dreams. (Dan. i. 17.)

79. A stone cut out without hands, which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. (Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44.)

80. That "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Dan ii. 22; Heb. iv. 13.)

81. Burning in a furnace. (Dan. iii. 6; Jer. xxix. 22.)

82. To fear nothing except sin, but to leave ourselves in God's hands. (Dan. iii. 17, 18; Is. xliii. 2.)

83. In the reign of Darius, King of the Medes and Persians, who had conquered Babylon. (Dan. v. 30, 31.)

84. When Daniel was cast into the lion's den, the stone at the entrance was sealed with the signet of the King and his lords. (Dan. vi. 17; St. Matt. xxvii. 66.)

A MORNING WITHOUT CLOUDS.

A PAPER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.

"WE should cultivate," says a thoughtful writer, "the bright weather of the heart;" and Carlyle, urging the benefits of cheerfulness, pleads for "a spirit all sunshine," and reminds us that wondrous is the *strength* of gladness, and its powers of endurance are beyond calculation. Nothing unnerves us more than melancholy; and though at times all surrounding circumstances make it difficult for us to feel of good cheer, surely we shall reflect within us the Light that shineth even in a dark place, when we remember that nearer to us than our troubles—nearer than fear, perplexity, pain, or weakness—is Jesus, our Sun and our Day-star, the brightness of the glory that is unspeakable? The Lord knoweth our frame; He remembereth our infirmities and how naturally they render us depressed, foreboding, and inclined perhaps to be fretful and impatient. It is easy for others, we think, to be sunny of heart and of face; the cross of pain is not laid upon them—our special trial that presses so heavily now does not cloud *their* lives. It may be that just at this hour it is as midnight within us in our secret thoughts; let us, therefore, remember Him who is "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds."

Those who have watched and waited by night for the returning day know how welcome is the lustre of sunrise, how strength and hope seem newborn, as over the eastern heights comes the glorious dawn. Thrice blessed is the glow to lives that have waited through Arctic winters for the reappearing of the sun. "To-day," says a traveller in those regions, "I have once more looked upon the sun; blessed be the great Author of light!" No midnight-watch, no dim wintertide endures for ever; joy cometh with the sunshine. In summer beauty the hills break forth to singing, and the trees of the woods are glad. But what radiance can picture the power of our Lord, in Whom believing, we find sunrise and morning and the Dayspring of undying hope? Looking unto Him, it is with us no longer night; neither sun nor star can vision the brightness of His presence.

> "Ye worlds of light that roll so near
> The Saviour's throne of shining bliss,
> O tell how mean your glories are,
> How faint and few compared with His!"

Oh, soul in shadow, longing for brightness, weary of lingering depression, in Him Whose thoughts towards you are loving-kindness and great compassion, there is no darkness at all; lean upon the Breast that has comfort and soothing and cheer for thy need: so shall surrounding gloom be dispersed, and thine eyes shall be opened to recognise the depth and height of the mercies that thy life is sharing still. "A morning without clouds," a clear, sure Light is Jesus, our Safety and our Guide.

We are told on good authority that "the best medicine in the world is light, and the best doctor is the sun." How different we have often felt physically after a good dose of precious sunshine; how it has seemed to chase away over-anxious forebodings, and to heal our nervous disquietude. Let us try and prove within us how Jesus, "this dark world's Light," can heal the sorrows of our heart—how He can touch with His balm every aching wound, and minister to the special wants and troubles we spread out before Him now. Is anything too hard for the Lord? He is the Great Physician, all-understanding, all-caring, Omnipotent; body, mind and soul He has made, and He has healing for the needy to the uttermost, joy and peace for His children, even amid sickness and infirmities.

We cannot get out to the golden beauty around and about us; but within our homes, within our hearts, as we think of our Lord, and as we pray to Him, there arises the "morning without clouds" that knows no fading sunset. Herein is the cure for darkness, fretfulness, despondency: "steal away to Jesus"—He is not far from thee at this shadow-hour. In His light thou shalt see and know He has for thee a grand ministry in and through thy weakness, to comfort and cheer His people by thy patience and glad restfulness. In His Light thou shalt conquer by increasing faith the dark thoughts that in the trial-hour the tempter fain would whisper; and this is the promise to the heart that overcomes—"I will give him the morning Star." The glow of dawn must pass, the noontide splendour dies, and the beams of spring and summer fade at last, but the sunshine Jesus gives shall deepen evermore. "Have you lighted the candles?" a dying Christian asked his wife as he passed to eternal morning; she answered "No," and he said triumphantly, "Then it is the face of Jesus that I see." In His unclouded brightness, oh, trusting soul, lose thine utmost doubts and fears whate'er befall, until the day shall dawn and the shadows flee away.

M. S. H.

[*Drawn by* LUCIEN DAVIS.]

AMONG THE SUMMER FLOWERS.

"*LIFE SONGS.*"—*See p.* 646.

MY EXPERIENCES AS A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

BY A VETERAN.

I.—MY FIRST DAY WITH THE LIBRARY.

I WAS quite young when our superintendent thought he saw in me the making of a good librarian for the Sunday-school. As an outside member of the congregation, I felt flattered by his choice, especially when I learned the facts of the case.

The School library had not been a success. The teachers grumbled, the children ignored it, and the custodian blamed everybody but himself. When he left us for another part of the country, there rose up in the school a party who were for reform. They all agreed in commemorating the abundant merit of the brother who had just left us; but, with equal unanimity, they declared for a new state of things. "We must have a better system," said one. "We must have more books," said another. "We must popularise the library," said a third. So, upon the score of a known affection for literature, and a reputation for getting on with young people, I was made librarian and installed in office.

The library, as committed to my trust, was in the condition which wider experience has shown me to be not at all uncommon. Its origin was buried in obscurity; but there was a kind of legend that, in what had become a dim and distant past, a godly widow had brought the library into being by presenting to the school the greater part of her husband's books. In its origin, therefore, it had not been very well adapted for young people, whose wants, indeed, had not at that time been so freely catered for by the publishing houses as they are now. But teachers, on serious reading intent, had found there some solid works of divinity, with a few of a more general although scarcely diverting character. At subsequent periods spasmodic appeals to the congregation had been made, with varying results. So far as I could gather, many of the donors had taken the words of invitation far too literally, and had strictly confined themselves to offering books for which they had "no further use." The difficulty was that nobody else had any further use for them either.

It was an odd thing that people should suppose hard-worked Sunday-school teachers and budding boys and girls to harbour a wish to read books which the donors themselves had ceased to regard as anything but lumber. I am told, however, that this kind of misconception still exists in some quarters.

It was soon eradicated from any minds in our congregation in which a trace of it may still have lingered. We asked again for books—readable volumes upon any subject, providing always that they were sound and salutary—and especially for brightly written, well-illustrated books for young people. At the same time we indicated in the most delicate manner possible that gifts of money would be accepted in unquestioning good faith from any who had no books to send us. The results amply justified the appeal we had ventured to make. A few volumes of the old type came in, but these, with the donors' consent, we exchanged for something better at the stall of the one second-hand dealer in our town.

In expending the money intrusted to us we did not merely buy religious books; we laid in a good stock of stories and other works which, without ostentatiously enforcing some religious truth or lesson upon their readers, were nevertheless marked by a thoroughly Christian tone. The older books, which had lost their comeliness of appearance, we had rebound whenever we deemed them worth keeping. Volumes clad in gay apparel we put into loose linen covers, for the making of which young ladies were good enough to be responsible. Then, with the library re-catalogued and rearranged, I was ready for my opening day.

Our superintendent duly announced the change which had come over their old but hitherto little-

"She will weep like rain over the sorrows of her heroine."

"Walter has a kind of notion that he would make an excellent buccaneer."

valued friend, and I accordingly looked for a large number of new clients from the very first. But I soon found that a lost reputation is not to be recovered at one *coup*. The older scholars had heard changes of this kind explained before, and had found they did not mean very much. The younger children, of course, took their cue from the elders, and were moved by no overmastering desire for books. Most of my clients that afternoon came from two or three classes, the teachers of which believed in the library as a means of helping the scholars, and possibly of carrying good into their homes. It was, in fact, an early illustration for me of the extent to which the character of a school is made by its teachers. If every class had been conversationally instructed touching the recent changes and the value of the library as those two or three were, we should have gathered in almost the whole school at once. But, in view of my inexperience on that day, perhaps it was as well that they were not.

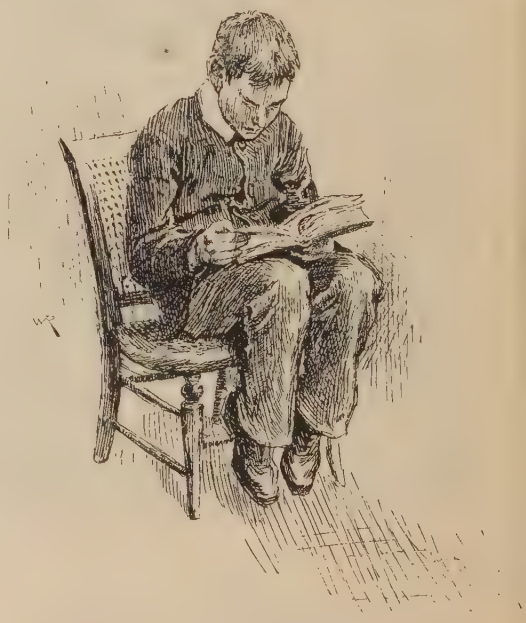
When the first batch of youthful inquirers gathered around me, I learned almost at once a lesson which every librarian should take to heart. He should know his books—not merely where to find them, but what their characters are.

The catalogue is absolutely valueless to many of the users. They can tell you the kind of book they would like to have, but how shall they select it from a list almost every entry in which is strange to them? A librarian who is familiar both with his books and his children is a treasure which any Sunday-school should make much of.

Let me illustrate this by a case in point. Margaret B., one of my first customers, wants a book. She is a big girl, a bouncing girl, a girl full of assurance and self-confidence. She is untidy in her habits, sometimes appearing at school with a button wanting here and there on her dress or on her boots. She is also very sentimental, and much more disposed to idling away her time than to doing her duty at home. Now, Margaret is quite open to advice, and is not hard to manage; she will accept any book which I tell her is a good one. If, however, she is left to roam at her sweet will, without guidance of any kind, she is very certain to carry home some story in which the sentimental rather overbalances the practical element. She will weep like rain over the sorrows of her heroine; but there will be more buttons wanting on her boots.

Or, take another case. Walter G. is one of those boys who already begin to distrust the rather humdrum but still useful pursuits in which their fathers are engaged. Walter has a kind of notion that he would make an excellent buccaneer, or, failing this, that "a life on the ocean wave," of a less truculent character, would be better than an apprenticeship behind the counter at home. If I lend him books which recount the extraordinary adventures of some boy Crusoe, whose resourceful nature enables him to evolve from a pocket-knife and a tin can almost every comfort civilisation can give, I am only fostering his disinclination for sober life. It may be that I am laying up sorrow not merely for him but for his parents. This is not the kind of work which a Sunday-school library should do, and therefore I must watch the vagrant steps of Walter G. as he looks for a book.

Moreover, the librarian must be of help to the younger ones. A delightful little creature of about eight approached me on that first afternoon with the utmost confidence in my knowledge of the treasures on our shelves.



"He revelled in the 'Book of Martyrs.'"—*p.* 645.

"If you please, sir, I want a book."

"Yes; what sort of a book?"

"If you please, sir, a nice book."

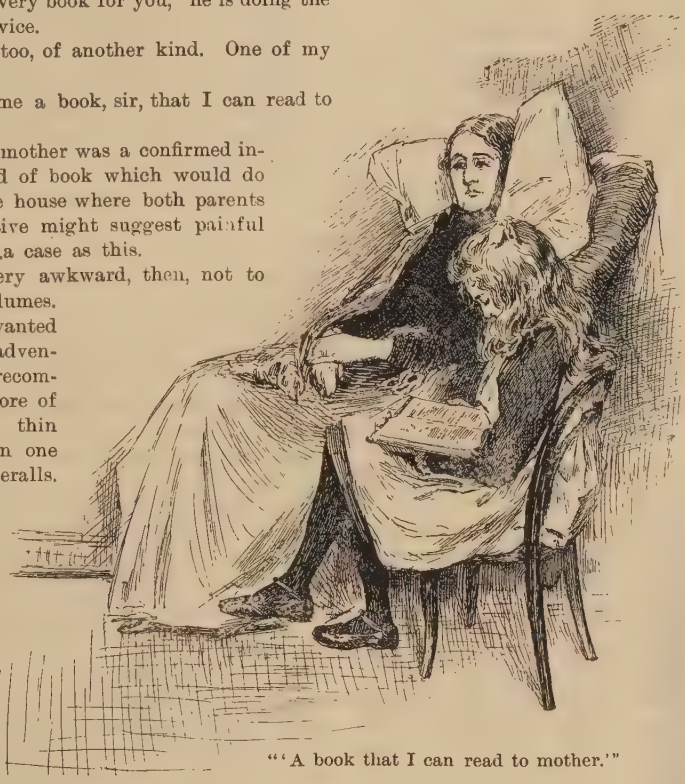
Now, this is much too general for practical purposes, but it is all the librarian will sometimes get. He has very little time for thought or search; there are other customers waiting, there is urgent work to be done, and he must not stand long in doubt. If he can lay his hand at once upon the right volume and tell the child, "This is the very book for you," he is doing the little one a real service.

There are cases, too, of another kind. One of my clients said—

"Can you lend me a book, sir, that I can read to mother?"

Now, the child's mother was a confirmed invalid, and the kind of book which would do good service in the house where both parents are strong and active might suggest painful reflections in such a case as this.

It was really very awkward, then, not to know all my volumes. To one boy, who wanted "something with adventures in it," I recommended (on the score of its title only) a thin volume done up in one of our neat linen overalls. The look of mingled pity and scorn with which he handed it back to me on the following Sunday haunted me for several weeks. I had given him a small collection of polemical tracts—excellent things in their way, but in no respect approaching the limits suggested by the hirer's hint, "something with adventures in it."



"'A book that I can read to mother.'"

In contrast to youths whose tastes ran in this direction we had one lad whose appetite was as insatiable as it was singular. His classmates laughed at him. He lisped slightly, had a face disfigured by small-pox, and was poorer than most of those around him. He read the polemical tracts, and seemed to like their flavour. He revelled in the "Book of Martyrs," and wanted all we had, first about the persecution of the early Christians, and then about the times of the Marian troubles. Upon all that he read he had an opinion, and in the course of changing his volume he would throw out a few *obiter dicta* as to the contents of the one he was returning. But when it came to propounding questions as to some of the subjects in dispute, I felt bound to refer him to his teacher—who, by-the-bye, went in dreadful fear of his pupil's wide reading.

The comments of the younger children were more entertaining. The thorough way in which they realised the identity of the characters they had read about was very decisive as to the influence fiction may have upon impressionable minds.

"How did you like the book?" would bring such replies as—

"Oh, very well, sir; only Mat Barton he was a brute. If I had a brother like him——"

"It was beautiful; only the shameful way they treated poor ——"

"I didn't like their starving Joe to death in that way, did you, sir?"

Their comments were often shrewd and just; at all events, they showed in many cases that the author had achieved his purpose and driven home some truth with entire success.

I am occasionally told now that Sunday-school libraries are but little needed in towns where free libraries abound. But there is something to be said on the other side. In the first place, the younger children get little or no profit from the free library. In the next place, I am not at all sure that it is good for boys and girls to delve at will amongst the miscellaneous stores of a free library. There are many works of fiction, the like of which might take their fancy, which it is certainly not desirable that they should read. Parental control in such matters is often very lax, and these young people would be in safer hands if they confined their attention to the selected volumes available at their Sunday-school. We may serve them, if we can, even partially, keep their recreative reading on the right lines. If, however, this is to be done, there must in a good many schools be some of the changes which occurred when they first put me into office. The books must be readable, or the demand will fall off. New works must somehow be got now and then, or the librarian will too often hear the repeated cry, "I've read that." And, lastly, the return of the volumes must carefully be watched, and the business of the library strictly managed. When care is given to these reasonable details, I can see nothing in my past experience to suggest that the Sunday-school library will not continue to do a popular, and, what is more important, a very useful work.

LIFE-SONGS.

"LIFE is so long, so sweet!"
She sat and sang among the summer flowers.
While ah! too fast, too fleet,
Sped by on hasty feet
The lily-fragrant hours;
"Life is so long, so sweet, I needs must sing
To-day, to-morrow, each day following!"

"Life is so short, so sad!"
She stood and mourned among the fallen leaves,
And thought how once she had
All pleasures bright and glad,
Red roses, golden sheaves;
"Life is so short, so sad, I needs must mourn,
With shades of eve and with the day new-born!"

"Life is so quickly past!"
She lay and whispered at the gates of death,
While earthly dreams fled fast,
And Heaven's own joy at last
Dawned o'er her parting breath;
"Life is so quickly past, in sight of Thee,
Lit with the love of God—Eternity!"

M. C. GILLINGTON.

A LINCOLNSHIRE LASS.

BY C. E. C. WEIGALL, AUTHOR OF "THE TEMPTATION OF DULCE CARRUTHERS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

"Nay, too steep for hill-mounting:
nay, too late for cost-counting,
The down-hill path is easy, but
there is no turning back."

ALEC'S work was perhaps more distasteful to him than anyone could possibly imagine.

Cyril's employment at least had the merit of being out of the common, and a keen source of amusement and interest to his sisters, for he constantly had some new joke as to Aaron's sayings, or the vagaries of his customers, to report, and in that way he managed to keep the family alive and merry.

But, to begin with, Clark and Co.'s offices were uninteresting in the mere fact that they were engaged in the exportation of tallow and hides, round which commodities no glamour of romance can possibly be thrown.

Then the situation—low down on the Thames, surrounded by dreary blank walls, and huge groaning cranes, with a vista of nothing save row upon row of like warehouses—was unutterably depressing to the country-bred youth.

His time was spent in a big empty office, with five or six other young men, in invoicing the exports of the firm, booking orders, and keeping the ledgers straight; and how dreary he found this employment after the pleasant life and society of an Edinburgh student, would be difficult to express.

His fellow-clerks were a good deal older than himself; and when he first took his place among them, scarcely deigned to pay any attention to the boyish newcomer, whose clothes were as quiet as his manners and ways of life.

But by-and-bye the new fact that he was a gentleman began to impress itself upon them, and, as is the usual case with men in a lower station of life, they began to think that it might be a fine thing to induce him to join their little coterie of society, and to become intimately associated with one so much above them in rank.

At first Alec was too low-spirited and depressed to respond in any way to their advances, and tried to make it plain that he wished to be left to himself.

Then, as the days wore away, and he felt the need of companionship, he began to study their characters curiously and silently, with a little sensation of disgust, as he realised the innate vulgarity of these young men, with their flashy cheap jewellery and their loud taste in dress—whose every second word was a strong exclamation, if it were not an oath, and whose conversation among themselves was not of the cleanest order.

Three of them were mere nonentities, following the lead of the two master-minds—young fellows who thought it was both grand and manly to swear, and to bet on every chance occurrence in the day's work that afforded scope for any wager to be laid.

But the two leading spirits—older by a year or two than the others—were two young fellows of a more presentable type than their junior clerks, Harry Holmes and Tom Povey: familiarly known in the office as "the Bruiser" and "the Masher." It would be difficult to ascertain the exact origin of these nicknames, for Holmes, or "the Bruiser," was gifted with very ordinary physique, and was remarkable for nothing save a knack of turning up the king at écarté, and sporting a huge signet ring on his middle

finger and a large diamond horse-shoe in his tie; while Povey, or "the Masher," was absolutely devoid of any special gift, save a faculty for always having a "good tip," and "being behind the scenes, you know, my boy," for any of the big race meetings. He was, one might almost have considered, mean in appearance, with an unwholesome complexion, and an air of never having been to bed the night before.

It was the aim and objects of these working members of society to be considered "men about town," and their first overtures of friendship towards Alec consisted of an offer to show him the sights of London.

"Haven't you done the Park yet?" said Holmes with a *blasé* air, which was not lost upon Alec, who humbly replied that his aspirations had not soared above Westminster Abbey or the Tower.

"We might be able to hire a nurse and a go-cart to take you there," said Povey, in a sneering aside; but he was promptly frowned down by Holmes.

"Will you allow me to be your guide to those venerable national institutions?" he said to Alec, with an air of deference, frowning angrily at a hasty snigger from one of the clerks near at hand.

Povey looked at his friend with a blank air of surprise; but as Holmes took the opportunity of calling him out of the room with an air of importance a few moments later, an explanation evidently took place, for they both returned bland and smiling to their desks.

"Will you accompany us to-night to our club, 'The Bacchanalia,' Mr. Fawcett?" said Holmes, as they were closing their desks preparatory to leaving the office. "We have a little supper on, and shall be much honoured by your company—if a gentleman like you can condescend to put up with us."

He said it with such apparent honesty and diffidence that Alec's vanity was flattered, and, with the dangerous susceptibility of youth, he felt the charm of superiority, and graciously assented to favour "the Bacchanalians" with his presence that night.

"I don't want to be late," he said; "as I am afraid that my sister will be sitting up for me."

"Oh, indeed! No, certainly not," said Holmes gravely. "Still, I am sure she must be aware that gentlemen of your rank in life occasionally have evening engagements that keep them out late. However, as it is now six o'clock, and our supper begins at half-past seven, perhaps you will do me the honour to come back to my lodgings with me, and have a cup of tea and a wash down, as you will scarcely have time to return home."

Alec, with much pleasure, accepted the invitation, and they left the warehouse, and after traversing a few streets, stopped at the door of a dingy-looking lodging-house.

During their walk, both Holmes and Povey had made a point of seeking Alec's opinion, with great humility, on two or three topics chiefly concerning etiquette, which Alec had given with all the confidence of a conscious superior.

The room which the two men shared between them turned out to be, when the gas threw light on the scene, not the abode of refinement that Alec was accustomed to in his daily life.

A dirty white cloth covered a table in the centre of the room, while a smaller table by the fireplace was littered with dirty cards and dice. The walls were hung with some indifferent prints of actresses and ballet-girls, and the only literature apparent to the eye was a sporting paper hanging over the arm of an easy-chair.

"Of course," said Holmes apologetically, "this is not the sort of thing that *you* have been accustomed to; but we have had to live as men of the world from the time we were born, and you must take us as we are."

Alec found that tea was not forthcoming, and that his two companions were on the point of quenching their thirst with copious draughts of brandy and soda, when Povey suddenly recollected himself, and hastened towards the bell.

"A thousand pardons, Mr. Fawcett! I am afraid you will not care for our stronger beverage; you shall have a cup of tea in a moment. No doubt you are a member of the Blue Ribbon Society."

But Alec's pride was in arms. He might be young, but he was not going to be proved a chicken, incapable of drinking anything stronger than tea. So, with a new air of swagger, he replied carelessly—

"Oh, pray don't trouble, Povey. Give me a split soda. I'm not a teetotaler yet."

Holmes filled him up a strong bumper of the beverage, which the foolish boy gulped down without more ado.

At that moment he took the first step down the ladder which is so easy to descend, but so hard to climb.

The brandy had far better have been a salutary poison, for it would then have saved his soul from the stain of much folly and misery.

"And now that we have drunk to our good-fellowship," continued Holmes, furtively glancing at the young fellow's flushed face and sparkling eyes, "let's have a game at 'Nap.' Of course, you are a good hand at it?"

Alec confessed that he was not; in fact, that he had never played the game before, and felt much humiliated by the confession.

"Oh, well—in that case, of course, we will only play for halfpenny points," said Holmes carelessly, and Alec, like a miserable coward, had not even the courage to confess that it was against his principles to play for money; and, anxious to be considered a man of the world, sat down at the card-table with the two men, only to rise at the end of half an hour poorer by a shilling, and knowing that that shilling meant the loss of some little necessary of life to his sister at home.

But the glamour of the gambler was beginning to steal over him; and had not Holmes promised him his revenge? and was not the game so easy, that in the end he must infallibly win a large sum?

"And what is your favourite for the Blankshire Autumn Meeting?" said Povey, lighting a cigar and offering one to Alec, which he had not the courage to refuse, although knowing that the Havana (?) would make him desperately ill.

"I haven't thought about it," said Alec, absolutely

at sea as to the place in question, and never having even heard its name before, but equally determined not to disclose his ignorance.

"Oh, well; I have private reasons to know that Macaroni stands in absolute certainty of a place; and I don't mind laying you six to one on him in pounds," continued Povey, with careless indifference.

Alec, with a lordly air, nodded his head, into which the fumes of the brandy were already ascending, and the evening he steered his new acquaintance safely out of the room, and set him on the homeward way—sober, it is true, though somewhat elated by laughter and strong drinks, and ready to swear eternal friendship to the man who had introduced him to so new a life.

It was nearly midnight when he reached Chelsea, and Mary, hearing his step on the stairs, stole down to meet him in her dressing-gown, with her pretty hair hanging over her shoulders.

"She entered breathlessly, with a pretty apology on her lips."—*p.* 650.

Povey noted the bet in a greasy pocket-book, which he took from the breast of his coat.

"He's a clever fellow," said Holmes, shaking his finger at his friend. "Don't let him do you, Fawcett. Still, I incline to think that you run a fair chance of winning six pounds—for Macaroni's an awkward customer. Now, if you are ready, we will be off."

He slipped his hand familiarly within Alec's arm as they reached the street, and began to talk on subjects which showed that he had an observant mind, and, under happier auspices, might have been a useful member of society.

The "Bacchanalian Club" was made up of a score or so of young men in the same position in life as the "Bruiser" and the "Masher," and to Alec's confused brain the evening seemed to be principally made up of drinks all round, very loud talking and louder songs, and a whole herd of young fellows, who shook hands with him, and wanted him to bet on every conceivable subject under the sun.

But Holmes remained at his side—an unflinching protector—warning off all intruders and would-be poachers on his preserves with a laugh, or a remonstrance. Alec might be a pigeon to be plucked, but no one should pluck him but himself; and at the end of

She asked him with tender anxiety what had detained him; but he answered her coldly and shortly, and pushed by her to his own room, where he fell into a heavy, unrefreshing sleep, while she—poor child—tossed anxiously on her pillow, wondering through what strange phase of character he was passing, and where he had spent that long, weary evening.

But this was only the precursor of many evenings without Alec, and of days when he went to work cross and languid, without so much as a smile or a morning kiss for his sister.

Mary had the tact to deal cautiously and warily with him; not accusing him with tears and protestations of getting into mischief, but trying to make the evenings bright and pleasant for him when he did spend them at home, and being more than usually affectionate to him, and attentive to all his wants.

To her great anxiety, his salary one week was not forthcoming, and in answer to her questions and distress, he replied roughly that he had wanted it for something else, and that later on he would repay her. As she was really in need of money, she had to go out secretly and pawn a little gold brooch which had belonged to her mother, and which she valued highly.

But she made up her mind that this should not happen again, and that the very next day she would go out in search of work of some description on her own account; for she could not let Gloire go about in rags, or keep Mrs. Holmes waiting for her weekly money.

When a week or two had elapsed Alec came home one night with a radiant expression of countenance, and without speaking, put six pounds into her hand.

"There, little sister," he said good-humouredly. "Some more earnings of mine, to be spent exactly as you like." And Mary, in ecstasy, blamed herself for her wicked thoughts about her brother. No doubt his absent evenings had been spent in toiling secretly for his family at some new trade by which he could augment his earnings.

Any way, the money was extremely acceptable just then. She expended some of it in some new shirts for Alec and a frock for Gloire, who seemed to possess a ruinous faculty for outgrowing all her clothes. Had Mary known that this money was the result of another step downwards on the ladder of honour, she would have died rather than have touched the polluted gold. But she was as unsuspicious by nature as one of her sanguine temperament usually is; and she and little Gloire had keen amusement planning, buying, and making the new frock, which was put on in honour of Alec's birthday.

But the child was surprised when she ran up to her brother, to be received with a rebuff, and a cold, "Don't bother me, Gloire, there's a good little girl. I'm very busy just now."

She went back to Mary with her eyes full of tears, and her rosy lips pouting with a sense of injury. "Oh, Mary!" she said indignantly, "I'd much rather go without new frocks, and have the old Alec back again. I don't know this new cross brother."

CHAPTER VIII.

NAN'S life, according to her letters to her sister, was a constant round of gaiety and amusement, varied by lessons on every subject she cared to pursue.

Her masters in singing, guitar-playing, and painting came to her from the other ends of the earth, she wrote, and Miss Dempster was sparing no expense to make her a perfectly educated woman of the world, before taking her up to town in the spring for the season.

Reginald Dempster gave her riding lessons, and as she was absolutely fearless, she was in a fair way to become an excellent horsewoman; and she was looking forward to following the hounds in the winter—in a bright scarlet coat, she had written; but remembering her mourning, she had scratched out the words hastily, with a sudden pang of shame that she should have forgotten her loss even for a moment.

But her letters were so full of bright accounts of her varied daily life, and the amusements she now extracted out of Dalton, once considered by her the very acme of dulness, that Mary put them often aside with an involuntary sigh for her sister's want of heart.

How could she really enjoy living with the woman of whom her father—scarcely cold in his grave—had so strongly disapproved, and even cautioned her against? If it is sad to offend the living, how much more sad is it to remember offences against the dead we have loved, and who have been so much more to us than in our carelessness we ever appreciated in their lifetime?

How often, when we look through our tears at the dead faces of our departed, do we long to unsay the bitter word or the harsh judgment, that brought the look of pain we remember—ah! how sadly!—when it is too late!

But perhaps Mary, with her loving simple mind, did not make enough allowance for Nan, who could only exist in the warmth of happiness, and whose butterfly nature could not bear the least touch of sorrow on its bright ephemeral colouring. She was developing into a different creature under the influence of her new surroundings, and her beauty was deepening into something far beyond the ordinary run of good-looking girls. This freedom from the wear and tear of poverty suited her exactly; and if she was not exactly radiantly happy, she was contented, in that the ambition of her life was rapidly fulfilling itself. Her idea of happiness was, to be admired and rich, and it seemed quite in the realms of possibility that Nan Fawcett would gain her heart's desire, which is a thing granted to few people on earth.

"It really is rather a good thing," said Miss Dempster casually to Nan soon after her arrival, "that you are in mourning, Nan, for that is such an excellent excuse for being perfectly quiet, and getting you fitted in body and mind for your campaign."

And though Nan quivered with pain at the hand laid so roughly on the wound still fresh in her heart, she acquiesced so quietly that Miss Dempster congratulated herself on her *protegée's* stoicism, and on her clear-sightedness in having recognised at once this kindred spirit, who would never trouble either her friends or herself with emotion.

"Emotion brings lines and wrinkles, my child; and it is a good thing for your beauty that you *have* never been and probably *will* never be, in love," continued the old lady, putting one hand under Nan's chin and turning her face up to the light.

The girl bore the scrutiny with the most perfect *sang froid*, and Miss Dempster, with a short laugh, turned away, absolutely at ease as to the state of Nan's affections.

One glorious September morning, when the golden sunlight was beginning to mellow the rich green of the Court woods with a suggestion of waning summer, Nan came down to breakfast to find something unusual in the air.

She had been with Miss Dempster for nearly six weeks, and during that time had ridden and walked daily in Reginald's society, much to the detriment of that young man's heart, and to the scornful amusement of her own.

He was standing at the window now, with a letter in his hand and the *Times* at his side, but he was reading neither, and was impatiently tapping the floor with his foot, while his aunt from behind the urn was slowly discussing the contents of her share of the letter-bag.

The butler was fidgeting in and out of the room with the hot dishes, for Nan was late, and punctuality was the rule at Dalton Court.

As she entered breathlessly, with a pretty apology on her lips, Dempster came forward eagerly to greet her, and to offer her a cluster of Gloire de Dijon roses, which, with a smile, she pinned carelessly into the bosom of her black gown.

"I wish, Nan," said Miss Dempster, looking up with a sarcastic smile, "that you could learn to be punctual for your meals. Dependants, like animals, ought to attend to the sound of the gong, and you ought to have been here to pour out tea, as I have been intensely worried over a letter from an ass of a man who says that the drains of my London house are defective, and that the whole of the drawing-room floor must come up at once."

Nan was getting so accustomed to speeches of this pleasant description that she did little more than faintly change colour.

"Your *dependant* in future will attend to her mistress's orders. I grieve to hear of your drain difficulties."

"Grief never mended a parquet floor yet, so far as I am aware," replied Miss Dempster, opening another letter; "and until I ask you for your grief, perhaps you will kindly keep it to yourself. Reginald, oblige me by feeding more quietly. The noise you make in cutting a mere loaf of bread is absolutely appalling. Halloa! here is a letter from Vernon Basset. What the dickens does he want?"

She relapsed into her letter, and Nan, unseen by either of her companions, dropped a very salt tear into her tea-cup, and meditated vengeance to be taken some day on the disagreeable old woman at the head of the table, whose bitter remarks were so hard to bear, even though she herself might be looked upon as merely a means to an end.

"Wants to come here, does he? for some partridges. Oh well! yes. I've half a mind to have him, for he is the very husband I want for you, Nan—a baronet, with a shooting-box in Scotland, house in town, and two country places—yes, it's the very thing; and I'll write off this moment, and tell him to come by all means."

Dempster turned pale, and began to crumble his bread ferociously.

"Really, Aunt Lavinia! I think that you seem to settle Miss Fawcett's affairs without much reference to her own feelings," he said incautiously.

Miss Dempster's cruel eyes slowly turned upon him, and looked him over from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, gloating over his confusion with malicious triumph.

"And pray, Mr. Reginald Dempster, who made *you* Miss Fawcett's champion? Perhaps you are going to do me the honour of offering her to me as a new niece; and in that case, allow me to wish you both great happiness. Still, I should have thought that abject poverty would have suited neither of you."

Nan rose from her seat, setting all the dainty china and silver of the breakfast-table jarring together by her impetuous movement. The conversation was more than she could bear, and she said sharply—

"A truce to nonsense, please, Miss Dempster! Allow me to decline the honour of an alliance with your family. I shall be only too glad to welcome Sir Vernon Basset, or any of your friends. Now I really must run away and practise, or my singing-master will be furious when he arrives to-morrow."

And she retreated, outwardly absolutely calm, but raging in helpless fury within.

Miss Dempster looked after her with a smile. She was not exactly a pleasant woman to look at, and the smile did not improve her appearance; for under its influence her thin lips grew thinner and more sardonic in their curves, and her eyes, handsome though they were under their fringe of lashes, showed even more coldly grey than Nature had painted them. And yet she was good-looking in her own particular style.

Her white hair, drawn up and turned back over a cushion under her delicate lace cap, gave a most aristocratic finish to the well-shaped, determined face, whose colouring was as vivid as it had been in her youthful days. She always dressed in the richest, most rustling of materials, and her gowns were always fastened, wherever it was possible, with a diamond brooch—her favourite stone, *par excellence*, by virtue of its cold beauty.

"If I had thought for one instant that you and Nan Fawcett were likely to fall in love with each other," she said, turning to her nephew, "I should have packed her off to her greengrocering relations and you to break stones on the road, or to earn your own living by your wits—which would come to the same thing in the end."

Dempster made no answer, save an inaudible and injured murmur, and slouched away to the stable with his hands in his pockets.

He was too much of a coward by nature to dare to reply to his aunt's insulting speeches, for he was dependent on her caprices for every penny he possessed, and preferred inglorious ease to an honourable earning of his own living.

Meanwhile, Nan, in the music-room, was pressing her burning forehead against the cool window-pane, trying to reason with herself, and calm her troubled spirit with something like philosophy.

"Is it worth all this misery?" she said fiercely to herself. "Should I not be much happier with Mary in London, where no one would tyrannise over me?"

Then she glanced down at her well-appointed and pretty gown, and at the gay strings of the guitar at her side.

"Bah! how weak and miserably foolish I am," she said, with a laugh, and moving to the piano, began to sing with a voice as blithe as a skylark on a summer morning.

Miss Dempster came in and out of the room two or three times that morning with parcels for the girl to tie up, or notes of invitation to be answered, and looked at her every time in a half-amused, half-compassionate fashion—as if she were a rat in a cage.

"There!" she said abruptly, as Nan sealed up her last envelope, "you are really not half a bad child, on the whole. Reginald is rather inclined to make an ass of himself over you, but I know you are too old

and cautious a bird to be caught with chaff. You thoroughly agree with me, I know, in considering ten thousand pounds a year far more worth the having than mere calf-love."

And without giving Nan time to agree with or dissent from her remark, she rustled away to scold her maid violently for some supposed breach of duty.

During one of their long country drives, the two ladies had come across Basil Wyndham.

Miss Dempster had lifted her eyebrows at Nan's friendly greeting, and had inquired as to who the man in the brown coat with the good-looking face was. But on hearing that he was only the manager of a country branch bank, and Mary's *fiancé*, she immediately began to pick him to pieces, and to request that Nan would ignore him in future, or at least treat him with the same cold civility with which she was for the present to treat her brothers and sisters.

"Anything for a quiet life," answered the girl scornfully. "The Spanish Inquisition was nothing to *you*, Miss Dempster. Why don't you try and tyrannise over my food and clothing, instead of my manners? It would be a pleasanter experience for me."

Which remark somehow fell in with Miss Dempster's mood, and she chuckled over it as a piece of grim humour, and forbore to bully Nan for the rest of their drive.

As Miss Dempster never by any chance went to church, and hated all parsons, Mr. Ricardo was naturally an unfrequent visitor at the Court. And although Nan had not entirely given up her own church-going, still, she sought no opportunity of talking to her old friends, and, in fact, shunned all unnecessary contact with them.

She had cut herself so entirely adrift from all her old associations, that it often seemed astonishing to her to think that she was in the same village where she had been born and brought up.

Strangers were occupying her dear old home, and had already altered the house so much that it was unrecognisable.

But Nan had no opportunity of knowing this, for she carefully avoided passing the house in her walks and rides, and never even approached the hallowed corner in the churchyard where her father lay, for fear of arousing into tumultuous life the very agony of remorse that lay somewhere deep down in her strange nature.

One of the last links with her past life had been the little gold bangle that Dempster had given her, and which had been the cause of Cyril's remarks, the fatal morning of her father's death.

But since that day the trinket had vanished, and the only witnesses of its disappearance had been the yellow kingcups on the bank of the stream in the Court woods, where she and her faithless lover had wandered together.

For Nan, late one evening, before she took up her abode at the Court, had gone out secretly, and had buried the glittering thing deep in the bed of the swift-flowing brook, and with it her childish faith in human nature and her passing fancy for Reginald Dempster.

She had plenty of bracelets and bangles now, studded with precious stones, if she cared to wear them, but somehow it was very seldom that one of those dainty fetters ever shone on her wrist.

The day of Sir Vernon Basset's visit arrived, and as he was to meet Nan for the first time at dinner, Miss Dempster was in a terribly critical state of mind as to her *protegée's* personal appearance.

She had consulted Sir Vernon, by way of introducing Nan to his more particular notice, as to a portrait that she wished to have painted of the girl, and what artist he would recommend to carry it out.

He had given her the name of a man of whom he knew something—a rising young artist, with the merits, he said, of being a gentleman, and never in the way in a country house.

"Cecil Hume knows how to efface himself," he wrote, "besides being a really decent chap for an artist; and, my sister says, the very man to do justice to your friend, and to paint a picture really worth possessing."

And on the strength of this recommendation, Miss Dempster had asked the artist to Dalton Court, to arrive by the same train as Sir Vernon, thinking, with considerable astuteness, that she could manage to throw Nan and Sir Vernon together very completely over the portrait painting.

Each feature, each turn of the head, should be discussed fully, and due deference should be paid to all his suggestions on the subjects of attitude and dress. In fact, Nan, and all her thousand and one fascinations, should be played off upon him; and if the portrait were never completed, it did not matter, for she should be painted in town as Lady Basset by the greatest master of the day.

And so it was that the artist and the honoured guest arrived together from the station by the same carriage; and Sir Vernon thought that he had done great things in the matter of condescension by recognising Hume, and talking to him quite affably as to the last big "At-Home," where they had come across each other, and the last private view, where everyone had gone mad over "A Bit of Cornwall"—quite a small canvas, which had the modest letters "C. H." painted in one corner.

As to what Hume thought of his companion's condescension we cannot tell, for no one took the trouble to ask him, or to gauge the depths of his gratitude—which, let us hope, was suitably profound.

CHAPTER IX.

MARY had a great mind, which was not easily deterred from any object that it might have in view, and she sat down first to consider deeply her capabilities when she had finally decided to find work for herself to do.

She had few talents, being one of those domestic girls whose ambition never soars above the well-being of their family and the careful guiding of their establishment.

But domestic qualities do not go far in the battle of competition. For teaching she had neither time nor inclination, and she very much doubted whether she knew enough herself to be able to impart to others in an intelligible fashion.

Then, of course, she was housekeeper, and Gloire's teacher into the bargain; and the work that would suit her must be something that she could take up in her leisure hours, when the regular duties of the day had been fulfilled. She had a very fair knowledge of colour and of design, and she thought at first that she might find work in some establishment as a designer of fashion-plates. But on application, she found that the market was already over-stocked, and that she would have to spend more time in the fashionable haunts of woman-kind than she could well spare from her home duties.

A glance into a dainty shop window in Bond Street, full of photographs of the reigning queens of society, gave her a new idea, and buying a small manual of instruction on the subject, she hurried home, and spent the whole of the evening in tinting the portrait of an old friend of hers, which, when finished, looked very satisfactory.

But on application to a neighbouring studio, she found that that branch of labour was positively overwhelmed with unfortunate artists who could find no market for their work, and her sixpence was wasted.

However, her visit to the photographer's studio had given her an idea, which she hastened at once to carry out.

On his table had been lying a sheet of the photographs which extol the beauties of some particular neighbourhood or some particular hotel, and are usually put up in the compartments of the trains that run anywhere near the spot indicated.

Mr. Smith, the photographer, was a gentlemanly looking man of middle age, with a quiet, prepossessing manner, and an evident desire to help the sweet-faced young lady who stood opposite to him, with such a downcast look in her eager eyes.

He had helped with work and advice many a girl and young man before this, but they had all disappointed him, and had expected money to pour into their outstretched hands without so much as lifting a finger to help themselves.

But somehow this girl, in her deep mourning, with her sad, resolute face, seemed to him to be of a different stamp from the others who had come and gone like shadows across his professional life, and he said abruptly—

"I should like to help you, Miss Fawcett, and I think I see my way to doing it. You say your work must be done at home in odd hours. Now, a new species of decoration has just been brought under my notice as something rather fresh to the trade. You see these photographs? Well, the idea is to decorate them with pressed ferns and flowers, and by illuminating suitable verses underneath them, to render them more attractive to the general public. What do you think of the idea? At present I have found no one to take it up; and though, of course, the pay would not be very high, still, if you care to take this photograph back with you and try your hand at original decorations, I shall be very glad to give you regular employment, if the work is well and carefully done."

Mary looked at him with intense gratitude shining in her face.

"Thank you. I will indeed do my best to succeed," she said modestly. "I can easily get a supply of flowers and ferns from my sister in the country; and we have plenty of books of reference from which I can hunt up quotations."

The photographer bowed her politely out of his studio, and she returned home with a heart beating high with hope, and as soon as her duties were over, sat down to try her hand at the dainty work.

She had only just received from Dalton Court a little box of maidenhair fern and autumn violets, and she set to work to press them, and when they were dry, to affix them with gum to the margin of the picture in an artistic fashion.

It was pleasant, fascinating work for her neat fingers, and when the quotations were illuminated beneath in scarlet and gold, she felt delighted at the good effect.

Mr. Smith was equally pleased when she returned her work to him; and though he did not say much—for he was not a man of many words—paid her for her work, and supplied her with material enough to last for two or three weeks longer.

Basil Wyndham's letters were the great joy of Mary's life. He collected every scrap of news which he thought might interest her in any way, and thus kept her in touch with all the old home life and friends.

And besides this, he made a point of going over to Dalton once a fortnight to visit Dr. Fawcett's grave, to see if it was tended as Mary would have it cared for, and that the flowers upon it were kept fresh and bright.

Though he made no effort to see Nan, yet he occasionally came across her during her walks and rides; and it was at his suggestion that the girl sent off a small weekly supply of flowers from Miss Dempster's greenhouses to brighten Mary's gloomy room. So that, altogether, his letters were full of interest; and if he said nothing good of bright, beautiful Nan, he said no word of harm, and Mary was content to know that she was well and happy.

Alec's weekly salary had an awkward habit of not being forthcoming when it was most needed, and Mary was hoping great things from a flying visit Wyndham talked of paying them later on in the year.

She thought that he would understand the vagaries and temptations of a young man's life far better than she herself could do; and meanwhile, she could only pray for her brother, and be thankful that Cyril was steady as a rock, and unalterable in his cheeriness and affection.

But, meanwhile, Alec was indeed going through the deep waters of temptation. He had been led on from one thing to another by his two new friends—from those seemingly trivial, but in reality most fatal, halfpenny points, to gambling far beyond his means.

If he had lost that fatal first bet, it might have been the means of turning him away from the paths on which he was entering, and by terrifying him by the loss of money he could never hope to pay, have given him a wholesome distaste for betting.

But unfortunately, "Macaroni" had proved himself the uncertain horse which fame had made him out, or rather, he had probably never been meant to win, by his owner, and, with the customary honour of the turf, had been "pulled" by his jockey.

Anyhow, Povey lost his six pounds, much to his disgust, and—be it said to his credit—paid up at once.

But since then he had won from the boy more than double the amount in I O U's, and Alec plunged daily deeper and deeper in the morass of debt, always hoping, with a gamester's folly, to retrieve his position by his last throw of the dice.

But matters had come to such a pass that he grew desperate, and as Povey had begun to press him for his money, he knew not where to turn for help. Day and night the horror of his situation preyed upon him, and when Povey showed him one night his I O U's to the awful amount of twelve pounds, and insolently demanded his money—threatening if it was not forthcoming, to lodge a complaint with the head of the firm—Alec, white with despair, pleaded for a few days' grace, but was told that payment must be made next morning, or he must take the consequences. And the boy went home in a stupor of remorse and horror.

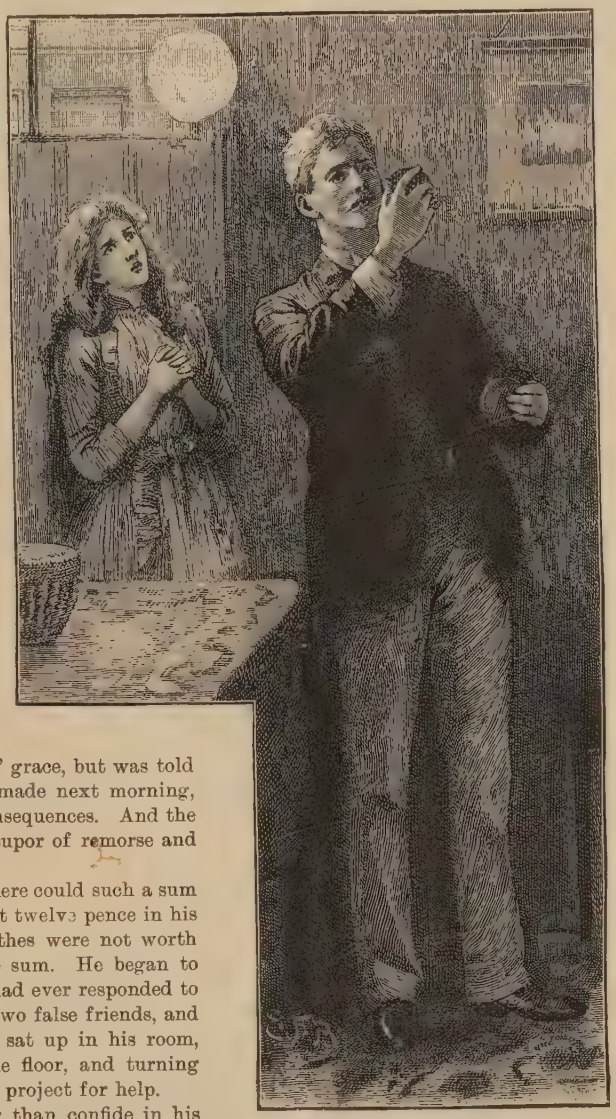
Twelve pounds! Where could such a sum be found? He had not twelve pence in his possession, and his clothes were not worth even an eighth of the sum. He began to curse the day that he had ever responded to the advances of those two false friends, and late into the night he sat up in his room, moodily staring at the floor, and turning over in his mind every project for help.

He would die sooner than confide in his sister, for he could not face her clear sorrowing eyes.

Surely there was some way by which he could retrieve his position without her knowledge; and if so, he was ready to vow by all he held sacred to touch neither card nor racing paper for the rest of his life.

Then, too, Wyndham was coming up to see them next day, for he had got an unexpected holiday, and there was to be quite a little *fête* in honour of his visit. He would be sure to notice Alec's altered looks, and to question him, so that it was all-important that the debt should be paid, and the load off his mind, before twenty-four hours were over.

There was one way—and only one—that flashed across him, and he caught his breath with the audacity and the horror of the idea. Their only valuable possession was a miniature of their mother, in the shape of a locket set round with diamonds. It was worth nearly fifty pounds, and if he could secure it, and pledge it unknown to Mary, he might toil night and day to redeem it again, before she had even noticed its disappearance. It was kept in a little rosewood box in the sitting-room, and the key was in Mary's work-basket; and without giving himself time for reflection, that would inevitably mean repentance, he changed his heavy shoes and stole noiselessly out into the passage.



"He held it under the gas."

The sitting-room was in darkness, but he struck a match and lit a feeble ray of gas; then he paused breathlessly to listen before he went further.

But the house was perfectly silent; and as it was one o'clock, the entire household would naturally be wrapt in deepest sleep.

The room looked ghostly under the faint light, and he hurried across it to the table on which stood the box containing the coveted possession. The key turned hardly, with a click in the lock, and his heart stood still with fear for an instant, fancying that he must have been overheard. But there lay the miniature in its little wash-leather bag, and he took it out with trembling fingers, and held it under the gas, turning on a fuller jet of light that he might see it more clearly.

He could remember his mother distinctly, for he had been ten years old when she had died, and for a moment the sweet smiling face of the painting almost unmanned him. It was so marvellously lifelike—so full of joy and the tenderness of motherly love—that he caught his breath with something like a sob of agony.

Here was the mother who had so devotedly loved her bonny fair-haired lad, the little son from whom she had always prophesied such great things when he grew to man's estate. And here was the boy, prematurely old with care, about to pawn his mother's picture to pay his gambling debts.

But he choked back the thoughts that had gone far towards unnerving him, and hastily wrapping up the locket, stuffed it into his pocket.

"That 'll do it," he said half aloud: "that ought to raise the sum three times over."

There was a low sob behind him, and as he turned, smitten with a sense of guilt and shame, he saw Mary crouching against the door, with her face buried in her hands.

"Why are you spying upon me, Mary?" he said angrily. "What do you mean by dogging my actions as if I were a thief?"

She raised her white tear-stained face to his—her eyes shining like two clear stars.

"Alec, my brother!" she said, "have you fallen as low as this? Let me help you in your trouble, whatever it may be; for surely if the spirits of those who are departed can watch over us——"

But she broke down in low agonising sobs, and clung round his neck, praying him to tell her his trouble and to give her back the miniature.

Alec stood with his hands clenched at his sides, his eyes bent on the ground, scarcely feeling the arms clasped so lovingly around him: conscious of nothing save that his mind was in a tumult of wretchedness. But his sister's tears moved him at last, and he said gently, taking her hand in his:

"I am so utterly miserable, that I can bear it no longer. It doesn't much matter now what I do or say, but I owe twelve pounds, which must be paid to-morrow, or I shall get turned out of my situation, perhaps; and where to find the money I cannot tell."

The magnitude of the sum appalled his sister; for twelve pounds was a sum as far beyond their power of paying as a hundred would have been to many another family.

"How can we get it together?" she said faintly. "I have two rings left that belonged to mother, but they are not very valuable, for Nan had her engagement-ring; but still we can sell them and the bits of old china that we brought from home, and perhaps that will nearly reach the sum you want."

His sister's gentleness suddenly went to Alec's heart, and broke down the barrier of sullenness that had been gradually crushing out all his better feelings.

Reproaches would have hardened and repelled him, but her loving words and readiness to help proved to be the turning point at this critical hour of his life, and he flung himself down on to the sofa, and burst into a very storm of tears.

He was still a boy, with a boy's nature and eager susceptibilities; and, though he was ashamed of himself for crying like a baby, still those tears wasned away the last stain that his evil associations had left on his heart.

Mary stood by him, stroking his hair with soft motherly fingers, and when he was calmer, sat down at his side, and gradually drew from him the whole confession of his weakness and his sin.

They sat together talking till the world of London began to wake again into life, and before they parted for the night, knelt down, hand in hand, and repeated the old simple prayers that they had been accustomed to say together in their childish days.

Then before Alec went back to his room, he replaced the miniature in its case, and gave the key into Mary's hand.

(*To be continued.*)

WITHOUT SIN UNTO SALVATION.

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A., PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S, AND VICAR OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S, HIGHBURY.

"Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."—HEBREWS ix. 28.

IT is probable that on the Day of Atonement an unusually large crowd of devout worshippers would be gathered together in the courts of the Temple. Whilst the high priest was fulfilling his office in the recesses of the inner sanctuary, these persons would give themselves, we suppose, to meditation and prayer, and yet keep their faces turned in the direction in which they expected their great representative to appear, each of them anticipating his coming again with an eagerness proportioned to the intensity of the spiritual life within him. During the high priest's absence, they could, of course, do no more than conjecture at any given time what particular part of his duty he was engaged in. He might be sprinkling the blood before the ark, or filling the highest place with fragrant clouds from the golden censer, or bending his knee in prayer for the well-being of the people. But it mattered not. He was engaged in their behalf, and obtaining for them a priceless benediction. And when at last he issued, in the splendour of the pontifical garments—announcing by the fact of his reappearance the fulfilment of his task—a thrill of inexpressible relief would run through the vast assembly, because they knew then that the burden of their sin had been rolled away:

that they stood pardoned and accepted before the dread Majesty of Heaven.

And if this be so, it is not at all unlikely that the scene which I have just depicted was present to the mind of the sacred writer when he addressed the words of our text to the Church of Christ, and to us as members of it. Our great High Priest has gone. Withdrawn from human sight into the immediate presence of God, He is pleading for us there: "ever making intercession for those who come to God by Him." What is the precise nature of that intercession, how Christ presents His blood, what it is that He does or says, it is not permitted to us to know. Nor is the knowledge necessary. It is enough for us to be assured (as we are) that every blessing we receive reaches us through the channel of His mysterious intervention, and that He so bears our names upon His heart before the throne, that there is not a single sin that He does not blot out in His precious blood, not a single tear that He does not lift up His precious hand to wipe away from His servants' eyes. And so we stand, as Israel stood of old, outside the sanctuary, knowing little of what is going on within, but trusting much. With faces turned in one direction, with eyes full of eager expectation, intently listening to catch the first sound of the long-looked-for approach —we wait for the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This being our attitude, as Christians, it may be well for us to consider the statement of the sacred writer here about the all-important subject. We will consider first what is said about the *manner*, and then, what is said about the *purpose* of this second manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Take the manner. When Christ appears again, He will appear "without sin," that is to say, apart from all connection with the work of dealing with sin, and of putting it away.

In the period of His first advent He had much—very much to do with sin. Indeed, I do not think it incorrect to affirm that the predominant purpose for which He came into the world was to deal with this particular matter. Look at the scene that took place on the Mount of Transfiguration. You find Moses the lawgiver and Elijah the prophet engaged in mysterious colloquy with the Saviour. The theme of their converse is not the throne that awaits Him; but the departure which He is about to accomplish at Jerusalem—that is to say, the cross of Calvary, with all its horror and shame—the cross which is as much of a stumbling-block to the world now as it was then, is the point to which the thoughts of these personages on such a high occasion instinctively converge. Or remember how resolutely, in the days of His earthly ministry, Jesus resisted all attempts to divert Him, from what He considered the chief work which He had been commissioned to do. If He would have consented to establish His Kingdom at once, without preparation for it, all hearts would have bowed to Him, and men would have received Him everywhere with the acclaim of a jubilant welcome. But He could not do this. There was a question to be entered into, a problem to be solved, and that was the question of sin: the problem of how to crush and overcome it. And it was simply because Jesus Christ *would* do the first thing first that the human race rose up in insurrection against Him, and cast Him out, partly because He was a great and bitter disappointment, and partly because they regarded Him as in effect a foe to their truest and highest interests. Christ, then, appeared, when He first appeared, to live (of course) amongst us, but to live mainly for the purpose of having it in His power to die. The sacrifice of the cross was the goal to which everything tended, the pivot upon which everything turned. For it, the incarnation took place; for without it, the incarnation would have been unavailing for us. It is the ground of the present glory; for it is because Jesus was obedient unto death—the death of the cross—that God also hath highly exalted Him. And so we hesitate not to say that Christ's great occupation when He first tabernacled amongst us was with the sad fact of human sin. He had to encounter it, to deal with it, to grapple with it, to overcome it, to destroy it. His whole existence on earth was painfully pervaded by the foul and terrible presence.

We might, of course, speak here of the trial it must have been to an absolutely pure and holy nature such as His to find itself in contact with a tainted world; but for our present purpose we need only point to the better-known scenes of His life—when His "hour" (as He always called it) began to draw near, and the shadow of the cross fell ever more and more deeply upon His path; when, in the garden of Gethsemane, or in those dark moments of Calvary, the clinging burden of the accumulated sin of the world—one ponderous weight of horror—lay upon His shrinking, agonised spirit, and could only be lifted off by that tremendous act of sacrifice which cast the Lord of life, the Holy One of God, the blameless and loving Son of man, into the loathsomeness and dishonour of a human grave.

All through that time Christ had much to do with sin. But when He appears the second time it will be without sin. He will have done with it altogether.

II. We pass on now to speak of the purpose of the subsequent manifestation of the Lord Jesus. It was to bring salvation. Here we have our second point of discussion. Let us do our best to comprehend what the sacred writer says about "unto salvation."

There are more senses than one in which we may be said to be "saved." By the word "saving" we commonly understand rescuing from the penalties of sin, from the terrible consequences of having transgressed the laws of a just and holy God. Well, we have hit there (of course) upon a very important part of the meaning of "salvation"; but only upon a part, and the partial interpretation itself requires to be explained before we can venture to accept it altogether; for it may be well questioned whether the Lord Jesus Christ in His capacity as Saviour does really undertake to deliver us from all the results of what we have done in the past, and does not rather leave a large part of our sin to work itself out to the bitter end. King David after his interview with the prophet was a forgiven man, and knew himself to be forgiven. In one sense he dwelt in the light of the countenance of a reconciled God; but, for all that, he never had peace again, and the life

which began so brightly, and culminated in so much honour and success, set at last in dense and gloomy clouds of sorrow, all distinctly traceable to his great transgression in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

So with ourselves, on our smaller scale and lower platform. Has a man been a drunkard, and after some years of excess has he turned, or rather been turned, to the living God? We thank God for it; but still the man is harassed by the past. He has lost much that cannot be recovered and replaced now. Perhaps even to the close, the sting of the fierce craving sticks in his flesh, and if it does not hurry him into self-indulgence that shames him, at least it calls for an attitude of the most painful, incessant vigilance, for an effort of the most resolute self-control, in order to prevent the old enemy from once more getting the upper hand. Have you squandered your property in your youth? Your conversion to God will not bring the money back again. Have you wasted your earlier years in idleness and neglect? Later on, perhaps, feeling the responsibility of the possession of talents, and wishing to use your gifts for God, you may earnestly devote yourself to study, but you will never become a scholar — the one opportunity has passed away. You cannot forego the intellectual sowing-time, and yet expect to reap the crop at last. And indeed, in less flagrant cases than these, there is not one of us who has lived carelessly — I do not say in open sin—but lived in carelessness, in neglect of God and of Christ, and of the means of grace, in practical forgetfulness of the responsibilities and privileges of the Christian position, and who has come out of that state, and is endeavouring now to the best of his power, and by God's help, to serve and follow Him, who loved him, and gave Himself for him—there is no such one amongst us who does not bitterly regret the past indifference, and does not feel the effect of it in blunted sensibilities, in slowness of spiritual apprehension, in an exposure to evil suggestions; in fact, in a subjection to doubts and difficulties, and misgivings and confusions, largely escaped by those whose life has been one act of consecration to God's service in the Gospel of His Son.

It cannot then be said that salvation is an indiscriminate rescuing from all the *consequences* of wrong-doing. Indeed, it is not any such thing. The consequences remain. God has laid down a law—that sin shall be followed, as the substance is followed by its shadow, by suffering and loss, and that law can never be reversed.

Well, but, you say, if it be so, what are we to understand by a saved man? He is one who has been delivered from the *worst consequence* of sin—which is the antagonism to God which sin produces—and delivered, by the overwhelming force of the Divine love, believed in, and brought home to his heart by the influence of God the Holy Ghost. When this has taken place, at once the man is lifted over a chasm, and introduced into a new world, and Scripture calls the transition a passing from death unto life.

It is a tremendous change! Formerly opposed to God, the man is now in sympathy with God. Placed on God's side, he hates what God hates and loves what God loves, and consequently, whatever may happen to him, he can know nothing of the sting, the torment, the hideous agony of self-reproach, the hatred of all goodness, the recoil from all purity—which constitutes the essence of the misery of the lost. Whatever else that man may be called upon to suffer, he cannot possibly suffer hell. He is at least saved from that. And as for the old results of his former life, from these, as we have seen, he indeed must not hope to be entirely delivered. But the change that has passed upon him affects them also, and alters their nature. The Divine love touches and transforms these penalties into the steps of a spiritual discipline, and by means of these the soul is gradually brought into more entire conformity with the mind and spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is also what perhaps may be called a "second salvation" to be taken into account. The first was a change of state; this is a process. Permit me, however, to explain more fully. Even when we have passed into the new spiritual region of which I have just spoken, we carry with us still the self-will, the self-seeking tendency of our hearts, and this manifests itself in various forms of evil, and from this we need to be set free. Saved then, in the first instance, by having been brought into harmony with God, we are being saved now from our cowardice, our falseness, our impurity, our pride, our vanity, our sloth: indeed, from everything which is inconsistent with the mind of Christ; and the instrumentality employed for that purpose is the power of God's Holy Spirit working through the teaching of the Word, through the monitions of conscience, through the discipline of our daily life. This we may say is a second salvation.

But there is also a third; and to this especially the sacred writer alludes in the passage before us.

The Divine intention concerning us being that in us the spiritual and the material should be united—in other words, that the soul should dwell for ever in a fleshly tabernacle—this intention is contravened by the action of sin. For sin, working through death, brings about a divorce between two things which God has joined together, and did not mean to be put asunder. But the contravention is only temporary. A day is coming when the sundered companions shall once more meet again, and man shall stand in the perfection of his complex nature before the eternal throne of God. That day, of course, is the day of resurrection. Until that day dawns our salvation is not, and cannot be, complete. The first step is taken when, by the power of Divine love, the enmity is dissolved and done away, and the union of man with God—heart with heart—is firmly established. The second comes in those processes of purification and discipline by which we are changed into the image of Christ, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. And the topstone is laid when the spirit is clothed with the spiritual body, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, and we shall also appear with Him in glory.

Three salvations, then—past, present, and future—have to be taken into account before we can fully understand what it is to be saved; and so, to come now to the point from which I started: Like Israel of old, we stand waiting while the Great High Priest is occupied for us within the veil. It is not the

waiting of idleness, but the waiting of earnest, eager expectation: the waiting of prayer, the waiting of diligent employment, of holy living. Our cry is, "How long, O Lord, how long?" We marvel that Christ tarries so long in the Temple. At any time He may return. We believe this, because He has said so Himself. Possibly, then, we may be spared the shame and horror of death. Who knows? We may be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye—clothed upon suddenly with our house for heaven. Who knows? I say. More probably, however, we shall have to succumb to the common fate, and lie down, when our time comes and our work is done, in the grave, passing to be with Christ in the calm unruffled peace, in the quiet haven of blessedness of the paradise of God. But anyhow, we go on our way now—we watch and labour—in the sure and certain hope that some day the Lord Jesus will appear unto them that look for Him without sin, unto the accomplishment of their full and perfect salvation.

A "GREAT SHROUDING" IN SHANGHAI.

"On the sixth day of the ninth month the venerable lady Zee-kiung-wei left this world. This afternoon, at four o'clock, the Great Shrouding Ceremony will take place. Moo-niang-niang (Mrs. Muirhead) is respectfully invited to be present.

"This is sent desiring your peace.

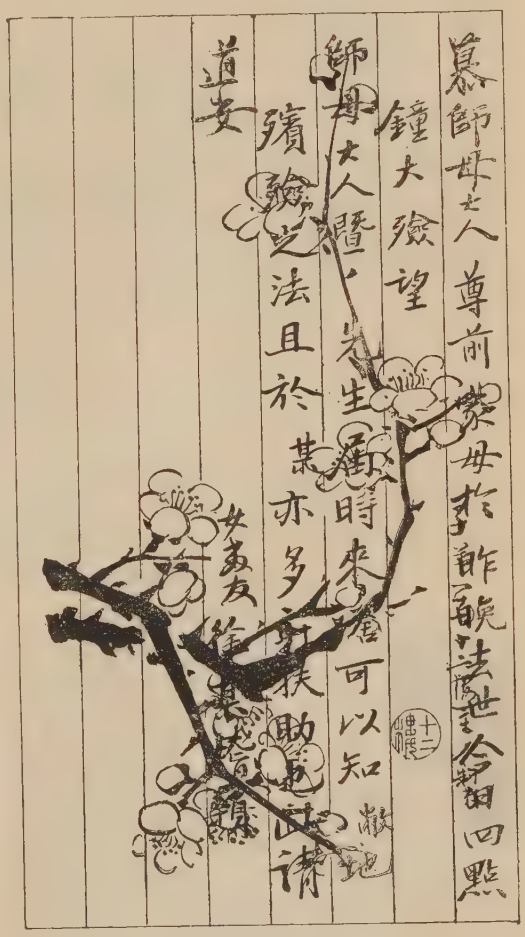
"Zee-mow-tsei,

"A humble disciple."

So ran a Chinese note, with my name in native characters on a little scarlet leaf pasted on the corner of the envelope. Zee-kiung-wei, the woman now dead, had been for some time a member of our native church, and Zee-mow-tsei, her only child, a girl of eighteen, the sender of the invitation, was, we believed, a sincere Christian. About a week before, the sick woman had been brought to a hospital, close to our house, where every care and comfort attended her; but the day before her death, her brother, a heathen like all her family, had insisted on her return to her poor dwelling, in a narrow, noisome street of the native city of Shanghai, that she might escape the calamity, as this people considers it, of dying away from home, although both native and English doctors assured her that such a proceeding must destroy her last chance of recovery. Pitiful was it to have her daughter clinging to us in agonies of tears, when she and we were obliged to submit to this removal.

So when next day we heard that she was dead, we decided to be present at her shrouding, partly for the poor girl's sake, and partly in hope of being able to hold a Christian service on the occasion.

We found a dense pack of people in the narrow alley outside, in the courtyard, and inside the house. Relatives were distinguishable by white cloths wrapped bandage-wise around their heads. At the entrance stood a mandarin's empty chair, and bearers of a red parasol, torches, and other official paraphernalia. In the yard were some musicians, performing by snatches the sharp, twanging noise so discordant to all western ears, save those of the bagpipe-seasoned Highlander. In the open entrance-room was laid on tressels, with the head towards the doorway, a huge wooden coffin, and beside it we found the orphaned daughter clinging to a kind native Christian woman belonging to a missionary household. The girl invited us to



THE CHINESE INVITATION.

view the body in an inner room; and a strange spectacle to us did it present—head and face completely enveloped in white wadding, like a great snowball.

With a gleam of satisfaction amidst her tears, the daughter informed us that four dollars' worth of cotton-wool had been thus applied. Thickly padded was also the poor body, beneath its bridal raiment, a robe of rich red silk disclosing a gorgeous-hued, heavily embroidered skirt. The feet were clad in white socks with very thick scarlet soles.

Without difficulty my husband obtained silence in the crowded outer room, while we sang in Chinese the familiar hymn, "Heaven is my home." Then he read a few Scripture verses, and spoke of the Christian hope of eternal life in Christ, and briefly prayed. Strangely incongruous sounded immediately afterwards the harsh wailing of the appointed mourners, as they rocked violently to and fro, pressing voluminous calico cloths to their tearless faces while the corpse was carried in and laid on some benches covered with a very large quilt of wadded crimson silk; this was wrapped around it, leaving the head exposed, and was secured with red silk cord laced all over it in an elaborate design. Now several small coverlets of the same kind were spread inside the coffin, and some copper coins arranged in a pattern upon the uppermost.

Then, with a fresh and fearful outbreak of lamentations, the corpse was lifted by several men and placed, or rather jammed, inside; by accident it was laid somewhat sideways, and much pushing and pulling and squeezing were required to bring the head into position on the scooped-out rest prepared for it. This achieved, the wadding was slit open so as to disclose the poor dead face, and then a bridal crown—a marvellous construction of red silk, spangles, and gilded ornaments—was placed on the head, and a pair of embroidered crimson silken slippers laid at the feet.

Sheets of coarse paper, about a foot square, were next spread over the corpse, layer upon layer, then a quantity of sawdust was shovelled in with tin pans. When all beneath was thickly covered with this, the paper beneath was cut down the centre and pressed back on the sawdust, forming a solid padding around the body, so that there seemed no inch of empty space. But yet another quilted coverlet was laid over all, then the huge lid put on.

Behind the coffin head there stood a small table, whereon were placed lighted candles, several bowls of food, and a pair of chopsticks.

Native laws of propriety required that the orphaned girl should remain seven weeks in her desolate home; we left with her the kindly woman before mentioned. It is our earnest hope that her Christian faith may stand firm against her hostile surroundings, and that in due time she may become a member of our mission church, and a useful Christian worker.

Saddening as was the scene described, we realised in some of its features that instinctive belief in an unseen world, a life beyond the grave, which must surely open the way, in these poor heathen hearts, to Him whose gift is life eternal, and everlasting joy.

At such a moment the Gospels of the world are on trial. In the presence of death how will they act? Act! they are blotted out of existence. Philosophy, politics, reforms are no more. . . . So awful in its loneliness was that hour, that the Romans paid a class of professional mummers to try and fill it. But that is Christ's own hour. Next to righteousness, the greatest word of Christianity is comfort, "to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn, to give beauty for ashes, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

ALICE JANE MUIRHEAD.

SUNDAYS WITH THE YOUNG.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR FINLAYSON, AUTHOR OF "THREEFOLD SALVATION," "THE ETHICS OF ATHLETICS," ETC. ETC.

LIFE'S CLOTHING: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

"He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."—ISAIAH lxi. 10.

IF you visit Portsmouth you may sometimes see passing through the streets a gang of convicts, on their way from the prison to the place appointed for their day's work. They march in military fashion, and are easily recognised by their convict clothes, of a dirty-brown colour, with the Government broad arrow stamped upon the cloth. While they are working, armed warders are stationed near them, and, as though to make escape impossible, a sentry with a gun stands on a raised platform looking down on them. Thus the greatest precautions inside and out of the prison are taken to prevent any of the convicts escaping. Yet sometimes a convict manages to elude the vigilance of the warders and to escape, though he is generally recaptured. His clothes betray him. He may break away from the prison, and breathe freely for a moment at the thought of liberty, but wherever he goes he is a marked man, and as truly known to be a convict as though he were confined within a convict establishment. His one hope of safety lies in his being able to rid himself of his convict garb, and to put on the dress of free men. To such a man the respectable dress of ordinary life, however humble, is worth more than food, or money, or

shelter. Now, I want to show you that, viewed in this light, there is a good deal of importance in the clothes we wear. The dress a person wears is often a table of contents, a sign of character. There is a saying which I do not like, "The tailor makes the man." I would rather reverse it, and say, "The man makes the tailor." And I would like all young people to remember another saying: "'T is not fine feathers make fine birds." Character is more than clothing. Still, the fact that the number of persons engaged in this country in making dress and clothing is nearly double the number of those engaged in supplying food, shows the importance that is attached to articles of apparel. The world thinks much of the clothing of the body. To-day I wish to claim your attention on a subject of much greater importance—the clothing of the soul.

The Lord Jesus Christ cautioned His disciples against over-anxiety in the matter of food, or of saying, "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" and urged them to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. These words of the Lord Jesus are directed as much to you and me to-day as they were to the disciples of old. In the corrupt days of the Roman Empire Pliny states that he saw a lady, called Lollia Paulina, dressed in a robe covered with pearls and emeralds, which cost in English money £432,000, and that this was known to be not the most expensive of her dresses. Such vulgar adornment gives a sad and shameful picture of the degradation of that age. It lends point and force to St. Peter's advice when he urges Christian women to concern themselves not so much with outward adornment, such as of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel—for all these things would perish in the using—but rather to occupy themselves with "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter iii. 4). The spirit will outlive the body, and therefore our spiritual character or clothing is more important than material garments.

If you received a command from your Sovereign to attend at Court, you would naturally go in Court dress. You would feel that your ordinary garments were not those in which to appear in the Queen's presence, and you would rigidly inquire for and rigidly conform to the Court regulations. Now, I am not able to give you an invitation to an earthly court, but I trust we may hereafter meet at the Court of the King of kings, and partake of His heavenly banquet. It therefore becomes an important question for you and me how we shall appear in His royal presence, before whom even the angels veil their faces and cry, "Unclean!"

The Lord Jesus, when on earth, taught us a parable which conveys a solemn warning on this subject. A king made a marriage feast for his son (St. Matt. xxii. 1–14), and sent out his heralds to call his subjects to the wedding. Some made light of the invitation and went their ways: one to his farm, another to his merchandise, and some even mocked at his messengers and killed them. But swift punishment overtook these men. "When the king heard thereof, he was very wroth, and he sent forth his armies and destroyed those men, and burnt up their city." Others came to the wedding feast, and for these garments were provided by the king. "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment." This man foolishly thought Court raiment was unnecessary; perhaps his own clothes were better than those of the other guests, and he vainly imagined his own clothes were good enough. At any rate, he had not troubled to put on the raiment the king provided. And now, under the searching eye of the king, he trembles; and when asked, "Friend, how camest thou hither not having a wedding garment?" he is speechless, feeling that he can make no excuse. His fate was just as terrible as that of those who refused to come at all. There is a very solemn lesson here for you and me. How are we to appear in the presence of God? Have you the wedding garment? You say, perhaps, "Well, I try to be good, pure, unselfish, and upright in my daily life." Ah! but remember, "All our righteousnesses are as *filthy rags*" (Isaiah lxiv. 6). Rags are unfit for a palace, and our best deeds are unfit for heaven. They will not bear the eye of God; and our best deeds are always imperfect and mixed with sin. In the presence of God, no man, however pure he may be, will attempt self-justification. Our cry must ever be, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." The Divine law declares, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). You cannot appear in the presence of God with a curse hanging over you. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). Continual obedience is required by the word "continueth," and perfect obedience by the words "in all things." This obedience we cannot render. But the Lord Jesus has rendered it in our behalf. He lived on earth a perfect life. He obeyed God's law in our behalf. He died voluntarily as our substitute, bearing Himself the punishment of our sins, while wholly free from sin; and now the righteousness which He has achieved He makes over to us. God accepts Him as our surety, and accounts us as righteous in Christ, if we surrender our hearts to Jesus, coming to Him as sinners, and clinging to Him as the Saviour of sinners. "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

> "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress;
> 'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
> With joy shall I lift up my head."

We are justified by Christ's life, for St. Paul says: "We shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10); and by His death, for the Apostle says, "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. v. 9). This is the wedding garment which God provides for all who enter heaven. There is no excuse for those who are without it, because God freely provides it as a covering for our souls.

The robe of Christ's righteousness is perfect and without a seam. This is the robe we must wear in the presence of God. It will cover our souls and clothe us with Divine righteousness. "If God be for

us, who can be against us?" St. Paul knew this, so he desires "That I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians iii. 9). We need the righteousness of Christ. Therefore the Apostle says, "*Put ye on* the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. xiii. 14). A great divine, known from his wisdom as "Judicious" Hooker, in a noble passage declares: "Christ hath merited righteousness for as many as are found in Him. In Him God findeth us, if we be faithful, for by faith we are incorporated into Him. Then, although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man which in himself is impious, full of iniquity, full of sin, him being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin in hatred through repentance: him God beholdeth with a gracious eye, putteth away his sin by not imputing it, taketh quite away the punishment due thereunto by pardoning, and accepteth him in Christ Jesus as perfectly righteous, as if he had fulfilled all that is commanded him in the law. Shall I say more perfectly righteous than if himself had fulfilled the whole law? I must take heed what I say; but the Apostle saith, "God made Him which knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God Himself. Let it be counted folly, or phrensy, or fury, or whatsoever. It is our wisdom and our comfort; we care for no knowledge in the world but this: that man hath sinned and God hath suffered; that God hath made Himself the sin of men, and that men are made the righteousness of God." I would like you to carefully remember this passage, because it states the truth, so far as man can state it, with scientific exactness; and clearness on this point will save much confusion of thought.

"'I had such a solemn dream!'"—*p.* 661.

If our acceptance by God depended in any degree on ourselves, on our efforts, our prayers, our repentance, our holiness, or even on our faith, we could never have any certainty of peace. These things are all important in their place, but our acceptance does not depend upon them. Good works, past, present, or future, are neither in whole nor in part the purchase-money of your redemption. It is altogether outside of yourself. With Christ's work and with His merits you must not intermeddle. To the infinite merit of Christ you must not seek to add your puny efforts and imperfections as a ground of acceptance. You are accepted by God solely and entirely in the finished work of Christ. "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. ii. 10). Hence, though your personal *condition* may be as changeable as the moon, your *standing* is *steadfast* as the sun, because founded on the all-sufficient atonement and the perfect righteousness of the unchangeable Lord Jesus Christ. "I may tremble on the rock, but the rock does not tremble under me." To build on the righteousness of Christ is therefore to build on a sure foundation. That is why I explained to you so carefully in a previous paper the value of Christ's atoning blood, and that is why I wish you to remember the value of Christ's perfect obedience and spotless righteousness.

A boy one morning said, on waking, "Oh, mother, I had such a solemn dream! I thought the judgment-day had come. I saw a great white throne, and the Judge had before Him some large books. I dreamed that I heard my name called, and though there were thousands of others, the Judge singled me out among all that multitude. I saw the Judge open a page which was black. I wanted to sink into the earth, but could not, and while I was in an agony of fear the Judge turned over a page which was red and white, and His stern look changed, and as He smiled at me I felt so happy that I woke." The boy's dream shadows forth a truth for you and me. The black page speaks of sin. God must already have many a black page in His book of remembrance against your name and mine. "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We be unprofitable servants" (St. Luke xvii. 10). Sins of omission and commission witness against us; but the truth of our salvation lies here: that God looks on us not as we are in ourselves—for that would be to pronounce our condemnation—but as we are in Christ Jesus, and thus He is able to pronounce our justification. The red page in the boy's dream pointed to Christ's blood shed on Calvary when He suffered as the substitute of sinners; and the white page to Christ's perfect obedience and to His spotless righteousness. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). Justification is the exact opposite of condemnation, and where there is the one, there cannot be the other.

The religion of Jesus Christ is full of brightness, peace, and joy. The child of God can daily say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah lxi. 10). Under the old covenant, the law said "Obey, and thou shalt live;" and so the poor Israelite was ever striving after obedience in the hope of obtaining the far-off promise of life. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ reverses those conditions and puts an end to our fears. Its message is, "Live in order that thou mayest obey." Christ gives us life, light, liberty, and love. He draws out, like a magnet, our love to Him, and gives us a motive power for obedience. The root must precede the fruit; grace first, then growth. Pardon and peace first, then power. Union first, then communion. When the wheels of a clock move within, the hands will move on the dial without. When we put on Christ, we reflect His image.

"I would not work my soul to save,
For that my Lord has done;
But I would work like any slave
From love to God's dear Son."

We are not to lead a holy life in the hope that we may be saved. That were to buy pardon. We are saved by Christ that we may glorify Him in our lives, which are His. Young friend, are you resting on the Lord Jesus? You must receive Christ into your heart before you can reproduce Christ in your life. Receive Him to-day, and rejoice evermore in His salvation.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

JULY 17TH. THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

To read—Acts ii. 37—47. *Golden Text—ver.* 47.

INTRODUCTION. Last lesson told of gift of Holy Spirit to apostles. St. Peter, taking the lead, told the crowds assembled at the report of the strange signs that this outpouring of the Spirit was a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. He then showed how the resurrection of Jesus was a proof of His being indeed the Messiah expected by the Jews. To-day's lesson shows the result of this sermon.

I. REPENTANCE. (37—40.) See the first effect of the sermon.

Conviction of sin. Their great sin brought home to them.

They had crucified their Lord and Messiah.

This conviction produced by Holy Spirit, as foretold by Christ. (St. John xvi. 8.) But was not enough of itself.

Judas saw his sin, and committed another.

What more is necessary for salvation?

Repentance—(ver. 38)—including three things—

Contrition—real sorrow for sin.

Confession—acknowledgment of it. (Ps. xxxii. 5.)

Change—a new and holy life.

They must also make public profession of the Christian faith by being baptised. (St. Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

Then they too would receive the Holy Ghost.

God's promises not confined to the Jews.

He will receive all who obey His call.

II. FELLOWSHIP. (41—47.) What a wonderful day!

Began with 120 Jewish Christians. (Ch. i. 15.)

Ended with 3,000 of various nations.

All baptised with water and the Holy Spirit.

Notice four marks of their new manner of life:

They continued steadfast in—

Doctrine—taught by the apostles about Christ.

Fellowship—no division: all one body.

Breaking of bread—partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Prayers—apparently one common worship.

Three outward signs of God's power with them—

Mockers were silenced.

Miracles (wonders) were wrought

Christian fellowship was established.

Remind how Christ taught duty of alms-giving.

Young ruler bidden to give to the poor. (St. Matt. xix. 21.)

Parable of sheep and goats. (St. Matt. xxv. 45.)

See also the marks of their conversion—

Worship daily in the Temple.

Praise or thanks for their "daily bread."

Love to all the brethren.

Thus the infant Church grew and multiplied.

III. LESSONS. The true order of the Christian life—

1. *Repentance* towards God.

2. *Faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

3. *Love* towards all men, shown by common fellowship, alms-giving, and prayer.

JULY 24TH. THE LAME MAN HEALED.

To read—Acts iii. 1—16. *Golden Text—ver.* 16.

INTRODUCTION. So far all has gone well with the early Church. Has had its baptism of the Holy Ghost, great increase in its numbers, great fervour of love among its members. All has been bright. Now clouds arise. Persecution and trouble are at hand. A miracle of healing results in imprisonment. To-day's lesson tells of the miracle.

I. THE MIRACLE. (1—10.) Two apostles going up together to the usual afternoon service at the Temple on Mount Moriah.

Three regular hours of prayer. (Ps. lv. 17.)

Morning—third hour, 9 a.m. (Acts ii. 15.)

Noon, sixth hour. St. Peter's prayer. (Acts x. 9.)

Evening, ninth hour, 3 p.m. Christ died (St. Luke xxiii. 44, 46), and this miracle wrought.

The man. A cripple from birth, laid daily to ask alms from worshippers, as still at most churches abroad.

The place. Gate called "Beautiful," made of Corinthian bronze, leading from Court of Women to inner court of the Temple.

The petition. For alms, as had asked of many thousand worshippers for nearly forty years.

The answer. "Look on us"—disciples of Jesus Christ.

Probably seeing had faith to be healed. (xiv. 9.)

"Silver and gold none"—apostles had not enriched themselves.

"Such as I have"—power to heal.

"In the name of Jesus"—above every name. (Phil. ii. 9.)

The cure. Immediate and complete. Described by the writer (St. Luke, physician) in medical terms.

The lame man leaped as a hart. (Is. xxxv. 6.)

He at once praised God in the Temple.

LESSONS. The lame man a type of all sinners.

Disease—life-long, no human remedies.

Faith in Jesus Christ only means of salvation.

Obedience to His word secures blessing.

Praise and worship must follow healing.

II. THE DISCOURSE. (11—16.) Picture the scene.

The lame man clings to the two apostles.

The crowd hastily collect in Solomon's Porch.

St. Peter at once seizes the opportunity.

It is not they who have done this marvel.

God has glorified His Servant Jesus.

The same so lately crucified by them.

Faith in His name alone has wrought the cure.

Notice these points—

St. Peter's humility—deprecating himself.

His boldness—accusing them of murder.

His earnest extolling of Jesus Christ.

LESSONS. The duty of those who call themselves Christians—

1. *Steadfastness* in the faith of Jesus Christ.

2. *Boldness* in proclaiming Him to all.

(1 Cor. xv. 58.)

"Thy name is as ointment poured forth."

JULY 31ST. PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

To read—Acts iv. 1—18. *Golden Text—ver.* 12.

INTRODUCTION. St. Peter's address to the people (last lesson) was suddenly interrupted. He and St. John had worked a miracle of healing on a man lame from his birth. A great crowd had assembled, to whom St. Peter preached that Christ Whom they had crucified was their risen and ascended Lord. But his preaching aroused the enmity and opposition of the rulers.

I. APOSTLES IN PRISON. (1—4.) Who seized them?

The priests—just arranging the evening sacrifice; probably some of the same who delivered up Christ (St. Matt. xxvii. 1) eight weeks before.

Captain of the Temple. Captain of Levitical guard told off to keep order in the Temple.

Sadducees—who denied any resurrection. (Ch. xxiii. 8.)

What was the cause of offence?

Preaching the doctrine of the resurrection.

But this the central truth of the Christian religion. (1 Cor. xv. 14.) Special stress always laid on it. *See* i. 22. Choice of Matthias to be witness of this.

So the apostles were imprisoned.

But the truth prevailed. The believers increased from 3,000 to 5,000.

LESSON. "My Word shall not return to Me void."

II. APOSTLES BEFORE THE COUNCIL. (5—12.) What was it?

The Sanhedrim—council of seventy Jewish elders.

Rulers—learned in traditions.

Chief priests—heads of religious parties.

Scribes—versed in the Jewish law.

The judge—Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas.

As many as possible of his family come to support him.

One common feeling of enmity to Christ and His followers.

Remind how Christ stood before same tribunal.

And Peter stood outside listening. (St. Luke xxii. 61.)

Then in cowardice he denied Christ.

Now in boldness he preaches Christ.

The miracle was done in the name of Jesus.

The same foretold in their Scriptures as Christ.

Their rejection proved Him to be the Messiah.

God had exalted Him as Head over all.

He is the only Saviour of souls and bodies.

LESSONS. 1. *The power of the Holy Ghost.*

The timid denier become the bold confessor.

"So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

2. *The only way of salvation.*

Through the humble and despised Jesus.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

III. APOSTLES SENTENCED. (13—18.) What happened?

The miracle could not be denied, for the once lame man stood there whole.

The apostles were recognised as having been with Jesus. The Council remembered the wonders following His condemnation.

So they simply forbade them, under pain of punishment, to teach in the name of Jesus.

Next lesson will show the result.

LESSON. "Who is he that can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?"

AUGUST 7TH. THE APOSTLES' CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

To read—Acts iv. 19—31. *Golden Text—ver.* 31.

INTRODUCTION. This lesson follows immediately upon the last. The two apostles, St. Peter and St. John, had been commanded by the Sanhedrim, the spiritual rulers of Israel, neither to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus. This lesson shows their reply.

I. A BOLD ANSWER. (19—22.) Picture the scene.

The seventy elders sitting in solemn council.

The two prisoners standing, guarded by soldiers.

The high priest sums up and gives the decision.

The apostles at once challenge the verdict.

They must obey God rather than man.

They *must* speak of and for Christ. (1 John i. 1, 3.)

How astonished the Council must have been!

And how powerless they find themselves!

The apostles defy them to their face.

The multitude take up their cause.

The miracle is incontrovertible.

They can only threaten and release them.

What made the apostles so bold?

1. *The justness of their cause.* They were doing right.

2. *The Spirit of God*—as promised by Christ. (St. Matt. x. 19, 20.)

LESSON. "Thou hast saved us from our enemies."

II. A FERVENT PRAYER. (23—31.) No doubt prayer had been sent up unceasingly during the time of suspense. How glad would be the welcome given to the two apostles! Now again they pray.

(*a*) *Plea.* God is almighty, Ruler of the world.

In vain do any rage against Him.

Heathen—such as Roman soldiers.

People—as the Jewish nation.

Kings of the earth—Pilate and Herod.

Rulers—the Jewish Sanhedrim.

All united against Christ, God's Son.

But only carrying out God's will.

(*b*) *Prayer.* For boldness to preach Christ.

For continued power to heal.

For signs to be done in His name.

Result. An immediate answer.

A further outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

Great boldness given for speaking.

LESSONS. 1. To be willing to suffer for Christ's sake.

2. To hold obedience to God before obedience to man.

3. To take all troubles to God in prayer.

AUGUST 14TH. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

To read—Acts v. 1—11. *Golden Text—Gal. vi.* 7.

INTRODUCTION. The persecution of St. Peter and St. John seems to have drawn the Christians very closely together. They were "of one heart and one soul." (iv. 32.) This was evidenced by their looking on their possessions as intended not for themselves only, but for the common good of all. Most of them gladly and voluntarily gave up their lands, houses, etc., and brought the proceeds to the apostles. The result was that none lacked—the poor were maintained from a common fund, and Christian love prevailed. To-day's lesson tells how this led one man and woman into sin.

I. THE SIN. (1—4.) Question on the story.

The persons. Two nominal Christians—proved to be tares among the wheat, as foretold by Christ. (St. Matt. xiii. 30.)

The sale. Sold a house or land for a certain sum, and kept back part for themselves.

The gift. Brought part, pretending that was all.

The discovery. St. Peter found them out. How?

By the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

The accusation. Ananias was tempted by the devil.

He had yielded and done the sin.

A sin against God the Holy Ghost. (Compare verses 3 and 4.)

The sin. What was it?

Perjury—falsehood against God.

Sacrilege—taking from God what was professed to be dedicated to Him.

The motive. Desire of vainglory. Wanting to be well thought of and yet to keep their own.

II. THE PUNISHMENT. (5—11.) Death.

Either natural, from sudden stoppage of the heart caused by the fear and shame at discovery, or supernatural, by God's stroke.

Then follows the fate of Sapphira.

She shared in the sin and punishment.

Notice. The sin was *premeditated*—not done on impulse of the moment.

It was also mutually *agreed upon*—husband and wife deliberately planning the sin together.

It was a tempting or provoking God.

Why so severe a punishment?

1. To mark God's abhorrence of sacrilege.

Remind of punishment of Nadab. (Lev. x. 2.)

2. To act as warning to the infant Church.

None greedy of gain may come near God.

RESULT. Fear came on the Church. How?

God's honour was vindicated.

God's apostles were magnified.

Hypocrites were warned off.

III. LESSONS. 1. "The love of money is a root of all evil."

"Into it [heaven] shall enter none that maketh a lie."

2. "Be sure your sin shall find you out."

4. "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

FRANK'S FOLLY.

BY EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN, AUTHOR OF "WYHOLA," "THE STRONGER WILL," "DOROTHY'S VOCATION," ETC. ETC.

FRANK was an enthusiast, and Frank (it must candidly be admitted) was also foolish—not always, but sometimes, and especially when he let his enthusiasm outrun his common sense. The two qualities are not inseparable by any manner of means; still, they are frequently bracketed together: which is a pity, for the enthusiasts would do more good in the world if they were rather oftener endued with an equal proportion of calm judgment and sound common sense.

Then Frank was young as well, and we all have to buy our experience; and Experience, as a great writer says, is an excellent master, but he is also very dear. However, his lessons generally prove worth the fees paid for them, and so accounts balance themselves in the end.

Frank was walking up and down his friend Nigel Holt's comfortable bachelor chambers in Halfmoon Street, and Nigel was arguing with him in an elder-brotherly way, which showed how intimate the two young men were together.

"My dear boy, do listen to reason; I tell you that such an experiment will be no experiment at all. You will go through horrible discomfort; you will very likely knock yourself up for the summer—for you are none too robust at the best of times; and you will have gained nothing—least of all what you wish to gain. Give it up, there's a good fellow, and come down with me to General Alwyn's. It's a first-rate sort of house to stay at—good tennis-lawns, a real old-fashioned country house, nice people, and pretty daughters. Young Alwyn's a capital fellow; and you know he asked you to come down with me if you could."

"I know, and I declined. I'm going to pull this thing off first, Nigel, before I make any summer plans at all. Not gain anything, you say? Why, I shall have gained an insight into the lives of hundreds and thousands of our fellow-creatures which nothing else could ever give me. What is the use of our talking of them and their needs, when we none of us have an idea what they live through and what they suffer? The only way is to live with and amongst them for a time—even if it be only a short time—and I mean to do it before I am a month older."

"I know you do, you obstinate, hot-headed boy!" answered Nigel, smiling placidly, but shaking his head; "and I'm well aware that you will do it whatever I say, for it's about as easy to throw down a brick wall with one's hands as turn you from any Quixotic purpose you've taken into your head."

"Pish!" said Frank impatiently. "I hate that word Quixotic. I wish Cervantes and his doleful knight at the bottom of the sea."

"Which shows your lamentable lack of appreciation of literature, my dear boy. You always were one-sided, and always will be, I fear, till you have got a little wisdom knocked into that hard head of yours."

"Oh, I know you think I'm a fool," cried Frank,

"They realised in a moment who the sleeping tramp was."—*p.* 668.

laughing; "but some of these days one of us will have to sing to a different tune."

"Just so," answered Nigel; "but just listen here a moment, Frank, and I will tell you why your proposed experiment will be no experiment at all. You propose, as I understand, to array yourself in a suit of the oldest clothes you have got—clothes that you will take care are sufficiently tattered to make you look like a tramp at starting (they won't, you know, but you will think they do, and be happy)—and then, without a penny in your pocket, you will start out on a tramp of some hundreds of miles, earning your bread as you go by working with your hands wherever you can get a job, and sleeping under hedges, or in barns, or anywhere you can get taken in, as——"

"As hundreds of poor fellows have to do every night of their lives, summer and winter," cried Frank, firing up. "It is the normal life of multitudes of our fellow-creatures, and of the class that all agree is the most difficult to understand—the most difficult to legislate for—the most difficult to relieve."

"Exactly—the great vagrant class is at once the most degraded and the most hopeless of the whole community; for wholesome regular work is its abomination, and those who live the vagrant life soon learn to prefer beggary, or even theft, to honest hard work; wherefore even philanthropy itself quails before the task of doing any permanent good to its members as a whole. And you think you are going to solve the problem and cut the Gordian knot by this precious experiment of yours!"

"I think nothing of the kind," answered Frank

hotly—he and Nigel seldom met without a quarrel, but they were none the less staunch friends for that; "but I think, and I know, that I shall obtain by it an insight into the ways and the lives of these people, with their privations, trials, labours, and pleasures, that will give me a better appreciation of the question than I have ever had before. At least I shall know something of how they feel, and I shall have made a real acquaintance with many of them, and have learnt from them their experiences, which——"

"My dear boy, you will have done nothing of the kind. Do you suppose these tramp fellows will take you for one of themselves, go as ragged as you will? Do you suppose that we should take one of them for one of our world if you shoved him into a dress-coat and walked him into a drawing-room? They are as 'cute as needles, these fellows. They will know you at once for a stranger; and you know the original meaning of *hostis*—an instinct of the uncultured human mind which we find in all states of primitive development. You one of them! You treated as a comrade and friend! My dear fellow, if we were school-boys again together, I should advise you to go and tell that to the Horse Marines. As it is, I fear you will insist on having your eyes more rudely opened."

Frank shook back his hair impatiently; he had let it grow a little long, thinking it would favour his disguise.

"It's no good talking to you, Nigel."

"It's certainly no good talking to you, old man, only we always do talk. What beats me is the way you seem to think that you start on equal terms with these poor fellows of vagrants, because you elect to go ragged and penniless. Why, man alive, think of the difference! Here are you, a man who has always been used to his three meals a day, who has no real knowledge of the sort of work demanded by the farmers, who would find beggary impossible, and theft—well, we need not speak of that—setting out in competition with great hulking fellows who have knocked about in gaols and unions, who have been used to turning their hand to any and every kind of hard manual work, and who have any number of comrades upon the roads to give them a friendly shove if they are down on their luck! What sort of a chance do you think you can possibly have amongst them? You will be footsore in three days, especially if you go about in the orthodox down-trodden boots; you will likely enough be scouted by the farmers, for you haven't the physique of a labourer, and they want strong chaps for hay and harvest: and the crops are heavy this year, they all say. You certainly will find no favour with your 'mates,' and if you get off without an accident or an illness, you will be luckier than you deserve to be. Come now, Frank, be a sensible fellow, and give it up. It won't work, I promise you that; and you will only be disgusted and disappointed in the end, if nothing worse happens. Come down with me to the Alwyns', and forget that you ever took such a hare-brained notion into your head."

But Frank shook his head, and only smiled. He and Nigel viewed this experiment from two totally different sides. Frank could not say that his friend had no reason on his: but he considered he had at least equal right upon his own, and he had made up his mind to do this thing, be the result what it might.

"Well, I wash my hands of you," said Nigel at last, in despair. "Gang your ain gait, and end a sadder and a wiser man. All that I can say is, Don't go without a stamp about you, and a sheet of paper and an envelope; and if you are sick of the whole thing in a week's time, write to me or your banker for money; and if you knock up, as is very likely, at some horrid little wayside pot-house, I'll strain my friendship so far as to come and get you out—but it'll be the last time I'll have anything to do with you and your mad escapades. I wish you had a wife to keep you in order, for I'm a Dutchman if anybody else can!"

They parted friends, as they always did in the long run; but Nigel wondered in what plight he should next see his friend, for he was convinced this scheme would come to grief in the carrying out; and Frank had a knack of getting himself into tight places, from which his friends had to extricate him as best they might. He only hoped he wouldn't come to worse grief than usual; but he was so uncommonly obstinate, he would likely enough let himself be brought to the verge of starvation before he would yield and own himself beaten.

"He would only say that what other men *had* to bear, he ought to be able to do, and persevere so long as he had a leg to stand upon. The boy is a perfect fool on some points: not but that it's an heroic kind of folly that has a fine side to it, though I wouldn't let him know I thought so for all the world. Well, I wish he were well through it, that's all. I don't like it a bit."

Nigel, however, was powerless to interfere, and he had his own plans formed for the next few weeks. The close of the following day found him one of a merry house-party at General Alwyn's, and for a time Frank and his folly went clean out of his head.

There was a special attraction for Nigel at that house, in the person of the General's daughter—gentle, blue-eyed Emmeline. He had met her in London since his last visit to her father's house, and he began to feel that the interest with which he had always regarded her was being returned to him. Of this he was not sure—he was afraid to let himself hope too much; but he did not intend to leave the Grange this time with his fate still undecided.

There were several visitors in the house, and the party was a merry one. There was Sybil Trent, a bright and lively damsel, the affianced wife of young Alwyn, the son and heir of the old people; and there was another girl there, almost like a daughter of the house, Maud Alwyn, an orphaned cousin of Emmeline's, who divided her time between the Grange and the house of another uncle.

Maud was slim, dark-eyed, and quiet; but when she did speak she spoke fluently, eagerly, and to the point. She was generally to be found in the garden, buried in a book; and though she played tennis well, and would respond readily to an invitation to make up a set, it was plain that the book had the greater charm, and if not wanted she would quickly slip off to it again.

Emmeline said she was a "dear," and the two cousins were plainly very much attached. Sybil

would laugh and shake her head sometimes when Maud's name came up; and one day, as they were all sitting together in the great yew arbour—the cousins, George Alwyn, Sybil, and Nigel—George began laughingly to tease Maud about some of her "ideas," whilst he told stories to the rest as to the out-of-the-way things she had done at different times in her life.

"She 'll turn into one of those eccentric individuals who set up homes for stray cats, or spend fortunes in buying up caged wild birds and letting them go again," he said. "It doesn't matter in the least that others will be caught in their place, so that the supply will be equal to the demand. She will go on working happily in a circle, and think that she is gradually stamping out that particular form of oppression from the world."

Maud only smiled at the laugh raised against her; and as the talk drifted into various channels, grave and gay, but all concerned more or less with women's work in the world, it was plain that she had ideas of her own deeper than those of her companions, though she was quite ready to take their banter, and be made in a certain sense the butt of the party.

"You ought to know my friend Frank Arnold," said Nigel presently. "You and he would get on capitally together."

"Arnold?" said George quickly; "that s the man I met in your rooms one day—a very nice fellow he was, too. We all dined together afterwards, didn't we? I asked you to bring him down here with you. Why didn't you?"

"He had other fish of his own to fry, or I would have done. Poor old fellow! I wish I knew what he was doing now. I 'm expecting every day to hear that he has come to hopeless grief, and to be summoned to pull him out of it."

"Why, what on earth is he doing?"

"Oh, the maddest thing! He 's one of those fellows always trying to see what can be done to raise the lower classes, as they are called, and no end of his time is given to recreative evenings, and such-like things. He 's got tremendous big winter classes of great hulking lads nobody else can do anything with, and he licks them into shape in a wonderful way. I admire the fellow immensely, though I always quarrel with him for driving his hobbies hard; but this last idea of his is a little too much."

"Why, what is it?"

Maud's eyes were eagerly fixed upon Nige; her attention had been arrested from the first. Perhaps Frank's name had been heard by her before. She did not speak, but she did not lose a word of what was said.

"Oh, you 'd never guess. The boy 's fairly cracked. He 's one of those born enthusiasts that never know where the dividing line between sense and extravagance lies. He 's been reading up all he can lay hands on with regard to the vagrant classes, and finding that by all accounts they form the nucleus of the floating population of vagabonds and idlers over whom it is next to impossible to get any influence, what does the boy do but resolve himself to go on tramp—to see what the life is like, with its hardships and temptations—so as, if possible, to see some way of getting into touch with these poor ragamuffins nobody knows what to do with."

"You don't mean it, really?" cried George, laughing. "Why, how on earth can he hope to succeed?"

"That 's just what I say; but he was full of enthusiasm, and he was going to do the thing really thoroughly: starting absolutely penniless and ragged, without a thing but what he stood up in, and a towel, and a hunch of bread and cheese done up in a red handkerchief."

"Oh, gracious!" breathed George softly. "Is the fellow clean daft, to try such a thing?"

"How could he?" cried Sybil, with a little shudder. "Won't he have to sleep in the most filthy places?"

"I believe he intends to sleep out of doors, and bathe in the rivers as he comes to them. He rather draws the line at dirt—whereby he will prove to a certainty the great gulf that divides him from his would-be comrades; but of course he can't see that; and for the rest, he will live just as they do. I have been wondering what he has been doing these last three nights, when the rain has come pelting down in great showers. It is a nasty thing, feeling that a friend of one's own may be lying drenched under a hedge, laying up a fine heritage of rheumatism and other ills, to be worked off later. I wish to goodness I knew where the boy was now! I 'd go straight off and see if I couldn't compel him either to come with me, or to apply at the nearest lunatic asylum for admittance."

"Oh, how can you talk like that?" broke in Maud, suddenly. "I think it is a splendid thing to do! If everybody thought of other people in that way——"

"We should all turn into tramps and vagabonds; and I suppose that would just suit you, Maud, for it would leave our houses vacant for all the ex-tramps and concealed criminals to shelter in."

Maud turned quickly upon him as though to reply sharply, but seeing the good-humoured smile upon his face, she only said, with unwonted gentleness—

"You know quite well that that would not be the way to help them; but I *would* help them if I knew how. And I think it is a thing to be respected and not jeered at, when a man does anything so self-sacrificing and practical as Mr. Holt's friend has done."

"Practical!" said Nigel, smiling a little. "Frank would be delighted to hear that word used with regard to any pet scheme of his; but I am always telling him that he is the most unpractical fellow in creation; and certainly this seems the most unpractical of all his unpractical schemes."

"In one way, perhaps," answered Maud thoughtfully: "I don't think it is likely to do much practical good to anybody, or even to succeed in giving him much insight into the phase of life he wishes to study; but in another way it is very practical: it is the most practical proof of his good-will and sympathy with those unfortunate creatures for whom so little seems able to be done; and it will give him a practical sympathy for their wants and their sufferings which may make him a greater power amongst them all the days of his life. The rest of us can say that we are truly sorry for them—but how many of us can say

that we have ever ourselves known hunger, want, cold and wretchedness? I think it is a splendid thing to do, though I do not think it is very wise."

"I will not gainsay you," answered Nigel, with a smile, "but I do wish sometimes that it was not a friend of my own who persists in getting himself into such straits. I never sit down to dinner without wondering if Frank may not be toiling, hungry and weary, in some hot hay-field for a crust of bread, nor lie down in bed without wondering where the poor fellow is sleeping."

"And perhaps if we wondered that a little more about hundreds and thousands of our brothers and sisters every day, there might not be so many of them wandering about homeless and starving," said Maud quickly.

"I don't profess to know," answered Nigel gravely. "The whole question is such a wide and such a solemn one. Men are awaking to new thoughts and new efforts—that one cannot deny. How far they will be successful in coping with the vast amount of human sin and misery in the world one dare not even guess; but at least they are showing us that nobody can stand actually idle without incurring grave responsibility."

George and Sybil had by this time wandered away, rather tired of the conversation, now that it had taken so grave a turn. The sun, which had been very hot all day, with that scorching heat which betokens the presence of rain in the air, had now sunk lower in the sky, and a light breeze was blowing over the land. Hot days, with rain at night, had been the prevailing weather of the past week, and now in the west great banks of cloud were rising.

"I'm afraid it will rain again to-night," said Emmeline. "It is such a pity for the farmers who have hay still to carry, though rain at night does not matter half so much as rain by day. Shall we take a little walk? We shall have plenty of time before dinner, and it will not rain yet."

The proposition was readily agreed to, and the three started forth across the field, and reached the high-road about half a mile from the house. Crossing this, they made their way over another field, and towards a little dell through which a brook ran gurgling. It was a favourite spot with the girls, and was one of the prettiest bits of scenery in the neighbourhood.

Emmeline, who was most familiar with the narrow winding track through the brushwood, led the van; Maud followed her, and Nigel brought up the rear. They could not talk much as they threaded their way single-file towards the brook, and their footsteps made little sound upon the moss and fallen leaves of many years. All of a sudden Emmeline stopped short with something like a start, and turning back upon Maud, she said—

"There 's a man lying by the brook; I think he 's a tramp. He may have been drinking, perhaps. Don't let us go on."

Emmeline was easily frightened by anything in human form, though bold enough with all animals, domestic or wild. Nigel, coming up at the moment, suggested that he should go and see if the fellow were likely to be offensive, and the girls made way for him to pass, following in his footsteps, for they were not afraid when he led the way.

As he approached the recumbent figure, he suddenly started forward. The next minute he was bending over it, shaking it gently by the shoulder, his face full of the liveliest mixed emotions.

"Frank, old man! Frank, I say! Wake up! Whoever would have thought of finding you here? Wake up, old fellow! don't you know me? Why, you surely have not been following the example of your new friends and getting half-seas-over this time of day? There, that 's more like it! How are you, old man?"

The girls, fully alive to the dramatic force of the situation, drew back a little into the bushes, regarding the scene with the liveliest curiosity. They realised in a moment who the sleeping "tramp" was, and eagerly waited for what would happen when he recognised his friend.

Frank sat up slowly, and rubbed his eyes as though to dispel the mists about them.

"Nigel, old fellow," he said, in a very hoarse voice, "is that you? Where on earth am I? I've had a most uncommonly bad sort of dream. Hallo? What are we doing out here in a wood? What does it all mean?" And then he looked down at his soiled and tattered garments and bleeding feet—for the boots had almost given out some time ago—and recollection came back to him.

"Get up; you 'll get your death of cold lying there on that wet moss. Had enough of life on the tramp yet? I say, old fellow, you can hardly stand. Oh, Frank, Frank, what a fool you have been! What 's wrong with you?"

"I've a touch of rheumatism, and I think I've got a cold," said Frank, who could barely get upon his feet even with Nigel's assistance. "I'm afraid it 's not turned out a great success. You were quite right, old man, only don't hit me now I'm down. I've not had much to eat these last days, since I couldn't get a job, and I didn't want to own myself beaten. If you 'd just help me to a decent cottage where I could get a shake-down and a meal, and stop a night or so, I shall be as right as a trivet soon."

He was anything but right now. He was shivering all over, and dazed and weak. Nigel hardly knew what to do with him, for there was no cottage within view; and indeed, his host's house was the nearest place; and how could he bring there such a wretched object as poor Frank now appeared? Whilst wondering what to do, something white fell at his feet, and, picking it up, he saw that it was a little note in Emmeline's handwriting.

"Bring him across the field to the road, and you will find there a bundle, with a hat, an ulster, and boots and socks. We will run home and see to that. Then you can bring your friend in by the side door, and the room next yours will be ready for him. Don't hesitate—it 's the only thing to be done. I will explain everything to papa and mamma. "E. A."

With a murmured blessing upon woman's wit in general, and that of his little lady-love in particular, Nigel prepared to carry out this plan, thankful for Frank's sake that the girls had not shown themselves at this instant, and that he need never know they had

seen him in such sorry plight. It was a matter of considerable time to get him across to the spot where the path crossed the high-road, but, once there, safe behind the hedge was the promised parcel, and with it a flask, the contents of which enabled Frank to reach the house more easily than Nigel had expected. Frank was too much bewildered by it all to wonder how it came that clothes and boots were gathered, as it were, from the hedge-rows. He let Nigel do what he would, and hardly spoke again till, warmed and fed, and safe in a comfortable bed, after having enjoyed the luxury of a hot bath by his bed-room fire—lighted in July, in spite of the summer heat—he turned a more comprehending look upon his friend, and said—

"I don't know where on earth I am, old man."

"Why, at the house you ought to have been in these past ten days, to be sure—at General Alwyn's, where you were invited to accompany me. You came a little late: that's all: but it'll be all right, never fear. I've wired to town for your things, and they'll be down here before you're fit to put them on. We'll have a good time of it now, if this wonderful tramp of yours isn't going to give you rheumatic fever or any trifling reminder of that sort, which you certainly richly deserve."

Frank smiled, and fell asleep almost immediately, and was quite unconscious how his story was passing from mouth to mouth down-stairs, and what a hero he was to certain amongst the younger and more romantic of the company, whilst the elder members thereof shook their heads, and said that people should not run such risks, even for the sake of trying to do good.

Yet though many animadverted upon his folly, all felt kindly towards Frank himself; and when, after the best part of the next day spent in bed, he struggled into his own garments lately arrived from town, and made his appearance to thank his host and hostess for their timely hospitality, he was quite the lion of the evening: and so much sympathy was lavished upon him, and so much interest vouchsafed to his tale, that Nigel declared it was quite putting a premium on his folly, and that his head would be hopelessly turned.

Not that the tale was a very exciting one, or that the would-be tramp had met with many adventures worth recounting. It had been very much as Nigel had said. The real tramps knew him for a stranger, and would have nothing to do with him; the broken-down gamblers and card-sharpers whom he came across more than once were so utterly depraved in mind that he felt he could hold no intercourse with them. His physique was not such as farmers wanted in the men they employed; and as the rain at nights often stopped the day's work in the fields, he often could get no employment, and hardly knew how to keep body and soul together. He had gained some bitter experiences, certainly, and experiences that might give him a new power in the future. He said he did not regret what he had done, although he was truthful enough to admit that his immediate object had not been attained. He did not speak much of the things he had seen and learned during his recent experiences when he told his story to the ring of eager listeners in the drawing-room. But these were spoken of later on to a single attentive listener, when he and she were slowly pacing the garden walks, or sitting at ease beneath the trees, whilst the rest enjoyed their game of tennis, or threw themselves anew into the long-despised croquet contests, which were now declared to be as amusing as ever.

Frank took some little time to recover from the privations he had endured, and the nights spent out in the damp and chill of wet summer skies. He did not have the tremendous illness Nigel told him he had courted, but he was weak and out of sorts for many days, unequal to the exertion of walking beyond the limits of the garden, and unable to take part in any of the more energetic sports organised by the younger section of the house-party.

And yet he was not often alone, and he did not appear to be in any way depressed by his misfortunes. It was Maud Alwyn who was almost always his companion during the days that followed, and it seemed as though between those two there could never be any lack of subjects of mutual interest.

"The two enthusiasts get on well together, eh, Emmeline?" said Nigel, recently promoted to the place of accepted lover of the daughter of his host. "What a pair of them there will be in the future! It's a precious good thing that both of them have money, for they will need it to make ducks and drakes of with their precious schemes of——"

But Emmeline put her hand over her lover's mouth.

"I won't have you say nasty things about my Maud or your Frank, and I think you agree with them much more than you pretend to. Maud is the dearest girl in the world, only I used to be afraid she would never marry, because she doesn't generally care much for young men, and she seems too grave for them. Yet I always hoped she would, because I used to be afraid she would grow morbid if she lived always alone."

"And I always said of Frank that he only wanted a wife to keep him in order and his ideas in bounds to be the best fellow in the world. Well, as the proverb says, 'All's well that ends well,' and I will forgive Frank even this last piece of egregious folly since it has been the means of winning him an out-and-out good wife."

"She's not won yet," laughed Emmeline. "And there's another proverb that says, 'There's many a slip—— '"

But there was no slip that time, and Emmeline was wrong, for Maud was being won that very afternoon, and Frank was reaping a strange and unexpected reward for his folly.

A Hymn for Children.

Words by Mrs. Luke. *Music by* J. W. Elliott.

Andante con moto.

1. I think when I read that sweet sto - ry of old, When Je - sus was here a - mong men,.....

Sempre legato (♩=120).

How He call'd lit - tle chil-dren as lambs to His fold, I should like to have been with Him then.....

R.H.

I wish that His hand had been plac'd on my head, That His arm had been thrown a-round me,.....

dolce. *cres.*

And that I might have seen His kind look when He said, "Let the lit - tle ones come un - to Me.".....

dolce. *cres. e ral - len - tan - do.*

2. Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go,
   And ask for a share of His love;
   And if I thus earnestly seek Him below,
   I shall see Him and hear Him above:
   In that beautiful place He has gone to prepare
   For all who are washed and forgiven;
   And many dear children are gathering there,
   "For of such is the kingdom of heaven."

3. But thousands and thousands, who wander and fall,
   Never heard of that heavenly home;
   I should like them to know there is room for them all,
   And that Jesus has bid them to come.
   I long for that blessed and glorious time,
   The fairest, and brightest, and best;
   When the dear little children of every clime
   Shall crowd to His arms and be blest.

"CONSIDER THE LILIES."

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE RE-OPENING OF A VILLAGE CHURCH.

BY THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF ARMAGH.

THESE words remind us of the important truth that beauty is, quite as truly as usefulness, divine.

The nun may symbolise consecration by funereal black, and we, who blame her, may likewise reckon dreary surroundings to be religious; but the God Whom we worship covers His dove with silver wings and feathers of bright gold.

And because man is created after the image of God, the instinct for beauty is deeply ingrained in his nature also, and testifies there for his Creator.

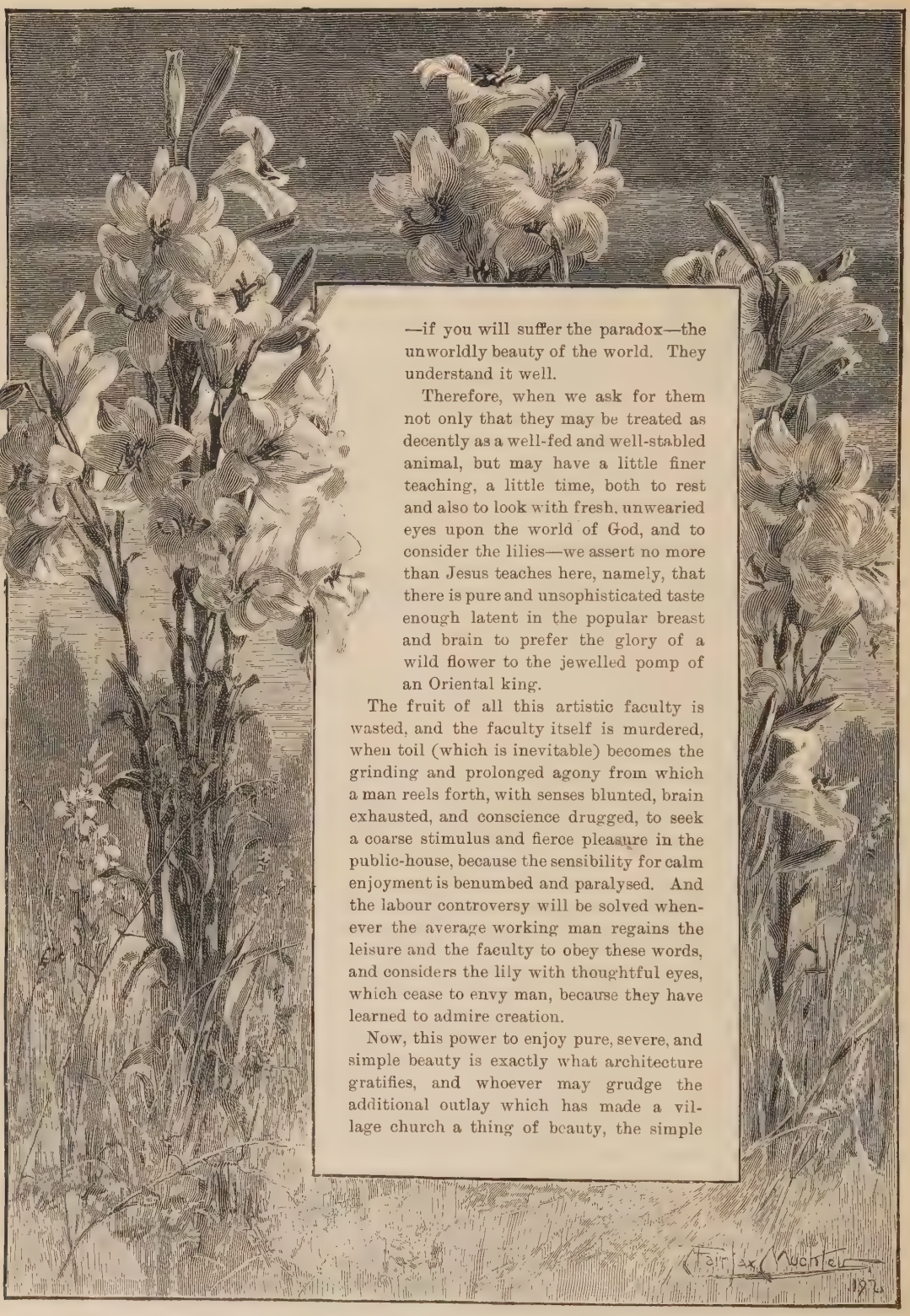
The inspired Isaiah is a prince of poets; the praises of the sanctuary set themselves to the noblest music; and many a lovely village church bears witness that the same instinct for beauty which fires the imagination of holy orator and poet, and tunes the sacred musician's lyre, seeks also a concrete and monumental expression in the glories of sacred architecture. Whereupon, some well-meaning observer asks (and his question is eagerly repeated by all the penurious and grasping who seek an excuse for their selfishness), "What need is there of rich and costly architecture? Where there is a roof to exclude the rain, and walls to screen us from the cold, what more do we require for worship?" In a sense, we may answer, "Not even so much is needed." Men have rendered acceptable worship on the storm-beaten mountain-side, on foundering decks, and amid the fires of martyrdom. We shall provide little if we only offer what is necessary for the abstract notion of worship. The roof that screens us does not commend our prayers: it only gives comfort to the worshipper, and, by excluding distractions and disturbances, assists the composing of his heart to prayer and praise; and the beauty of shaft and doorway, pavement and window, ought to give the same worshipper an elevating joy such as the ancient prophet felt, when the charm of minstrelsy attuned his soul for inspiration. Whoever spreads a carpet on his own floor, or brightens his reception-rooms with tasteful ornaments, or his walls with paintings (although men have lived and been sociable in the loneliest cottages), confesses the same instinct which leads his brethren, who love the place where God's honour dwelleth, to seek the beauty and honour of the assembly-hall of the religious commonwealth, the house wherein God meets His people, the palace of the Great King, which they, like David, would fain see beautiful for situation, and a fair place.

It is certain, at all events, that our Lord not only shared the love of beauty, but felt its religious import; else why should He bid His congregation to consider the lilies? If He had said, "Consider the stars," that would, in some sense, be unworldly; or, "Consider a corn-field or a gold-mine," that would, at least, be practical; but lilies are neither one nor the other.

Here was a vast congregation of provincial peasants, poor, toiling, rough men, little addicted to æsthetic reveries; and here was a Teacher who had the secrets of eternity to proclaim, able to draw them away from earth and its littleness to the New Jerusalem, with its pearls and gold; or else, if He treated of our world at all, to utter high discourse about solid work, such as alone is deemed to make life respectable and sacred. Or, again, he might have handled deep questions of abstruse divinity. Does it not seem just a little frivolous, a waste of time, and even slightly sentimental, to spend any portion of the Sermon on the Mount in bidding peasants and fishermen to consider lilies? To our cold modern utilitarianism this must be so; nor will any defence be found for this appeal to the loveliness of a flower, in the heart of the most solemn teaching, which does not defend also the richness of traceried windows and the stateliness of carved roofs.

A notable lesson taught by these words is that simple Galilean country folk, who represent all the untaught (if only they are unsophisticated as well), could see, when it was pointed out to them, that the beauty of a flower is greater than that of imperial robes. All the long story of art and literature proclaims the same truth—that the people have eyes and appreciation. The simple, straightforward consciousness of the common folk has poured the song of Burns, and embodied the vision of Bunyan, and painted the canvas and spread the dome of Giotto, and carved the marble of Chantrey, and clothed in the noblest of merely human words the still nobler thought of Shakespeare. Therefore Jesus habitually appealed, not only to the conscience of humble men and women, but also to their love of nature, the corn-fields and the vine, the bird nestling in sheltering branches, the lightning shining across all the sky, and the roaring of the stormy sea.

You admire the pictorial richness of His style; but do you observe that He poured out all this wealth for the benefit of the simple Galilean peasantry? And their successors to this day love and appreciate His teaching, among deeper reasons, because its pictures stir within them a sense of the mystic meaning and



—if you will suffer the paradox—the unworldly beauty of the world. They understand it well.

Therefore, when we ask for them not only that they may be treated as decently as a well-fed and well-stabled animal, but may have a little finer teaching, a little time, both to rest and also to look with fresh, unwearied eyes upon the world of God, and to consider the lilies—we assert no more than Jesus teaches here, namely, that there is pure and unsophisticated taste enough latent in the popular breast and brain to prefer the glory of a wild flower to the jewelled pomp of an Oriental king.

The fruit of all this artistic faculty is wasted, and the faculty itself is murdered, when toil (which is inevitable) becomes the grinding and prolonged agony from which a man reels forth, with senses blunted, brain exhausted, and conscience drugged, to seek a coarse stimulus and fierce pleasure in the public-house, because the sensibility for calm enjoyment is benumbed and paralysed. And the labour controversy will be solved whenever the average working man regains the leisure and the faculty to obey these words, and considers the lily with thoughtful eyes, which cease to envy man, because they have learned to admire creation.

Now, this power to enjoy pure, severe, and simple beauty is exactly what architecture gratifies, and whoever may grudge the additional outlay which has made a village church a thing of beauty, the simple

reverential worshippers from the country-side will never join in their complaint. The text which teaches this about our fellow-man has something more important to tell us about God.

God is revealed in the beauty of His universe. And many of you know the importance of the part which beauty now plays in the evidence for religion in relation to modern theories.

We are told that our old argument from design is shaken; that the survival of the swiftest, strongest, tallest specimens has forced animal nature into its present moulds, forming it, without any exercise of creative wisdom, by the mere vulgar necessities of existence; that just as we ourselves, choosing the fittest animal and the sweetest fruit, have made a modern sheep and horse and a modern apple and grape to be strangely unlike their wild progenitors, so the pressure of stern necessity, choosing some and rejecting others, has brought us ourselves, and all things around us, into their present condition.

The variation which was useful survived by helping the creature which bore it to live long, and a variation which dragged its bearer down disappeared along with him in his ruin.

We cannot now pause to say how much this theory leaves unexplained, how much it positively contradicts, and how strangely, while struggling to abolish design, it appeals to our own intentional and calculated acts. Unbelieving science complains that religion is "anthropomorphic," but the grievance could much more plausibly be retorted. Design, plan, patient action are what it is always, most irrationally, imputing to blind chance.

But when we consider the lilies, we are reminded that a survival of the most useful and best equipped, the force to which all our present order is attributed, does nothing to explain the marvellous wealth of loveliness in our world—a world which is even more full of beautiful things than of things which may be eaten, things which can aid us in the struggle to exist.

Is beauty no evidence for an artist, a great spirit, producing spiritual effects, such as make our own spirits, in exact proportion to their purity and nobleness, tremble with mysterious sympathetic yearnings?

To this a twofold answer is offered us, at once hesitating and instructive. Much beauty, we are told, is nothing but association of ideas, so that evening charms us by the suggestion of repose, and vegetation by reminding us of provision. As if a granary were more beautiful than a bank of gorse! as if the most subtle and delicate intimation that a bank-note is useful did at at all enhance its loveliness! as if time and habit would presently cultivate the same emotion for a pillow and curtains as for the purple curtains of the dawn.

Again, we are assured that the beauty of flowers and animals may be explained by the consideration that the fairest animal was most easily mated, and so multiplied its like, and the most brilliant flower most surely attracted insects, and was fertilised with pollen.

A marvellous rejoinder. For it ascribes beauty to selection, and to culture by living intelligences, which is an erring step, if the road we seek is toward the denying of all intelligence in the process which arrayed in a loftier beauty the seas and mountains, the skies with their ever-shifting lights, and the mystic splendour of hidden crystal and deep-buried gems.* If the rose needed living creatures to raise it to its present loveliness, what then of the pomp of spring on the hillside, and morning spread upon the mountains? Surely we feel in these thought, thrill, the presence of a soul with which our souls burn to hold communion. Surely we discern that—

> "Some sublimer painter dips
> His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse."

Thus, considering the lily, we are made aware of God. And what a God! One who dwells not in a remote, untrodden, lonely shrine, but lavishes loveliness all over His creation—and not for man's enjoyment alone, but also for His own, since the loneliest nooks are exquisitely finished, and bear witness that "for Thy pleasure they exist and were created;" a God who fits us also, made in His image, to rejoice in the works of His hands; a God who waits and works patiently, and is content to bid a lichen creep over the naked rock, where one day the deep soil shall nourish the tossing forest; a condescending God, who gives a more perfect finish to the primrose than to the mighty pine that overshadows it, and heals with exquisite device of moss and creeper the scars inflicted by earthquake and tornado; a God whom we can recognise again in the condescending patient Healer, since He who tends the lily will not leave the deep cravings of human hearts unfed, nor fail to do for His children on their knees what He has done so plentifully for the grasses which they kneel upon.

* Cf. Kennedy, "Donnellan Lectures."

"SWAPPING HORSES."

IT has been left on record by the wise men of old that it is unwise to "swap" horses while crossing a stream. The unwisdom of the proceeding is obvious. You must get into the stream to complete the exchange, and the stream may carry you away. Now this kind of thing is more frequently done than we imagine; and it will be my endeavour in this paper to put before my readers some of the ways in which we show ourselves indifferent to the teaching of the proverb.

John Smith is an old acquaintance of mine, though that is not the name by which other people know him. He has been, ever since I knew him, a pushing man, full of schemes for his own advancement, and yet he has never advanced far—he fell into the stream too often, and then had to wade out again. He was a lawyer's clerk some years ago, and when the two little heads that sat at his table were suddenly multiplied into four, he began to think it was time to increase his income in pretty much the same ratio. An old schoolfellow of his was a well-to-do farmer, who, even in the bad times upon which agriculture has fallen, was able to make a good living. He it was who, Eve-like, dangled the tempting bait before our Adam. "Why not turn farmer?" said he. "The rents are so much lower now than they used to be that any duffer [I do not think this was intentional] could make it pay."

Prudence whispered into John Smith's ear, "Take a small farm first, and spend all your spare time there, and then see whether, with the assistance of a good bailiff, you can get along or not. You will have your regular salary coming in to form a sort of financial backbone," etc., etc. But, as it often happens in this world, prudence was sent to the right-about; so was the salary; and, by-and-bye, so was nearly everything else. John Smith was crossing the stream, you see, the stream of "Many Chances," and when he got down from one horse (Moderate Income) to mount the other (Increased Prosperity), he went into the water more deeply than he intended—in short, he fell into deep water, and floundered about there till his friends came and pulled him out. They made him give up the farm and go back to the form, and all the thanks they had was something like this: "Just at the very moment when the tide was beginning to turn in my favour! In another year I should have pulled myself level. Friends, indeed! Deliver me from my friends, if they serve me like——"

At this moment the door of the sitting-room opened, and Mary Jane, the little maid-of-all-work, said, "If you please, sir, the man has called for the rates; and he says if they are not paid by Saturday he will have to put you to further trouble, sir."

Then John Smith turned to his wife and said, "I wish you would go down to Stephen's and ask him to lend me a five-pound note. He said if I ran short I could have a small loan from him."

And yet the tenor of this poor man's thoughts was, "Deliver me from my friends"!

Charles Jones was another man I knew. He was not at all a bad sort of man (of course he wasn't, or I shouldn't have known him), but he was hardly ever in the same mind two days together. Still, he had, by industry, and a large share of what men call luck, succeeded in making a very good business as an auctioneer. Perhaps his changeable temperament was rather in its element in a business of this kind—things were "going" all the year round, and the more the merrier. In short, so merry had the business become, that Mr. Jones began to think it was about time he took to himself a wife. For some time past he had "had his eye" on a young lady he had been acquainted with for years, and who, I am bound to say, was well disposed to him; but, unfortunately, he had a roving eye, which glanced upon another lady, and this complicated things. For while he almost felt himself in honour bound to number one, he also felt himself bound to honour number two. It was certainly an embarrassing position, such a position as, upon general principles, a man should avoid. These ladies were both pretty, they were both young, they were both well dressed, they were both hot-tempered—I mean high-spirited—they were both well-educated, they were both willing (from his point of view) to become Mrs. Jones. In point of fact, there wasn't a pin's point between them, except that he felt sure of number one, and not so certain of number two. What could the poor man do? Some of my fair readers will say he should have consulted his inclination. He did, and there was no incline either way; it was a dead level. Then he consulted his friends. They said it was much too delicate an affair for them to interfere in, for (as they politely put it) Mrs. Jones might in after-years get to know what advice they had given, and might never forgive them. At last Mr. Jones made up his mind: he would repair to number two and ask her to accept him. He did: she didn't. It was all over the town in a day or two, and number one heard of it. It was all over with Mr. Jones, too, for a day or two. But his natural energy soon recovered from this knock-down blow.

But number one was a woman of spirit, as I have before indicated. "She was not going to take up with another woman's cast-off—not she. If Mr. Jones had wished to have her, he should have asked her before." He said he would ask her twice to make up for it. She still refused. "For the third and last time," said Mr. Jones, lapsing into a business phrase. She was obdurate; and he who had so often sold to the highest bidder was himself "sold" by one who would not bid. You see, of course, how the proverb applies. One woman was ready to be this man's wife, but he "swapped" her for another while crossing the stream of uncertainty, and fell in.

I knew another man, Robert Brown. He was a near neighbour of mine, an industrious, steady son of the soil, who had worked his own way up, and, from being cowman to a large farmer, had become cow-keeper for himself. He had several cows, two or three small fields, and one large and never-failing pump. His hay was all made and ready to be carried one day, and it could have been carried that day, only that Mr. Brown wanted to go to the flower show that was held in our little county town on that very same day. It did seem a pity to leave the hay unearted. "But then," as Mr. Brown said, "one day could make no difference." But it did; for it rained the next day, and the day after, and it rained, off and on, for the next three weeks, so that when the weather took up at last, very little of that hay was worth taking up at all.

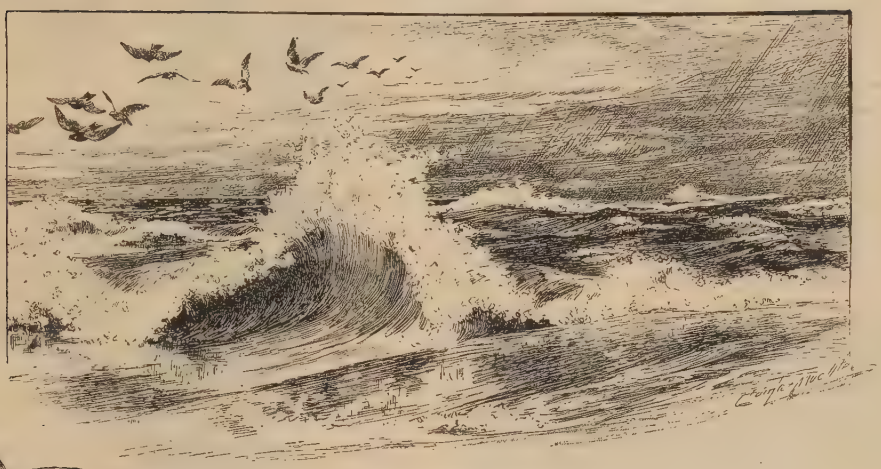
And here again you see how the "swapping" was done. Mr. Brown was riding his horse "Fine Day" through the stream of "Opportunity," and in dismounting he fell into the water—though in this case, literally, the water fell into him.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.

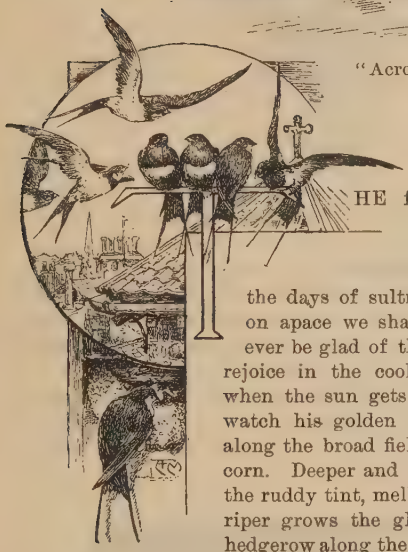
THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS.

(GOD IN THE BOOK OF NATURE.)

"The stork knoweth her appointed times."—JER. viii. 7.



"Across thousands of miles of stormy sea."



THE full flush of June summer-tide is past, and as the days of sultry July come on apace we shall more than ever be glad of the shade, and rejoice in the cool air at even when the sun gets low, and we watch his golden beams strike along the broad fields of waving corn. Deeper and deeper grows the ruddy tint, mellower, richer, riper grows the glory of every hedgerow along the harvest-field, the rosy burden of the orchard, and the purple splendour of the heathery down and moorland waste. Every now and then comes a day of sultry cloud and calm, when woodland, field, and meadow seem wrapt in repose. Not a leaf stirs; no voice of bird along the brake. Except at early dawn, when light first breaks over the hills, or long after sunset, when the peace of summer night reigns far and near over the wide expanse of heaven and the sleeping world below, no one voice out of the myriad songsters of the feathered choir is to be heard. At the first faint glow of trembling light in the eastern sky the thrush breaks out into a morning song of praise, which the skylark soon bears swiftly upwards to the gates of light; and when the glory of sunset has died away into the softer radiance of ten thousand stars, the mellow pipe of the blackbird may chant a strain of closing benediction; but among the world of birds July is a time of silence.

But, for all that, every hedgerow is full of life; and though the days of building, and nesting, and rearing the young brood are pretty well over, there is still work on hand which the anxious parents have not forgotten and will not neglect. A brood of young birds, although well fledged, feathered, and furnished, have yet to be taught, trained, and guided. The wise instinct which by the Creator's ordering has taught the old birds how, where, and when to build wisely and well, and to bring up their young in safety, still cares for the callow brood, until within them, too, wakes up by degrees the apt intelligence and the keen foresight that have been the birthright of the whole race ever since it was first said, "*Let fowl fly in the open firmament of heaven.*"

Come now across the little mossy lawn outside the vicarage window, down to where we can get shelter under the deodar, and quietly watch what is going on. It is late, now, for Madame Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) to be having family cares, but yet, as you may see, they have not ended. There on the smooth grass by the laurel hedge are the two anxious parents (the cock resplendent with orange bill) and three young ones, all busily in search of food; foraging in and out among the rose-bushes, digging up grubs and worms, the children almost as big as their elders—their part in the work being now and then to stand with open mouths and wait for some dainty to be dropped in by the busy father or mother. Twenty yards away, perched on the back of an old garden-seat, is the well-known and dainty little Flycatcher (*Muscicapa grisola*), and, beside her, are two young birds, for whom every now and then she darts out into

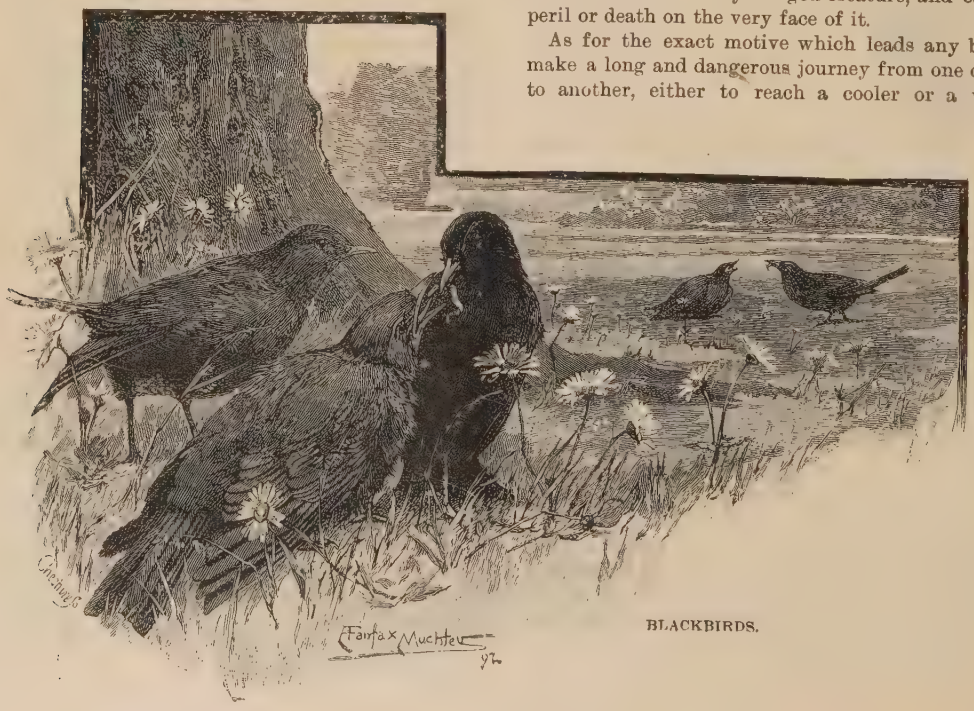
the sunlight, captures a fly or tiny gnat, and brings it back to her hungry children. All the way, thousands of miles, across the wild and stormy sea, did this little nimble bird wing her weary flight from the far-off shores of Southern Africa. She set out on her long, long journey towards the end of April, speeding on, day after day and night after night, though she may never before have travelled that way, and with unerring instinct reached not only the island which she sought, but the exact part of it most likely to afford rest and shelter; or, perhaps, the very same woodland retreat where she was born and bred, or reared her young.

And this brings us to the greatest of all wonders and mysteries connected with a bird's life and being, and that is the sudden migration from one country to another, at certain fixed times and under certain special guidance and laws with which we superior beings have no acquaintance, and can account for only in one way. Some men of learning (science so-called), indeed, tell us that the bird does this by dint of superior knowledge and experience gained through endless generations of winged creatures, growing brighter and keener as century after century went by.

But, put to the test, no such explanation will hold water for a moment. For what does it amount to? There was a day when the little flycatcher, or the nightingale, or the tiny golden-crested wren, or the swift-winged swallow, knew only her own land and her own climate, cold or hot, wet or dry, and dreamed not of any other, far off or near. But suddenly there came a season when a voice said, Fly away to the south, across thousands of miles of stormy sea, and you will come to the very land, the exact climate, the very feeding-grounds and woodland shades you long for. Surely no bird would obey any such voice, or for a moment dare to plunge headlong into a strange habit unknown to any winged creature, and carrying peril or death on the very face of it.

PIED FLYCATCHERS FEEDING YOUNG.

As for the exact motive which leads any birds to make a long and dangerous journey from one country to another, either to reach a cooler or a warmer



BLACKBIRDS.

climate, it is not possible to speak with any certainty. But, inasmuch as full-grown birds in any country would have no great difficulty in procuring food for themselves only, it is but fair to conclude that one main object in their flight is to provide a proper diet for their future brood of young ones. For, though a sufficiency of food for the able-bodied and hardy adult may be found in most climates, yet the exact, fitting nourishment for the tender infant may be altogether wanting. One country—nay, every county—may abound in a particular species of insects rarely, or perhaps never, found in another, though close at hand; and this very diet may be almost a necessity for the young bird. Thus, there is one species of bunting which, at one stage of its existence, requires at least an occasional diet of grasshoppers; and Mr. Montague* tells us that until he found this out he failed again and again in rearing a young bird of that special kind. It is doubtless, therefore, this stimulus which, by a deep-set instinct, leads the willow-wren and the golden-crest (though Cristatus often stays with us all through the winter), and many other of the insect- and fruit-feeding birds, to direct their flight to other—possibly distant—regions, where the happy days of nesting and breeding are to be spent.

But among all the birds that fly and sing in the shady woods of England, not one, as a migrant, deserves more to be noted than the tiny golden-crested wren. Creeping in and out through the hedge, or flitting from tree to tree, as we see it, and seldom attempting any longer flight, it is marvellous to think of so small and defenceless a creature ever setting out on a voyage over the wide sea. Yet at a certain period of the year it is known to traverse the fifty miles of stormy weather between the Orkneys and the Shetland Isles without possibility of rest, there build, and bring up its tiny brood, and then set out again for a milder climate.

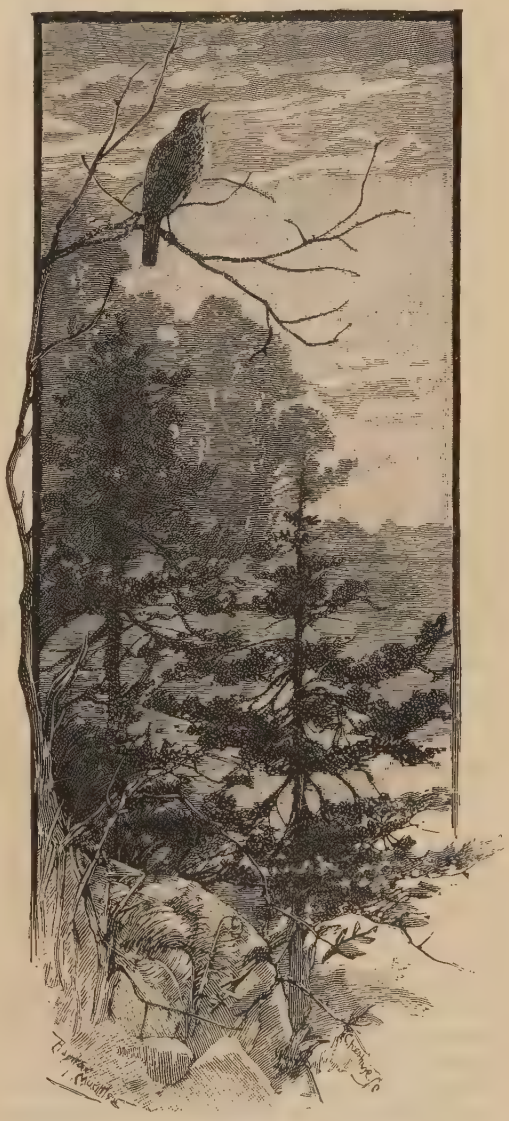
For any such wondrous and universal habit as this no mere inherited wisdom from bygone generations of birds will suffice to account.

There waits for us a wiser, simpler solution than this, wonderful and surprising as it may seem to human beings gifted with reason by an all-wise Creator, and yet unable to vie with the bird of passage in foresight, skill, or power of flight. The bird from the far-off shore of the sunny south, or the wintry coast of the frozen north, sets out on her long, mysterious, and perilous flight, to find a more genial springtide air, or a less bitter cold, simply and only because He, from Whom comes the life and the intelligence of every created thing, breathed into that creature at the first all that she needed to know. The first flock of winged and happy songsters that ever flew under heaven knew all that the wisest bird of passage now knows. The tiny golden-crested wren (*Regulus cristatus*)—so tiny that the entire weight of a full-grown bird is but ninety grains—set out on her perilous journey against cold and storm and rain, darkness and snowy whirlwind, thousands of years ago, as full of hope and unerring instinct as she now does to the far-off woods of Kent or the leafy vales of Hampshire. It is but a spark of the same wise and swift intelligence, and from the same living and eternal source, that taught the honey-bee to build her waxen cell in one exact shape of simple and perfect beauty; the spider to weave her geometric web with faultless skill; the wasp and the hornet to fashion their nests of paper such as no human skill can equal or imitate. To all and to each one of His creatures He, Who alone could, has given that, and exactly that, equipment of structure, intelligence, or reason necessary for its life and continuance and well-being.

And all these has He set before us—the greatest of His handiwork—that we may see and admire in them His goodness and His power; not only that they may magnify Him in their degree, but that we may love and adore Him.

B. G. Johns.

* Linnæan Transactions, Vol. VII.



A TREBLE SOLO.

SAMENESS WITHOUT MONOTONY.

BY THE REV. MICHAEL EASTWOOD.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."—HEB. xiii. 8.
"Behold, I make all things new."—REV. xxi. 5.

OME sixty thousand sermons are preached in England every Sabbath. And as the day draws near the preacher asks himself, "What shall be my theme?" In most instances the answer comes with no uncertain sound—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day."

Well that it is so, or we could not resume our duties and face the people again. Were we but able to point to an idea, to elaborate a doctrine, to repeat a tradition, or bid the people look at ourselves, we should soon fail to reappear. But our business is to point to Another, and to repeat a story that is old, but ever new, because it is of Him.

Thus it is that the people bear with us, with our infirmities, with our shortcomings, with the natural poverty of our discourses as viewed in themselves. Remarkable it would be that people have listened to preaching for nearly two thousand years if there were no Jesus Christ behind it all.

It is of Him we now speak: of Him who is ever "the same." When these words were written they meant: Jesus Christ of to-day (the Gospel day) is the same as Jehovah of yesterday (the Old Testament day). Does not this enlarge our views, ennobling not the Master Himself, but our conception of Him? Yesterday God created the heavens and the earth; to-day we find that it was He—Jesus Christ—without whom nothing was made. Now we know who walked with Enoch, who wrestled with Jacob, who talked with Abraham, who revealed Himself to Moses, who led His people like a shepherd—Jesus, the same yesterday and to-day.

Always the same. The only (real) difference is the atmosphere through which He is viewed. I used to stay in Cumberland, and right away in line with the street, twenty miles distant, was a grand and venerable mountain—Skiddaw—always there, always the same, and yet different every day, every hour. Some days, however, it could not be seen. Clouds rolled between, but it was there, all the same. Other days it seemed close at hand, seen through the atmosphere that precedes rain, when distant objects grow near—a peculiar sombre atmosphere; then the mountain almost overshadowed one with its solemn grandeur. And some days, when the earth was deluged with golden light, and as sunbeams fell athwart the mountain, it seemed further away and yet much nearer, its details startling in their far-away distinctness. Always there, always the same; and yet, how different!

Thus we are reminded not only of the sameness of Christ, but the infinite variety—may I reverently say?—the infinite novelty in Him.

In Him there is sameness without monotony.

We do not like monotony. How it wearies! A long road without a turning and without variety: how it wearies body and mind, and multiplies one mile into three! A dreary expanse of country, without a river to mark it with streak of silver, without mountain or hill to relieve the dead level, without clustered trees to refresh the eye—how it tires! A monotonous sermon ("all of a thickness," as a northern boy described it)—how hard to bear!

Now, it is said of Christ—He says it himself to no less a personage than St. John—"Behold, I make all things new." So there must be in Him infinite resources of heavenly novelty.

How different from ourselves! We weary one another with our sameness. We repeat the same commonplaces in our conversation; we write the same things in our letters; we utter the same platitudes in our religious exercises—and God has more patience with us than we have with each other.

Yet now and then we meet with a man about whom there is continually something new; who is always the same, and yet never twice alike; who always seems to have a chapter in reserve; whose life, as we know it better, ever unfolds in a way that charms the senses, enlightens the understanding, and warms the heart. Think of such a man, superior to all you know, and for whose engaging friendship you sometimes think you would give all you have. Yet even he would weary many. And at best he is a cipher, when contrasted with Him in whom is all the fulness of the Godhead and all the perfection of humanity.

Even His enemies never grow tired of Him.

And that "for ever": who shall say what it will reveal to us? Yesterday and to-day are ample guarantee of what to-morrow will be. Yesterday—Old Testament day and imperfect dispensation—what variety! Many a dreary life would be charmed by a study of the Old Testament alone, with its infinite variety of light and shadow. To-day—Gospel day—who can read the books, who can see all the pictures, who can hear all the music; who can measure all the good inspired by Him, who maketh all things new?

Now, let us adapt our theme, and take "yesterday" as the early Gospel day, and "to-day" as the present, deriving the comfortable assurance that Jesus Christ is *the same Companion and Friend* to-day as yesterday, *the same Teacher* and *the same Saviour.*

I.—THE SAME COMPANION.

What beautiful glimpses we have of the companionship of yesterday, almost tempting us to wish that we had lived then instead of to-day. But yesterday is so

vividly pictured in the Gospels that we may know what to expect to-day.

Yesterday Jesus began His mission at a homely gathering—a wedding-party—changing water into wine and disappointment into gladness. And even when He did not speak or work, how eloquent and comforting would be that silent presence and companionship.

See Him with His Apostles. How ends the list of their names? I once gave a class of boys the little task of learning and writing out the names of the Twelve. I was surprised to find, in every instance, that the list wound up with the words, "And they went into an house." The verse that contains the names of the last Apostles ends with those words. Now, what the boys repeated mechanically let us repeat with intelligent thankfulness — Christ in the house, Christ in the home, the same to-day as yesterday.

Think what He must have been in His mother's home for thirty years. And, lest we should be discouraged at the thought, we have the assurance that our association with Him may be real and close and beautiful, as, stretching forth His hand (yesterday) towards His disciples generally, He said, "Behold my mother and my brethren, for whosoever . . ." (St. Matt. xii. 49, 50).

Yesterday He took the little ones up in His arms, laid His hands upon them, and blessed them. And, no doubt, this is given as a sample of what He often did. Is He the same to-day? What means the band of 500,000 Sunday-school teachers (in our own country alone) every Sunday afternoon gathering around them some 5,000,000 scholars, and, without pay, without coercion (save the constraining love of Christ), telling those children the old, old story? What is meant by all the entrancing books and papers published for children to-day?—Jesus Christ, the same Friend of childhood to-day as yesterday; no longer embracing two or three children in the Temple cloister, but a great multitude that no man can number. For where He took one child to His arms yesterday, He takes a million to-day. Ah! yes, alike to child and Apostle, He is the same yesterday, to-day, always.

Do you realise these things? We spoke of the mountain a little while ago sometimes seeming near, sometimes further away, sometimes invisible. That was to distant souls. But to the dwellers upon its side the mountain was always there. They lived upon it. They could feel it day and night, always the same. So do they who are rooted and established in Christ Jesus. And this privilege is yours.

II.—THE SAME TEACHER.

"Lo! I am with you alway." Is He not ascended up on high? Yet to an eminence where all can see Him. When on earth, He said, "The Son of man which is in heaven." If in heaven when on earth, surely on earth when in heaven.

This is attested by the spiritual knowledge of those who walk with Him. He expounds Himself to them. It is attested by the 60,000 sermons preached every Sunday. He is the sermon; He is the Word. It is attested by the Sunday-school, where some of our little ones know Jesus to-day better than did the Apostles yesterday—after three years' association with Christ "after the flesh." Yes, *He is the Gospel; He is the International Lesson.*

And time would fail to tell of the modern Bible, printed so beautifully, bound so portably, published so cheaply, translated so marvellously: showered down upon the earth like manna, and every morsel eloquent of Christ.

It is well to remember the Galilean boat, the Gennesaret hill, the Samaritan well, the corn-field path, the Capernaum synagogue, and the Temple of yesterday; but let not these things divert our gaze from a present Christ, still in our midst: no more local, but universal; for—

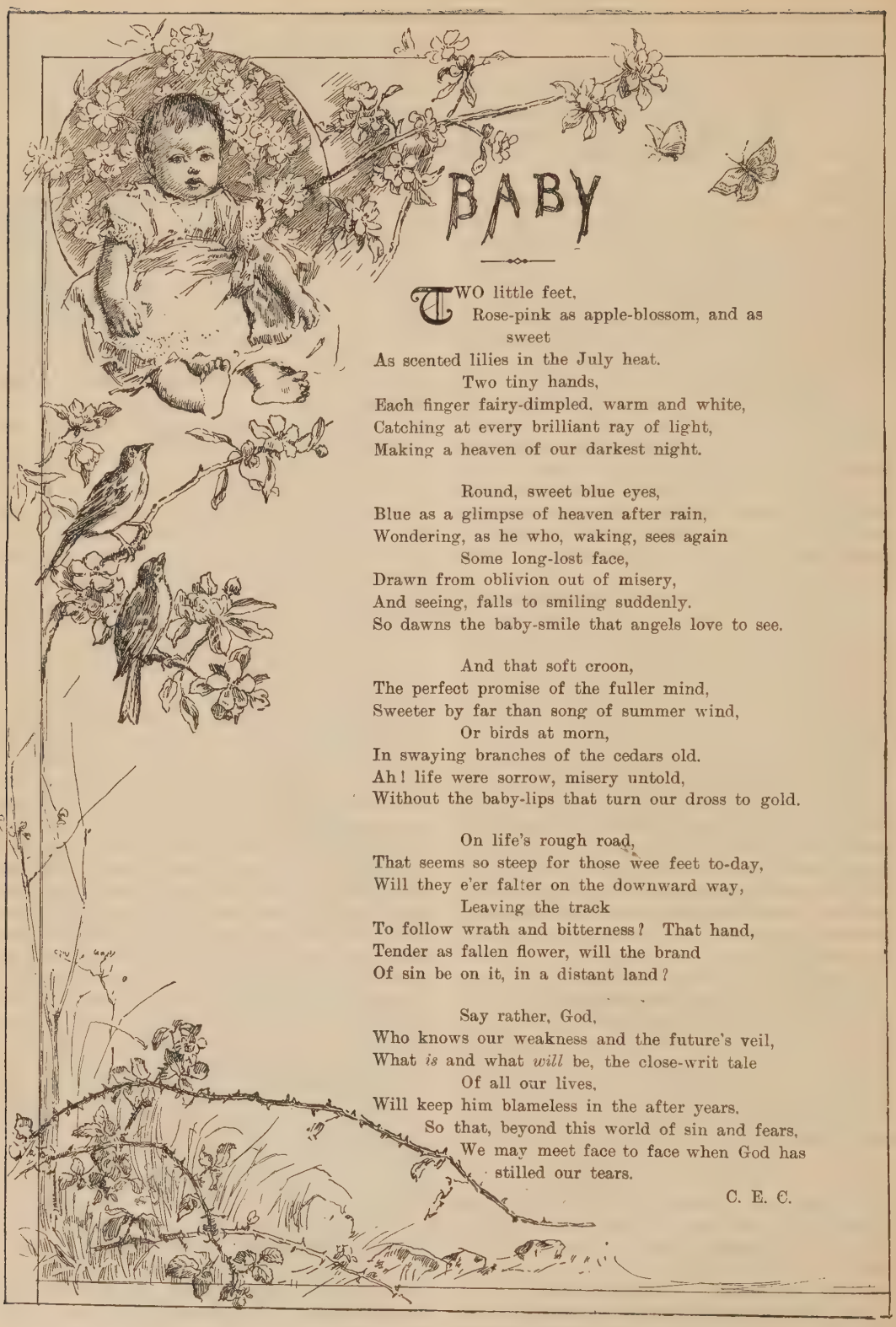
> "Faith has yet its Olivet,
> And Love its Galilee."

III.—THE SAME SAVIOUR.

Yesterday the blind received their sight, the deaf were made to hear, the lame to walk, the leper to rejoice as he escaped a living death. All this free, without money, without price, and never one case refused. Jesus—"Saviour"—is the same to-day, and none dare point to a case and say it is too desperate for Him. Yesterday He recalled the maiden scarcely cold in death, the young man some time longer dead, and Lazarus far within the portals of death; and this is told so vividly, not merely in record of the past, but in prophecy of the future, that we may have hope to-day, and believe that He can save to the uttermost.

Even concerning the body alone, when the Christian considers the marvels of surgery to-day, the progress of nursing, and matters pertaining to health and food, he is bound to ascribe them all to Him who went about doing good to body and soul alike. We feel that the miracles of to-day would not be experienced had not the Saviour come down to this poor, sin-stricken world—if He did not abide in it still. Philosophy and civilisation had their chance for ages to show what the world could do without a Divine Saviour.

Last, but not least—in some way we cannot understand—Christ is the same to-day in His dying love. His sympathy is the same. When the heavens were opened to the seer of Patmos, he beheld that which made him think of a Lamb newly slain, yet slain from the foundation of the world. Then the weeping of Christ, whether silent tears at the grave of Lazarus, or convulsive sobs at the vision of Jerusalem; the sighing of Christ over human infirmity; Gethsemane, with its agony and sweat, under the load of human sin and sorrow: these are not momentary experiences only, but signs declaring that His heart is ever the same. Even Calvary itself is the momentary exhibition of a passion that is eternal and a love that is unchanging; for, like Himself, it is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.



BABY

TWO little feet,
Rose-pink as apple-blossom, and as sweet
As scented lilies in the July heat.
Two tiny hands,
Each finger fairy-dimpled, warm and white,
Catching at every brilliant ray of light,
Making a heaven of our darkest night.

Round, sweet blue eyes,
Blue as a glimpse of heaven after rain,
Wondering, as he who, waking, sees again
Some long-lost face,
Drawn from oblivion out of misery,
And seeing, falls to smiling suddenly.
So dawns the baby-smile that angels love to see.

And that soft croon,
The perfect promise of the fuller mind,
Sweeter by far than song of summer wind,
Or birds at morn,
In swaying branches of the cedars old.
Ah! life were sorrow, misery untold,
Without the baby-lips that turn our dross to gold.

On life's rough road,
That seems so steep for those wee feet to-day,
Will they e'er falter on the downward way,
Leaving the track
To follow wrath and bitterness? That hand,
Tender as fallen flower, will the brand
Of sin be on it, in a distant land?

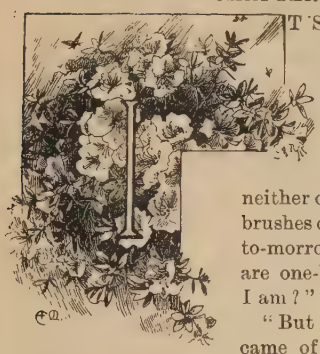
Say rather, God,
Who knows our weakness and the future's veil,
What *is* and what *will* be, the close-writ tale
Of all our lives,
Will keep him blameless in the after years.
So that, beyond this world of sin and fears,
We may meet face to face when God has stilled our tears.

C. E. C.

LUNA GORDON'S STEWARDSHIP.

BY MARY HAMPDEN, AUTHOR OF "THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.



"IT'S no use for you to call me lazy, Anne! Tradition doesn't say that Raphael or Michael Angelo ever completed a masterpiece in one morning, and neither can I. There! the paint-brushes can have a holiday until to-morrow. I wonder if they are one-half as glad to rest as I am?"

"But no masterpiece ever came of such—such 'scrappy' work as yours, Theo."

"Nonsense! genius is always erratic," laughed Theo, as she closed her paint-box with a snap. "When I have produced my *chef d'œuvre* and made our fortunes, when all the world knows of me, and I graciously consent to accept the homage of a good third of it—then both you and Philip will blush for the way in which you now try to force the genius. I've got a large bump of imagination somewhere about my head, I fancy, for I can realise just how it would feel to be famous. I can almost hear people speaking of me as 'Miss Theo Gordon—the artist who painted the great picture of the year, you know!' Oh, when will the time come? I'm regularly pining for it."

Anne did not answer. Perhaps she did not feel competent to pronounce upon the probable date of her flighty, idle sister's anticipated success; but Theo had run up-stairs to wash her paint-soiled fingers, so no reply was necessary.

Anne continued her own unambitious work—a piece of plain sewing—and smiled as her needle flew in and out of the seam. She was used to Theodora's castle-building, and had long ceased to wonder at the instability of those airy mansions.

Anne was the sensible, commonplace member of the Gordon family. She knew that she would never achieve great deeds, but comforted herself for some natural regret that fame was not within her reach, by the reflection that commonplace persons are very necessary in this world.

Luna and Theo were both clever, but the household would have suffered in health, comfort, and financial matters, had the youngest sister possessed their talents in the place of her own more homely virtues.

The Gordons were poor—that was the truth of it. As Anne often declared, it was fortunate that "there were only three of them—and Philip." Philip was not, strictly speaking, a Gordon, being only the girls' half-brother, but this was merely a difference in name. Strangers who spoke of "Mr. Carroll" remembered that the late Ambrose Gordon had offended his richer brother by marrying a widow with one son—the Philip in question; but Luna, Theodora, and Anne valued Philip almost as well as he deserved to be valued, and never complained that their mother had brought dissensions into the family.

The girls did not trouble to inquire much into the history of those dissensions. They knew that their father's wealthy brother was still alive; but as they had never seen him, this fact was of small interest to them. Why he had objected to their father's marrying their mother—gentle, sweet, beautiful Mrs. Carroll—they had no idea. It was enough for them to know that their parents had been lovers all their married life, down to the winter-time, now five years ago, when they had died almost together, and had gone, as it were, hand in hand, to face the throne of the God they had truly served.

And if Philip's mother had been the cause of their poverty, it was now Philip who kept up the home. He was an artist—clever, yes, undoubtedly clever, but not famous. He had found that painting pictures was not a paying profession, so had devoted himself of late years to black-and-white work—illustrating books, etc. Ambition had to be sacrificed to a man's duty. Three orphaned sisters needed a bread-winner, not an art-student, for a brother.

The Gordons' home was in London—to be precise, in the Marylebone Road—a dingy, narrow house of brown brick, looking upon a road which could not be commended for its attractions. Luna and Theo often grumbled about the locality—they longed for "a nice, friendly, artistic neighbourhood," a "pretty bijou villa with a great big studio"—and patient Philip only laughed at them for their dissatisfaction.

"You will have to put up with this, girls," he would say, "while you depend on me for a roof and four walls. If Theo likes to paint that remarkable picture she is always talking about, and provide the home you all want out of the proceeds, well and good. I shall be delighted to come and live there. Only, somehow or other, Theo's picture doesn't advance very quickly."

"You will see it some day," Theo would retort. "Rome wasn't built in a day, you know; and any fresh canvas I take *may* prove to be the famous one."

But Theo's work seldom occupied many hours of the day. This morning, after she had washed her hands and hastily brushed back her curly brown hair, she came running back to the studio, but not to paint, not even to study. Dragging a lounge-chair across to the open window, she picked up a book and prepared for a rest.

"I suppose the hot weather tires one," she murmured, patting a well-worn cushion into place behind her shoulders as she spoke. "Sister Anne, sister Anne! what do you see in that long seam to engross your thoughts and give you that solemn little twist of the mouth? I know that trick of yours—it means that you are thinking out some abstruse problem. Is it the butcher or the baker this time? Oh, I know, it must be *coals!*—I saw them coming in yesterday."

"No," Anne answered gravely—she usually took Theo's laughing remarks *au sérieux*—"the coals are very cheap just now—summer prices. I was wondering whether I could save enough out of the housekeeping to buy you that new hat you want."

Theo turned quickly and looked across the room at her younger sister. Anne was sitting by the table with a housekeeper's work-basket before her; her head was bent over her work, and her eyes downcast. She was the plain as well as the commonplace member of the family—small-featured, fresh-complexioned, with a dainty, slim figure and soft grey eyes, but still plain. Anne said herself, "My hair makes me ugly, and the freckles, which always are seen with 'carrots.'" Still, she was the last girl in the world likely to worry over her want of beauty, and only a very unappreciative critic could possibly have called her grave little face "ugly."

"What a good little soul you are!" Theo cried. "No one would think you are only twenty—two years younger than I am, and three years younger than Luna. We are the frivolous ones, and you, you 're the hard-working bee. All the same, purse-keeper, I *do* want that hat, if you can manage it."

"I 'm sure you do; and Luna really ought to have one too. I must see what can be done."

Anne had only just finished her speech by a nod of decision when the two absent members of the family entered the studio together.

Luna came in first—Luna, the beauty: Philip followed her.

The hat which Anne wished to see replaced by a better one looked well enough on Luna's golden curls, but then that did not prove that it was worthy of them. Philip, Theo, and Anne were all of opinion that Luna deserved clothing like some Eastern princess, and if they were too much inclined to rejoice in their sister's beauty, it must be remembered that they all had artistic sympathies. Philip, in particular, was ready to overpraise his favourite sister. He had painted many a picture in which her fair face had appeared, but that was in the old days. Now that his skill had grown with the years, he often wished that he could spare time to do her greater justice.

"A girl so favoured ought to be very good, Lu," he would say to her sometimes. "Beauty, like every other gift of God, must have its responsibility."

Luna was used to Philip's "little lectures," and liked them, though it must be owned that she often forgot them as soon as they were uttered. If she was spoilt, it was not by this constant atmosphere of home appreciation, but by poverty, so she said; and this was upon the principle that "it is easy to be good when one has no worries."

Luna was "more than common tall," straight and slender, and graceful in every movement. She was not languid, neither had she any of those conscious airs which a girl of acknowledged beauty is only too likely to gain. It was to her credit that she was no more vain than the flowers are, and her manner was full of a fresh sincerity.

Just now, though, Luna was in a complaining mood. The close heat of a fine day in London had tired her far more than idle Theo was tired by it; and the dingy, dark studio, with its threadbare carpet and scanty furniture, looked more than usually "poor" in the light of the sunshine.

"Oh, how I hate poverty!" she cried, as she threw off the hat and sank wearily into a chair. "Phil dear, I 'm not grumbling at you, you know that, only at—at circumstances. Why are some people rich, and yet discontented? If I could *only* make some money! But I 'm quite useless; and you, Theo, who *could* help us, you are lazy!"

"I know I am," Theo owned; "but this life takes all the energy out of me."

"You discontented girls, do leave off grumbling!" said Philip's cheery voice from the easel—he had gone to work immediately upon entering. "If you mention our poverty again during the next three hours, I shall mount my pulpit and do my duty as your responsible elder. You said the other day, Theo, that when I once begin to preach, there is no telling when I shall stop, so you had better beware! Why do you try to make yourselves out so much worse than you are?"

"Worse? I don't think I could be worse," said Theo decisively.

"Worse?" echoed Luna.

"Yes, worse. You speak as though you were the most mercenary girls in the world. Now, Theo, let me see the masterpiece."

Theo rose, took a canvas from the floor and carried it across the room to Philip's side.

"I didn't do much this morning. I wasn't in the humour."

Philip took the painting and knitted his brows at it.

"Not bad; the colouring is really good; but the drawing of that vase is faulty."

"Oh, Phil, but the figure is the picture. The vase is only an incident of the background."

Theo had struck an attitude of mock despair. Philip looked up in his sister's merry face, a face where bright colouring created the charm, the pink tints of girlhood and the warmth of the vivacious brown eyes; and then he shook his head at her without speaking. There was no need for a scolding; Philip knew that Theo was more of the real artist than her words implied.

"Seems to me she 'd have looked better if you hadn't dressed her so old-fashioned, Miss Theo," said a voice from the doorway. A face peered into the room for a moment, then disappeared, after its owner had enunciated her art-criticism upon Theodora's classic painting.

The girls looked at each other and laughed heartily.

"Poor Mrs. Wooley!" said Philip, "we shall never educate her up to our modern notions, shall we, girls?"

CHAPTER II.

MRS. WOOLEY loved the Gordon girls, as she often said, "like a mother." She had wished each one of them many happy returns of their respective first birthdays, having been then their nurse. Now she was housekeeper, and felt that she was the mainstay of the family. Nor did she confine her kind ministrations to the providing of suitable food and general

household management, but gave good advice gratis when she thought anyone was in need of it; and was ready to express her opinion on all subjects, from high art to chimney-sweeping.

Certain it is that the Gordons' home would have seemed less like a home had it been deprived of the familiar presence of Sabinia Wooley.

In person she was tall, stout, and upright; dark-haired, only the plain waves over her forehead were more grey than black now—gone grey, as she herself declared, because "old Father Time doesn't let none of us forget him;" dark-eyed she was, too, but with eyes which, though they scorned tears, grew soft in the extreme at touching occasions; and the general expression of her broad fat face was aggressive rather than gentle.

"It doesn't do to wear smiles on your lips for other folk to jeer at," said Mrs. Wooley; she often made proverbs and wise sayings for herself, to suit daily necessities; and these proverbs usually bore resemblance to recognised sentences of wisdom as found in copy-books.

When the Gordons came down in the world, this good woman participated in their descent cheerfully, without one murmur of regret. "It's no use moaning over burnt papers"—this was her expressed opinion—"an' if you're going to be poor, well there's not any reason as I can see why I shouldn't be just as able to put up with it; besides, haven't I been with you all your lives? and why should we want to make a break now? Even a hedge-sparrow don't leave its nest because a cuckoo-egg comes into it!"

So Mrs. Wooley shared the misfortunes. None of the girls rebelled against her freely exercised authority, and Philip was glad to think that they had such a kind guardian during his occasional enforced absence from home.

Next morning, after the day of the family discussion, when Philip had forbidden the further mention of their poverty, he was obliged to rise unusually early. He was going out of town upon work in connection with an illustrated paper, and it was necessary for him to arrive at his destination in time to secure a good place in a crowd of sight-seers at a great public function, so that his active pencil might have opportunity to accomplish reliable work.

As a rule, when he was bound upon such expeditions it was Anne who presided at his early breakfast-table; but to-day she was sleeping later on account of a bad headache, and her duties were performed by Mrs. Wooley.

Philip was looking pale and harassed. He toyed with toast and butter, instead of eating the more substantial viands provided for him.

"Little food, little work, an' therefore little money, Mr. Philip."

Philip felt rather like a naughty boy as Mrs. Wooley fixed her most severe glance upon him. He stroked his fair moustache, and, leaning back in his chair, gave up further effort of pretence.

"I don't deserve to be offered such a nice breakfast, do I?" he asked, with a rueful attempt at joking. "The truth is, I didn't sleep last night, and so a hot chop looks like an enemy."

Mrs. Wooley stood beside his chair and surveyed him critically.

"No good ever comes of worrying, Mr. Philip. Care killed the cat, and many another creature beside. You're thinkin' about the rent, that's what you're doin'; an' what's the good, I should like to know? Does sowing worries help us to reap sovereigns? If it did there'd be some use in it; but not unless."

"It's my business to think about the rent."

"About getting it together, not about *not* getting it. There's a world of difference in that. If you *can't* get it, why, we'll have to go somewhere else. I suppose the Marylebone Road isn't the only place in London where we might live an' be happy. No, Mr. Philip; you take my advice. Don't you look on into the future. That's the mistake as everyone makes. It's better only to know of the misfortune in hand, not of the two in the bush."

Philip found Mrs. Wooley's wisdom cheering, but he was face to face with difficulties of real gravity. Work was scarce, pay was even scarcer; and expenses seemed to multiply with every day. Sometimes he doubted whether his own health would let him do much more than he was doing at present, yet he was always searching vainly for more employment. There were a few hours to spare in the evening which he would have liked to fill with lucrative occupation: more black-and-white work if possible, for which daylight was not required.

That was a tiring day for Philip Carroll, but he was used to tiring days. It was late evening when he returned, a hot summer evening, and the streets were gay with carriages. People were going to the theatres, concerts, receptions, balls, where the frivolous world crowds its votaries together. Philip's walk led him through the most fashionable quarter of town: through Mayfair, along Park Lane, then through Grosvenor Square and South Audley Street.

At one of the houses in the last mentioned street a carriage was stopping, the horses impatiently prancing. Philip just saw that the door of the house was open, letting a stream of light out over the pavement; he did not notice the figures of a man and a girl who were standing upon the step.

In another moment he had even forgotten that he had seen either house or carriage. Another man would very likely have compared his own poverty with the luxury of these strangers, but that was not Philip's way. For his sisters' sake he wanted *enough*, but he was not envious of riches.

But it was destined that his own lot in life should be linked with that of the man and girl at whom he had not even glanced.

He was crossing the narrow road, at a point some yards further on, when he heard a warning shout, and sprang back just in time to avoid being knocked down by a pair of horses. A picture he was carrying slipped from his hold, and was trampled by the prancing hoofs. It was a painting of his own, some work of earlier date, which he had called for on his way home, and had fetched away from a gallery where it would not sell.

The artist's instinct made Philip try to rescue his picture. The near horse plunged still more wildly.

The young man felt a sharp blow on his left arm, and staggered back a few paces, faint and dizzy with sudden pain.

He hardly realised what was occurring for the next few seconds. Then he found himself still standing, but supported in the arms of a tall gentleman of military appearance, while a fair face looked at him anxiously, sorrowfully, from out of the carriage window. A footman was supporting the left arm in which the pain was.

"Hold it steadily, Simpkin. There! that is better. No need for alarm, Gwen dear; there is not as much harm done as we feared."

No wonder that the girl was frightened, for Philip's face, as it lay back for that one helpless moment on her father's shoulder, was pale as death.

"I—I am sorry I gave the lady any alarm," said Carroll faintly, as soon as the words would come. "As you say, there is no real harm done."

"Few men would say as much with their arms broken," said Sir Lucian Fane briskly. "Now let us get you out of this crowd; my house is only a few doors down."

Philip looked round in surprise: he had not observed the clustering faces which almost encircled him. He let himself be helped into the carriage, for, indeed, the pain of his arm was so severe that it seemed to rob him of all his strength; and then there followed another time of endurance while he was being assisted up the steps, through the wide hall, and into the library of the baronet's town house.

Once in the safe refuge of a large arm-chair, Philip fainted again.

"Overwork, Gwen!" said Sir Lucian to his anxious daughter. "Poor fellow; he looks as though work were very much a matter of necessity with him. An artist, evidently: well, we've spoilt his picture for him. A gentleman, certainly: I never saw a more refined face."

Sir Lucian's estimate of Philip Carroll's personal appearance was little more than just. The young man, whose careworn eyes made him seem older than his twenty-nine years, had inherited the winning smile, frank expression, and physical beauty of his mother, without losing the air of manliness which is sometimes lacking in the face of a handsome man.

The injury to Philip's arm was pronounced by the doctor, who came at once in obedience to the baronet's summons, to be less severe than had been at first supposed. Indeed, the blow had only bruised the bone, not actually broken it.

"I must thank you for your kind care of me, Sir Lucian," Carroll said, when the doctor had gone; "and will you make my apologies to Miss Fane? The accident was entirely owing to my own carelessness, and it gave her a bad fright, I fear."

"You will see my daughter to-morrow morning. Of course, we cannot allow you to go home to-night."

"You are very good, but I have sisters who will be anxious about me. It is necessary that I should return."

Sir Lucian thought that circumstances and the amiability of his own intentions towards this stranger entitled him to put Philip through a catechism. The replies he received were brief, but ready. Carroll had no reason for wishing to conceal his family affairs, and the baronet's manner, though abrupt and somewhat commanding, showed that courtesy which should exist between two gentlemen.

"You are an artist?"

"Yes."

"Art does not pay nowadays. Do you find any difficulty in disposing of your pictures?"

"I make a small income as a book-illustrator, besides working for papers."

"Yet you were carrying a painting. Early work, I suppose?"

"Exactly so."

"It is ruined. You must let me make up to you for the loss you have suffered."

"Thank you," said Philip quietly. "If you could obtain me a commission for any kind of art-work I should have occasion to be grateful for the slight injury I have suffered at the hoofs of your horses."

He smiled as he spoke, and Sir Lucian grasped his right hand and shook it cordially.

"I will come and see your work, or my daughter shall come; she knows more about art than I shall ever have time to learn. You have sisters, you say? Yes, Gwendolen will call on them. I am glad that the accident befell your *left* arm. An artist should take more care of his working members. You were rash, you know, Mr. Carroll, decidedly rash."

"I was," Philip answered. He appreciated the friendliness of this man so many years his elder—the friendliness which showed even through the soldierly severity of Sir Lucian's deportment. "If I had been killed, my sisters would have had no one to work for them."

"Now you must let me drive you home. I shall accompany you myself," said the baronet; "then I shall be sure of your safety."

When the house in the Marylebone Road was reached and the door opened, it was Luna who appeared to greet her brother.

"*Oh, Phil!* my darling Phil!" she cried. "*You are hurt!* We have been so anxious about you!"

Philip explained the reason for his late return, and Sir Lucian added some words of sincere regret for the accident. Then the baronet was driven back to his own comfortable home, and found himself thinking kindly of the brother and sister he had just left, who were evidently so deeply attached to one another.

"Refined faces, both of them. Yes, Gwen shall visit these people as soon as possible," was his decision.

CHAPTER III.

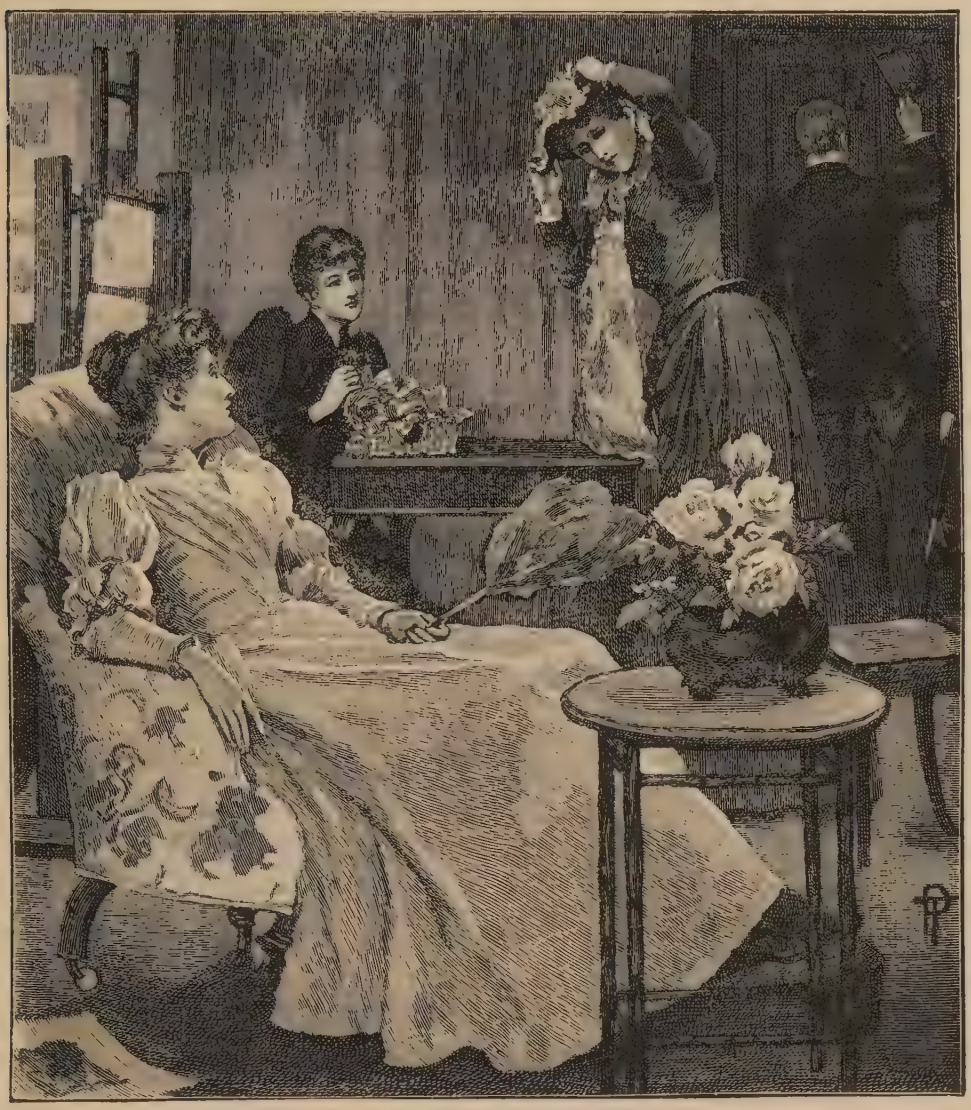
A WEEK followed, during which the Gordons and their brother saw more of Sir Lucian Fane. He called often to inquire after Philip, whose health had temporarily broken down—the result of overwork and of the shock which he had received.

By the time ten days had passed, Philip was convalescent, and the girls were "able to think about being happy again," as Luna said.

"Phil, if you get ill again," Theo declared, "I shall go distracted! I nearly did this time, only I knew Mrs. Wooley couldn't nurse two of us."

"It was all the fault of this wicked London, Miss Theo, with its crowded streets, and people all flying after pleasure," said Mrs. Wooley, who had overheard the remark. "*I* was born in the wholesome country, where if you plant a snowdrop it comes up white, an' not all streaked with soot. This pleasure-seekin's just drivin' people foolish; but there, it isn't to be wondered at. Silly things please silly minds, an' it's no use feedin' a butterfly with bread an' cheese."

The girls were greatly excited at the prospect of receiving a visit from Gwendolen Fane. Philip's description of her was most lamentably deficient in all essential points—they all agreed upon this. Why, he could not even tell whether her eyes were blue, brown, or grey, or give a name to the style of her hair-dressing!



"The two absent members of the family entered the studio together."—*p.* 682.

It will readily be believed, therefore, that when a note came from Sir Lucian, saying that his daughter would do herself the pleasure of calling upon the Miss Gordons at three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, the excitement increased to gigantic proportions, till even sensible Anne allowed herself to be a little flurried by it.

"I've bought threepennyworth of marsh-marigolds from a poor man in the street," cried Luna,

coming swiftly into the studio on the eventful afternoon. "Look, aren't they lovely in this brown pot? Now, Theo, you had better make up for my extravagance by painting them to-morrow!"

"*Paint?*" asked Theo. "*Paint?* Good gracious! do you think my nerves are made of cast-iron? I shan't be able to paint again for quite a week after the approaching ordeal! A baronet's daughter! just fancy! And that isn't all, girls, for she is an heiress as well. A real live heiress! Oh, why wasn't *I* born an heiress?"

Philip came in at this moment and answered the question.

"Because you would have squandered the money, you provokingly restless girl! I am coming to do a little sober, honest work in the room with you, so please have a trifle of respect for it."

For lively Theo was racing about the studio, giving a touch here and a touch there to the artistic, if cheap, decorations, varying the arduous nature of her occupation by an occasional rush to the window when the sound of a passing vehicle suggested the approach of Sir Lucian's carriage. Luna was quite as excited, if less boisterous in her way of showing it; she was pacing up and down between window and door, her hands clasped behind her back, her eyes bright with animation, and the long skirt of her quaint indoor dress trailing behind her. Anne was standing by the mantelshelf, dusting their few china treasures—old blue willow-pattern plates and cups which had belonged to their mother.

"Phil, do you think Sir Lucian means business?"

Luna had paused in her walk by her brother's chair. Philip smiled up at her, taking his eyes for a moment from his work as he answered—

"Yes, Lu. He told me only yesterday that he wants me to paint a picture for him."

"A picture! he can't pay you less than twenty pounds for that. You will be able to go for a holiday. Oh, it's no use to argue against our decision, Phil; you will *have* to go if we say you are to."

"Lu, don't try to be a female autocrat."

"But, dear, you look so tired. Mrs. Wooley said the other day that 'Where there's a need there's a must,' and she is quite right. We can't let you go on slaving for us——"

"Slaving? No, no; free work is not slavery."

"It amounts to the same thing," put in Theo, from the other end of the room. "At least in our case it does. Oh dear, oh dear! I am growing so dreadfully covetous! I'd kiss the boots of anyone who'd give us a hundred pounds to-morrow!"

There was a general laugh at this frank confession of Theo's abject sentiments, but the merriment was checked by the sound of the expected knock at the hall door, and Theodora sprang up with an exclamation of dismay from the sofa where she had thrown herself in sheer weariness of wishing.

"There, now! I have been watching for her ever since two o'clock, and she has given me the slip! I meant to reconnoitre her appearance as she came up the garden, so as to be able to say, 'How d' you do,' without staring her out of countenance! Now I shall *have* to stare!"

"Hush!" said Luna proudly; "don't make us all look foolish, Theo; she may be an heiress, but she is only a girl."

It took Mrs. Wooley some time to precede the visitor up the steep stairs; then Miss Fane was duly announced.

Philip rose to greet her.

She was not beautiful, like Luna, only graceful and delicate-looking, with a mobile, rather sad face, and timid manner. While being perfectly self-possessed, she seemed conscious of her own youth and most anxious not to seem haughty or reserved. This gave her an impulsive way of speaking, an appealing tone in her voice. She could not be more than nineteen, if as much, Luna thought.

"It is kind of you to come and see us," said Philip, as he bowed over the little hand she extended to him.

"I am so glad that you are better, Mr. Carroll; we have been very anxious about you, father and I."

Then the girls were introduced, and soon grew friendly, for Gwendolen's unaffectedness pleased even Theo, who had been inclined to rebel against the patronage of "a mere girl who happens to be an heiress." Gwendolen did not wish to patronise.

Philip watched Luna and Miss Fane as they stood side by side near the easel, and smiled as he noticed their small differences of expression and feature; they were both tall, both fair, though the visitor's flaxen curls were not like Luna's coils of gold. They might have been sisters.

"I think your work is most beautiful, Mr. Carroll, particularly this portrait. Is it a portrait? It is such a sweet, true, happy face."

"That was mother," Theo answered. "I always told Phil he was good at portraits, but he wouldn't believe me."

Philip took the unframed canvas and held it at arm's length for Miss Fane to see; the girl was quick to guess at his thoughts, for she said softly—too softly for the others to hear—

"You have lost a great deal. . . I am so sorry I touched upon a sad subject."

"You need not regret it," he answered, in as low a tone; "there are some lives which, even when most missed, are a joy to remember. My mother's life was one of those."

"I do not remember *my* mother."

"Then your loss is greater than ours. This is a sketch I made once at Rottingdean, near Brighton. Do you know the place, Miss Fane?"

"Yes, and that exact point of view; how well you have given the effect of the wide downs. But about portraits, Mr. Carroll; would you be willing to paint mine? Father told me to ask you."

"I would do my best gladly, but I doubt whether I could satisfy Sir Lucian's just expectations."

"It is a fancy of his. . He has not succeeded yet in getting a portrait of me to please him." Gwendolen laughed and blushed as she turned to the girls, saying in an apologetic tone, "I am an only child, you know."

"Well," said Luna, smiling at Miss Fane's embarrassed explanation, "that is a sufficient reason,

apart from all others. So Sir Lucian thinks that an obscure artist may be able to please him where Academicians have failed? I know your portrait was in the Academy last year; I recalled it directly I saw your face."

"Yes, and Phil said it wasn't well finished—'scamped work,' he called it!"

"Theo, don't repeat all my audacious criticisms," said Philip, in amused self-defence, "or Miss Fane will accuse me of an unsuccessful worker's usual bitterness of judgment."

"No, indeed," Gwendolen protested, with an earnestness which again brought the colour to her cheeks. "But you would not mind accepting father's commission, then, Mr. Carroll? It would not interfere too much with your present work?"

Philip was replying when an interruption occurred. Mrs. Wooley entered the room with a telegram in her hand. Her eyes were round with astonishment and dread.

"It's just come, Miss Luna, an' when I saw it you might have knocked me down with a cobweb! Horrid things they are—the very look of the nasty yellow envelope is enough to give one's heart a twist!"

Gwendolen had thoughtfully withdrawn into the window-recess so as to leave the brother and sisters free to discuss their news. Philip watched Luna's face as she read the pencilled slip; Theo gave a gasp of excitement; only Anne kept her usual composure.

"It cannot be bad news, because we have no friends," she said decisively.

Luna looked up and met her brother's eyes.

"Our uncle is dead; he died several days ago; this is from his lawyers, and they explain that we should have heard before if they had known our address."

"We can't be expected to be very sorry, considering that we never saw him and that he quarrelled with father."

"Poor man!" said Anne; "perhaps he regretted the quarrel before he died."

"Gwendolen came slowly forward from the window.

"I must go now. I hope it is not sorrowful news for any of you."

"We can scarcely call it that. An old feud has managed to prevent natural family feeling," Philip explained. "Do not hurry away upon this account, Miss Fane."

"We all hoped you would stay to tea," Anne added.

"I will come another day, if you will let me," said Gwendolen; and persisted in leaving the Gordons to consider the intelligence they had just received.

While Philip escorted her to the carriage Theo asked for a sight of the telegram.

"O Lu, what a long one! it must have cost a sum! and—oh—you didn't tell us that the lawyer's coming to see you! What can that be for?

"He says it is about uncle's will," said Anne gravely, "which is solely in Luna's favour."

"In Luna's favour!" repeated Philip; he had caught the word as he re-entered the studio.

Luna turned pale and looked up from the paper. Philip's face expressed wonder and sudden enlightenment. Anne's wise little countenance had grown awe-stricken. Theo was the first to speak.

"We are his only relations—his nearest. I'm sure we are! Oh, Lu! our fortune's going to turn at last! You lucky girl, *you'll be an heiress!*"

CHAPTER IV.

That telegram had brought a bewildering piece of news to the house in Marylebone Road.

"This has been a wonderful month!" said Theo. "First, you met with an accident, which was bad; secondly, we have made two influential friends; and thirdly, we are going to come in for unexpected wealth. There are only a few more days left in June, but who can say what may happen next? I, for one, should not be surprised at anything!"

Luna, after the first excitement was over, turned to business considerations.

"Phil," she said, sitting down on the arm of her brother's chair and passing an arm lovingly round his neck, "Mr. Cliffe is coming this evening; must I see him alone?"

"Not unless you prefer to do so."

"I should prefer for you all to hear what he has to say."

"I am very curious," Anne admitted.

"How we were longing to be rich, only the other day, and now—I suppose there can be no doubt about it? Phil, I was discontented before, but I shall be worse, much worse, if we have to put up with poverty again, after seeing a prospect of something better. Surely, we have borne it long enough! The miserable little grinding ways, the counting of coppers, the—There! I see I have shocked you; but I believe you never guessed how I hated our life here: Theo did nearly all the grumbling, but I meant much more."

Philip was surprised by the vehemence of Luna's sudden explanation of her feelings past and present. In a hard school he had gained experience of the world—negative experience of all the world has to offer—and he knew that Luna had yet to pass through the ordeals which accompany the gain of the smallest amount of wisdom. These girls, whose guardian he was, were young—very young, Philip thought; and in need of better guidance than he could give them. They were good girls in their way—simply, earnestly good—and believed in the loving watchfulness of the greatest of all Guardians; but the *actuality* of the support of His guiding hand they had not yet realised.

"They must learn, poor girls!" thought the brother, as he caressed Luna's hand, which lay on his shoulder. She would have been surprised had she known that now, after this good news had come to her, he was pitying her as he had never done in the days of the poverty which had caused her so much anxiety. Aloud he only answered—

"I mustn't be shocked, Lulu, because I want you always to tell me your thoughts."

"We may not be any happier because of this."

"Anne, don't croak," Theo argued; "we may not be as doleful as we've been for the last year. I felt myself growing thin and haggard; no, it doesn't show many ravages, I know," she added, playfully feeling her bright cheek, "but I could tell that a few more months of worry would have ruined *my* appearance;

while as for Lu, we can't afford to have the family beauty spoiled."

"*Spoiled!*" repeated Philip; "no, we mustn't let you get spoiled in any way, dear."

Luna coloured.

"Do you think I am in any danger? I should be really sorry to disappoint *you*, Phil."

"Ah, you know I expect great things of you! I was only wondering what would be the result of your wealth, dear; what you will make of your stewardship."

"Luna's *stewardship!*" cried Theo: "I wish someone would give me a stewardship just like it; I would make a grand result. I always said that I needed an easy life to develop my genius; now will be the opportunity to paint my masterpiece. I couldn't do it for the sake of making money by it!"

"You won't do it *now*, if you remain so flighty."

"Oh, Phil! Well, that's all I can expect of a brother who has got a favourite sister; and it's too bad! You ought to have taken more to me than to Luna. Am I not the artistic one?"

"That remains to be proved, I think, Theo."

"You are incorrigible! Now, we'll eat up the tea-cake; it was bought in honour of our aristocratic visitor, but we can regard it as constituting a feast to celebrate this wondrous event."

"We will save some for Mr. Cliffe," said Luna; "I dare say lawyers can appreciate tea-cake."

"When does he say he is coming?"

"This evening at 6.30."

"Two hours and a half to wait," sighed Theo, "two weary hours and a half!"

"I will finish hemming that table-cloth," said Anne, rising to fetch her work-basket, "then I shall be able to give up half an hour to listening, when Mr. Cliffe is here, without feeling ashamed of myself. I am so glad you will let us all see him, Luna."

"It concerns you as well as me. What an industrious little soul you are, Anne! I believe you think 'it's a crime to steal time,' as Mrs. Wooley says! Would a few wasted minutes sit heavily upon your conscience on such an occasion as this?"

"No," Anne answered dubiously; "but there is a great deal to be done, Lu dear, and this table-cloth was so torn round the edge."

"Bother the table-cloth!" cried Theo; "we are going to have money enough to buy seventy thousand table-cloths, supposing we could do with as many! Now, girls, we must be discretion itself while Mr. Cliffe is here, and not show how wild we feel; it wouldn't be dignfied to make our sentiments public. In the sacred privacy of home there's no harm in my owning that my head *does* feel a little weakened by the great news, but Mr. Cliffe shall think us the three most sedate girls he has ever seen. Lu, you'll help me by preserving a calm demeanour yourself by way of example, won't you?"

"If anyone fails, we know who it will be, Theo."

When Mr. James Cliffe made the acquaintance of the Gordons, it is probable that he was not deceived by their air of placidity. He was a kind-hearted, genial man, with daughters of his own, so he did not imagine that sudden fortune can fall at a girl's feet and not be fully appreciated; especially not, when the girl is poor as Luna Gordon was. One glance round the studio showed him many signs of want of money.

Theo immediately took a fancy for the white-haired lawyer, and restrained herself with difficulty from telling him frankly how anxious she was that he should begin to talk business. But after a few preliminary questions and answers between Philip and Mr. Cliffe, the latter turned to Luna, saying—

"By the only signed will in our possession—one of an early date—the property of the deceased gentleman was left to your father, or, in the event of his death before the testator, to his eldest child—yourself, of course."

"There is no doubt of this?"

"None at all."

"Will you please tell me the exact position?" Luna asked gently, as she offered the lawyer a chair by the hearth. "I never saw our uncle, and know nothing about the fortune he possessed."

"Tell us *clearly*, will you?" Theo added: "without any legal phrases, I mean. We might be able to understand what you meant, but nothing sounds real wrapped up in so many words. I hope you don't mind my saying so?"

"By no means," said Mr. Cliffe, smiling at her serious face. "Simply, then, you have come in for a fortune of some seven thousand pounds a year, and succeed, also, to the late Mr. Gordon's estate—Hillborough Abbey, in Hertfordshire."

"*An Abbey!*" cried Theo, self-repression overcome by the astonishing nature of this intelligence. "*Can we go and live there?* May Luna do what she likes with it?"

"Absolutely. There are no conditions."

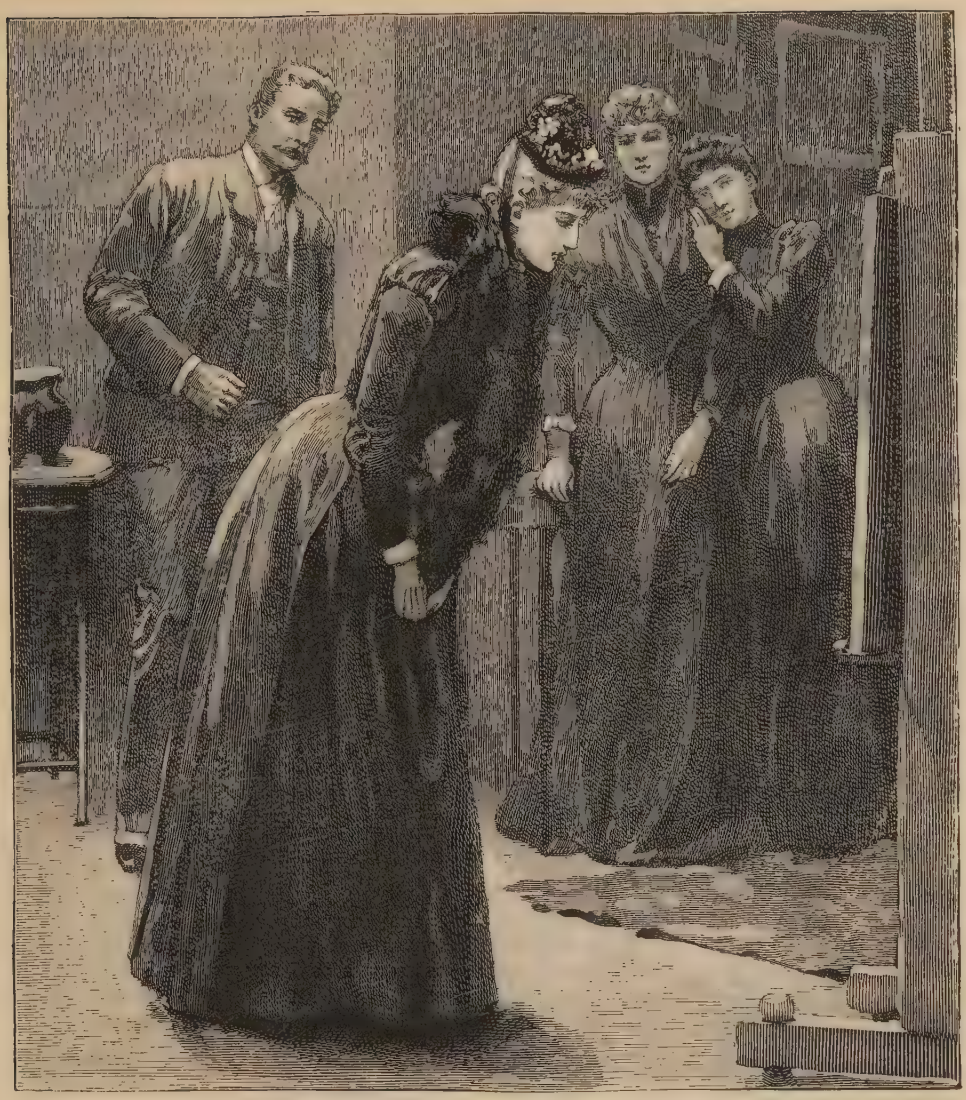
"My uncle died suddenly, I know," said Luna: "but surely he must have made a later will. He always refused to see or hear of us after our father died."

"It will be necessary for me to explain the position to you," said Mr. Cliffe. "I will do so as shortly as possible, and as simply, Miss Theodora."

Philip made notes of the lawyer's statement, which may be briefly summarised as follows:—

The late Mr. Gordon had been a man of harsh and bitter nature. His brother Ambrose, the father of Luna, Theodora, and Anne, had, on the contrary, a careless, amiable disposition, so that the elder brother had always looked upon the younger as a "ne'er-do-well." Ambrose Gordon had not deserved so severe an opinion, though he had been undoubtedly improvident. Then Ambrose had further angered his wealthy brother by marrying Philip's mother, who was the widow of one James Carroll, who had offended the owner of Hilborough Abbey beyond forgiveness. The late Mr. Godfrey Gordon had not been a forgiving man. James Carroll had gone to law against him in the matter of a contested right of way upon some Suffolk estate, since passed out of the hands of the family, and Godfrey Gordon had extended his enmity to James Carroll's widow. *Before* Ambrose married the woman he loved he was heir to his brother's wealth; *after* his marriage that brother disowned him and his for ever.

"Then how is it that Uncle Godfrey was so improvident as not to leave only this will behind him?"



"'I think your work is most beautiful.'"—*p.* 686.

Luna asked, when the nature of the family feud had been explained to her. "He cannot have meant me to succeed to his fortune, as he bore us all such ill-will."

"A later will was made, leaving everything to a college friend. I drew it up myself," was Mr. Cliffe's reply. "But it is nowhere to be found; and as it is known that the deceased gentleman before his death destroyed a document of the kind in company with many other private papers, we can only suppose that he repented of his opposition to your just claim, Miss Gordon."

Luna was pale by the time the lawyer had taken his departure—pale and excited, with a brilliancy about her eyes and a nervous tremor in her voice.

"Phil," she said, taking her brother's arm, "I hope *you're* glad, too. Oh, we shall leave this life once and for always! There shall be no more drudgery for you, dear."

"I cannot live upon your money. You must let me work, Lu.'

"And Hillborough Abbey!" cried Theo, wildly clapping her hands. "A fortune and an estate as well! Are the skies going to fall?"

CHAPTER V.

GWENDOLEN FANE had enjoyed her visit to the Gordons. The atmosphere of their home had seemed to her to be full of geniality. The girls were so freshly enthusiastic over their small interests; Theo's studies were full of promise; Luna's beauty was accepted by them all as something for which to be

grateful; the house was brightened by her presence; even Anne found absorbing satisfaction in her daily household cares. They were sweet-tempered girls, loving sisters, true companions to each other and to their brother. It was just this sympathy in all the affairs of life, in the smallest incident or fancy just as in the more important questions affecting all alike, that made the home element which Sir Lucian's daughter had never known. She had been a lonely child in the nursery—now she was a lonely girl in the world.

Of course, she was not lonely in the sense that she had no one to whom to speak, no one to share her daily pleasures with her. An aunt of Sir Lucian's, an aged lady, had presided over Gwendolen's educational years, and now chaperoned her upon all occasions; but this companionship did not make the girl feel any less alone. Mrs. Rose was old, easily tired, well fitted in all essentials to be a girl's guardian, but not sympathetically inclined. Confidences were not exchanged between them.

It was to her father that Gwendolen most readily turned for encouragement and advice, but he was often away from home; and even he was not qualified to be the recipient of all her girlish ideas and plans. Gwendolen was his only child, and he was fond of her in his way, but it was a way which made him feel greater pride than love for her. She was a daughter of whom any father might well expect a brilliant marriage: she was perfectly trained in the etiquette of her social set, perfectly well mannered, almost perfect in disposition. Sir Lucian congratulated himself upon the wisdom which had made him choose his aunt for Gwendolen's guardian.

"My daughter has not felt a mother's loss," he said, and fully believed his own words.

The glimpse into the Gordons' household had been like a vision of another world for Gwendolen, and she would gladly have exchanged her more brilliant position in life for a share in the shabby but happy home which seemed so poor in value to both Luna and Theodora.

Gwendolen wished to call again upon the Gordons, but she could not do so too soon after her interrupted visit, and a week passed without her seeing or hearing of any member of the family. Then it was not she who made the initiative to any further friendship. Philip Carroll called at the house in South Audley Street.

"Has Mr. Carroll come alone?" Gwendolen asked the footman, who entered her own sitting-room, where she was reading one afternoon, to inform her of the visitor's arrival.

Mr. Carroll was alone.

Gwendolen was sorry. "I wish one of the girls had come too," she thought.

Before going to the drawing-room she went to her father in the library.

"Mr. Carroll has called—the artist—ah, you know? We will decide with him about your portrait, Gwen," said Sir Lucian.

"I should like to ask his sisters to come to see me—they are such nice girls. Have you any objection, father?"

"No, Gwen; you can please yourself in the matter. They must be ladylike girls, or they would not satisfy you."

Sir Lucian laid his firm hand approvingly on his daughter's shoulder as they walked together to the drawing-room.

"Pleased to see you, Mr. Carroll. How is the arm? Quite strong again, I hope?"

"As well as it ever was, I thank you. My sisters were very sorry that a telegram shortened your visit the other day, Miss Fane," Philip added, turning with a frank smile to her.

"A telegram, Gwen?"

"Yes, father. Miss Gordon received a telegram while I was there, and I naturally thought that a stranger would be in the way when private affairs were under discussion."

"That telegram told us of a most unexpected change of fortune," Philip explained. "My sisters have just lost their uncle, and Luna succeeds to his estate and income. I came to explain that I must go out of town with the girls, Sir Lucian, and so it is with great regret that I ask leave to resign the commission you so kindly offered me."

"So your sister's father was one of the Gordons of Hillborough!"

"Yes."

"I knew the late Mr. Gordon well. We were close neighbours. It is to Hillborough you are going, I suppose?"

"The girls will live there for the future, and I shall have to see them comfortably settled in their new home before leaving them. You will understand, Sir Lucian, that Luna's changed position only affects me indirectly. As soon as possible I propose to return to town and take up work again; but you will not care to wait for Miss Fane's portrait until then."

"No need; we shall be neighbours in Hertfordshire. Gwen and I are going to our place there in a few weeks; so if you care to undertake the work, Mr. Carroll, it can proceed there as easily as here."

"I should be glad to do so."

"Very good; then, we will regard that as settled. This is the portrait by Lakey. Not satisfactory at all. The likeness is tolerable, but the general effect is hard."

Sir Lucian had crossed the room and was standing before a painting so large that it occupied the full length of the wall beside the fireplace. Philip followed him and devoted a long, silent study to the work.

It was excellent in technique, but unequally painted. The dress of soft terra-cotta velvet had been elaborated at the expense of the face. Sir Lucian's criticism was just; in place of the round bloom of Gwendolen's girlhood the face of the painting showed hard outlines and unworthy colouring.

Philip looked across the room at the reality before speaking his opinion of the presentment. Gwendolen was sitting where she had seated herself upon entering the drawing-room, close by the open window, so that the full light falling between dark crimson curtains lit up her eyes and brow, and flecked the

small chin and raised neck. The pose of her head was full of grace—noted by the artist's keen vision; one hand hung low over her knees, a delicate feminine hand, with tapering fingers which played with a fan of carved ivory; her fluffy flaxen hair looked almost silver by comparison with the warmer gold of the western sunlight.

Gwendolen was thinking, unconscious of all around her, when Philip turned his scrutinising glance upon her; her pale blue eyes were wistful; she was wondering whether home-love would ever be hers—the home-love which the Gordons knew so well.

It was not of a possible lover that Gwendolen was thinking; she was only wishing vaguely for *someone*—some one creature to change the monotony of well-occupied yet uneventful days; someone to hope with, to admire, to confide in, to encourage, to pray for.

Philip wondered at the wistfulness of her face, and his heart felt for her. There was no doubt about it, the work of the Royal Academician had not been successful.

"I think it is the true feeling for his subject which must have been wanting," Carroll said aloud. "A portrait-painter must fail if he has no sympathy with the face of which his brush has to give a lasting record. That sympathy is difficult to command sometimes, but it should have been easy in this case."

"You shall try to improve upon this, Mr. Carroll, and if you succeed you will have my sincere gratitude. Gwen—ah, tea has come, I see; let us employ a few moments over the ladies' meal."

"My father has a supreme contempt for tea, Mr. Carroll," said Gwendolen, smilingly taking her place beside the low table; "I think he regards it as an excuse for wasting time."

Philip thought the meal exceedingly pleasant, in this drawing-room at least. Conversation turned upon Hertfordshire, and he learned many particulars regarding the surroundings of his sister's new home. Not the least inviting part of the description Gwendolen gave him of Hillborough Abbey lay in the fact that it was situated within a quarter of a mile of Fanleigh Hall, Sir Lucian's estate.

"At one point, where the river runs, your ground touches ours," the girl told him; "so I shall look forward to seeing your sisters constantly."

"It is kind of you to be pleased at the prospect."

"I imagine that Gwen is rather lonely at Fanleigh," said Sir Lucian, "so if your sisters care to cheer her by young companionship they will be doing a good work.—By-the-bye, where is your aunt to-day, Gwen?"

"She is out this afternoon; I am sorry."

Philip might be excused for thinking that the absence of Mrs. Rose was no great misfortune while Sir Lucian's home owned so winning a hostess. There was an indescribable but delightful sincerity about Gwendolen's gentle manner. When she said good-bye to Philip she gave him a message for Luna.

"Will you tell Miss Gordon that I send her my best congratulations, and that I hope you may all be very happy at Hillborough? As you are going away to-morrow, I cannot come to see her as I should like to do."

"I will repeat your exact words," Philip assured her; "and I know that Luna will appreciate them."

CHAPTER VI.

"Well, there's no knowing," said Mrs. Wooley gravely; "we may find a fine house has its drawbacks—most silk has a cotton thread running through it; but we shall find out all about that if we wait long enough, patience being better than wisdom!"

A cab piled with luggage stood before the door of the Gordons' old home in the Marylebone Road, and Mrs. Wooley, having handed the keys over to a neighbouring caretaker, entered the vehicle with some reluctance.

"A good-bye *is* a good-bye always, in spite of what folks may say to the contrary," she decided; "an' goin' away from any place always means a risk of some kind. Well, well, necessity hasn't any law, and—— There now, if the brute isn't takin' the whip!"

The remainder of the good woman's reflections were banished by tender-hearted indignation; with her head well out of the cab window, she informed the driver in forcible terms that if he beat "that poor miserable little horse again" she would "get out an' walk, an' let a man bring on the boxes with a truck!"

At the station Mrs. Wooley joined the rest of the travelling party, and tried her best to throw cold water upon the high spirits of the girls. This was from a sense of duty only, because Mrs. Wooley knew that any over-exuberance of mirth must produce ultimate depression; but she may not have made sufficient allowance for the adaptability of youth.

"It isn't everyone as steps out of a row-boat on to firm land, Miss Theo; sometimes people who make up their minds to findin' everythin' as they like it, meet with much as they didn't expect. No doubt the Abbey 'll be damp. The country mostly is. Though, speakin' generally, damp 's better than London soot. Still, if you lets yourself get that set-up by——"

"Oh, but we are going to enjoy even damp, Mrs. Wooley; and the Abbey grounds have got two woods and a real river—did you know? And the village is half a mile away."

"There 's the train comin', miss; you 'll be sure to miss it if you don't take care."

Theo laughed, and gave up the attempt to make Mrs. Wooley excited.

"I am glad that we are really off at last," said Luna, as the train steamed slowly away from the platform; "it is easier to realise our changed lot—— Phil, you are looking serious. You mustn't have a grave face to-day, of all days!"

"No? Is it not a serious matter to have to take care of three flighty girls?"

"Am *I* flighty?" asked Anne wonderingly.

"Well, dear, flighty for *you*. You know I found you drawing fancy plans of secret passages and panel-chambers."

Anne blushed.

"It was dreadfully foolish; but there may really be underground passages or strange hiding-places at Hillborough. There used to be monks there once, Philip; and you know that Miss Fane told you only a third of the house has been inhabited for years."

"We will explore," said Luna with decision; "but at first we shall be too busy to think of ghosts or——"

"Ghosts? How lovely!" cried Theo.

"I don't believe in ghosts," was Anne's comment.

"You are not going to an empty house, you must remember, Theo; your uncle's servants are all of them there."

"We are going to revel in luxury and idleness, aren't we, Theo? It will be delightful to have nothing to do but amuse ourselves these long summer days!"

Luna leaned back with a smile of satisfaction as she drew this word-picture of contemplated idleness. Philip did not look particularly edified by it; Anne suggested that work would soon be advisable again; but Theo sympathised heartily with the suggestion.

"You shall have all the new music you want, and play the piano and violin half the day, Lu, while I will read, read, read, nothing but read for hours at a stretch! Your melodies will harmonise with my romances. And Anne shall potter about in sweet content."

"I shall be able to take care of some of the flowers," said Anne happily; "it will be such a treat to me to make the rooms pretty with them. And then there will be conservatories, I suppose. Oh, Luna, do you think there will?"

"Why, of course. You will not need to cherish a sixpenny bracken-fern in a pot another winter, by way of seeing something green, dear."

"But I have brought the bracken," Anne replied; "I could not be so ungrateful as to leave it behind."

"Bravo, Annie," said Philip, pressing his little sister's hand; "you are faithful to old friends, and so deserve many new ones.—And what am I to do, Luna, while I stay with you?"

"You shall ride about the estate and manage the farm part of it; you shall drive a dog-cart——"

"Oh, a very high dog-cart, with yellow wheels," interrupted irrepressible Theo.

"You shall visit the tenants and make friends with the rector; you shall paint Miss Fane's portrait and have time to do some great picture for next Academy; then you shall study—— Oh, Phil dear, I have seen you in every one of *my* fancy pictures of our life at Hillborough!"

Philip made some half-laughing rejoinder, and changed the subject. He did not mean to remain at his sister's house for long—thinking, and perhaps rightly, that he ought not to live upon the fortune which she had inherited. The late Mr. Gordon's animosity towards Luna's father, and therefore towards Luna herself, had been caused by that father's marrying Philip's mother; it went against young Carroll's natural pride to contemplate accepting benefits which had been meant for no one of his name to enjoy.

"What is the name of our station, Phil?" Luna asked, when their journey was nearly at an end.

"Hilldon; the village is a very quiet little hamlet, I believe, and the station has only been built half a year."

"Hurrah! I see it—I do *really* see it!" cried Theo.

"Did you think it existed only in my imagination, then?"

"No, but 'what the eye seeth the heart believeth!' Luna, am I dreadfully untidy? You look as calm and dignified as a landed proprietress ought to do, but I *know* I am a scarecrow—I feel like one. And we ought to make a good impression upon the rural population."

Luna pushed back one or two of Theo's more rebellious brown curls—they were always escaping from the confinement of hat or veil—and gave her to understand that, *for Theo*, she was tolerably presentable. The merry girl made a little grimace at the reservation in her sister's reply.

"Now you might have told me that I looked satisfactory, and so relieved my nervous doubts, Lu. Upon my honour, I feel quite shy!"

"You are very fond of calling your honour to your aid, Theo; are you sure that you know what you mean by it?"

"Indeed, yes. I mean that I have always regarded Washington as a hero above all heroes! Now, Phil, call a porter, and let us get out of this train. I am longing to see what kind of an equipage is awaiting us."

A man-servant advanced, touching his hat.

"You are from Hillborough?" asked Philip.

"Yes, sir. The phaeton is outside, sir, and a cart for the luggage."

"*The luggage, Lu!* why, we've only got five shabby old boxes and a carpet-bag," whispered Theo. "I'm afraid we shall not impress the rustics by the extent of our portable belongings, at any rate!"

Soon the girls and their brother, with Mrs. Wooley in solemn attendance, were packed away in the phaeton. Luna's eyes were bright with satisfaction as the grey horses bore the party swiftly along the country road. Anne's admiration was claimed principally by the flowers in the cottage gardens, and the luxurious summer foliage of the woods as they passed them.

It was mid-day now, and the landscape was redolent with a golden light which cast dense shadows in the rear of trees and buildings. The birds were singing their hymns to fair July just entering upon her reign; the butterflies skimmed over fields where corn was making ready for the autumn harvest; soft fleecy clouds scudded over a sky of deepest blue. Afar to eastwards stretched open land for miles and miles, ending in faint blue hills on the dim horizon, over which hung a purple haze of heat.

Hilldon village was picturesque indeed; a mere handful of small homes clustering, as though for protection, beside the grey-towered church. The street ran up and down many times, each tiny hill giving some new point of view: now of a river which wound by mills and forests, now of pasture-meadows,

bordered with silvery willows, where peaceful cows were feasting on verdant grass and snowy daisies.

The phaeton passed through the village and turned into a cross-lane to the right. Here the road was not as white and dusty, for the high green banks and hawthorn hedges shaded it from the full sunshine. Presently a veritable avenue of limes and beeches spanned the lane, and this welcome shadow continued until another turn brought the Gordons in sight of their new home.

"Oh, how lovely!" cried Luna.

The Abbey stood upon high ground against a screen of tall fir-trees which shut out any view of the country beyond. It was just such a building as Anne had fancied it—rugged in shape, with castellated towers rising at the four angles, besides the bell-tower which crowned the irregular roof. Many windows there were, quaintly latticed and peeping from among trailing creepers and denser ivy. Before the house was a square quadrangle which had once been enclosed by high walls, but which was now defined only by the rounded carriage-way which led to an out-built porch. Over this porch, as the girls found when they neared it, was carved in the old stone a graceful figure of an angel who held a scroll inscribed with the word "Peace."

"A good welcome, Lu," said Philip, pointing to it as he stood beside her on the steps; "*Peace*—that is what I wish you in your new life; peace at home, peace in the world, and"—he added in a lower tone—"that other peace 'which passeth understanding.'"

Luna pressed the arm on which her hand rested, and looked quickly up at his grave face.

"Phil, I 'm growing superstitious, I think. I have a fancy that—that some trouble will come to me here. I was so glad to come, so eager to see the Abbey, but there is something chilling about it—— Oh, why can't we see into the future, so as to be prepared for anything it may hold for us?"

Philip watched her. She was pale, and a brightness as of gathering tears was in her eyes.

"The troubles which come to all lives would find you out just as easily in any home, Lu dear; none threaten us now, so let us forget that there is such a thing as sorrow. Didn't I tell you that your wild spirits would give way to depression? If you want to be cheered up, go and ask Mrs. Wooley's opinion of the Abbey."

Luna threw off her nervous mood with an effort.

"All the same, Phil, I feel, I *know* that I shall have to face some trial, some ordeal here. Now we will join the others. Mrs. Wooley? Where is she! And what has become of Theo and Anne?"

"They are exploring the rooms," said Philip. "Come and take formal possession, Lu; to-day you enter upon your new stewardship."

(To be continued.)

DEBORAH.

BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D.

"But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Beth-el under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth."—GENESIS XXXV. 8.

HUMAN history is a pathway across the churchyard of the ages. The feet of the successive generations hurrying over it obliterate the inscriptions upon the tombstones. Only a few escape erasure, owing to their bolder outlines, or to the instinctive reverence that preserves them. Here and there we are arrested by a short record that tells of some beautiful character or some noble deed which the world cannot forget. Among the multitudes that passed into oblivion during the lifetime of Jacob, only a few names survive to our day; and of these names, that of Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, is not the least conspicuous. The word Deborah means a bee; and the memory of her who bore this significant name in the far-off ages is like the little bee found the other day in the coffin of the mighty Pharaoh, that had been attracted by the flowers before the lid was fastened down, and was thus shut in with the mummied dead, and shared in the same immortality. Wordsworth speaks of the hum of the bee as being—

> "A slender sound, yet hoary Time
> Doth to the soul exalt it with the chime
> Of all his years."

And the faint hum which Deborah made in the world has awakened an echo that has reached across the silence of the intervening centuries, and touches a deep chord in our hearts to-day.

It was because the old Egyptian bee was shut up in the same coffin with Pharaoh that its little body survived to our time; and it was because Deborah was connected with the patriarchal family that her memory endured amid the oblivion that has overtaken nearly every other contemporary. Pieces of amber are sometimes found in which the body of an old-world bee has been embalmed for a million years: the sole relic of all the animal life of the remote period when the primeval pine forests exuded the gum that crystallised into its coffin; and so the precious amber of the Bible has embalmed the name of Deborah, because she was the nurse of Rebekah, and lived in the household of Isaac and Jacob, and shared with them in the covenant blessing. It is very touching that we should thus have a record, not only of the illustrious heads of the sacred family, but also of one of its lowly dependents. In admiring the stateliness of the oak, we are apt to lose sight of the little white sorrel-flower that grows at its root, and that gives its august protector a touch of beauty and grace.

And so, while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob absorb our attention, we do not usually think of the humble retainers in their household, Eliezer and Deborah, whose names we know because they gave them the loving and faithful service of their lives. It may be instructive, therefore, to stoop down and examine more minutely the brief record of one who linked together the patriarchal households, and formed a bond of connection between them and the ancestral home. Her life was not great according to the standard of the world. She was one of the obscure characters of Scripture, and the work she did was in an unnoticed sphere. But the humblest work is necessary, and in its own way important; and often those who do it are in their own degree as noble and praiseworthy as those who by their brilliant tasks have moulded the ages.

The first time that Deborah is noticed is in connection with the departure of Rebekah to the distant home of her husband. She acted as nurse in the household of Laban. She had been Rebekah's foster-mother, and had brought her up from her birth. The attachment between a foster-mother and the child she has reared, in whom there is not a drop of her blood, is often stronger than that which she cherishes towards her own born children. It used to be so in the Highlands of Scotland; and numerous stories are told of an Irish foster-mother sacrificing the interests of her own children for the sake of her foster-child. During the Indian Mutiny the Hindoo ayah in charge of an English child often went through unheard-of privations and dangers in order to preserve the life of her little foreign charge from the ferocity of her own countrymen. In Eastern families such a nurse was highly valued and honoured. Long after the necessity for her services was over, she remained as a permanent member of the household, and was the beloved friend and counsellor of all. So was it with Deborah. Rebekah had grown to womanhood; but although the special duties which she originally performed were no longer required, her nurse lived with her foster-child and watched with deep interest her expanding powers of body and mind, and, no doubt, was her sympathetic companion and confidante in all her joys and troubles. And when the crisis came in her life, and Rebekah had to abandon her father's house and her own people, and cast in her lot with strangers, even though of her own blood, in a distant land, Deborah refused to be separated from her. Like Ruth, who accompanied Naomi from Moab to Bethlehem, Deborah followed Rebekah from Mesopotamia to Canaan. "Where thou goest I will go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

We can imagine the comfort her nurse would be to the young inexperienced bride over the long weary journey through the Eastern desert, and the happiness of having with her in the strange circumstances of her new abode one who was so closely associated with her old home—who could not only minister to her bodily wants as no one else could, but also talk sympathetically of the days that were no more, and of the familiar scenes left far behind. When the cavalcade, under the guidance of the faithful Eliezer, arrived at Hebron, and Rebekah was received into mother Sarah's tent as the wife of Isaac, Deborah settled down with her mistress into the calm routine of every-day duty. The life in Isaac's home was very much what she had been accustomed to in the home of Laban. It was a pastoral life: restful, secluded, and continuously religious. An atmosphere of antique quiet hung around it; for the aged Abraham still lived with his son—as his father, the aged Bethuel, had lived with Laban. And when the birth of Esau and Jacob introduced a new interest into the tranquil household, Deborah would, in the case of the children, revive the solicitude she used to feel for the mother. Rebekah's partiality for Jacob, who was undervalued by his father, would make Deborah espouse his cause in any contest with his brother; and in the foolish favouritism which prevailed in the tent, and divided the household against itself, and introduced the seeds of future sorrow and alienation, she would, no doubt, have a large share. There were traits of character in Jacob, who dwelt quietly in the tent, which harmonised more with her own womanly qualities than the rough, impetuous activities of the bold hunter Esau; and therefore she uniformly took his side along with her mistress. That Jacob was the favourite with Deborah, as he had been with his own mother, we infer from the fact that when the household of Isaac was broken up, and the brothers were alienated and separated from each other, and at last Rebekah died, it was Jacob, and not Esau, who took the old nurse of his mother home, and cherished her declining years with tender affection. In Jacob's house she was, doubtless, the friend and confidante of the grandchildren, as she had been of the grandmother and the father; for her heart was like a honeycomb—capable of adding new cells of sweet affection to those that were already full, and renewing its youth by the exercise of that love that never grows old.

And when the end came, at a good old age the grateful patriarch and his children laid her to rest under the shadow of an oak near their home. She was not buried in the cave of Machpelah with her mistress, for that sepulchre was reserved for the members of the patriarchal family as the charter of their right to the inheritance of the whole land. But she found a grave near the hallowed sanctuary of Bethel, where God had given such a wonderful revelation of Himself to Jacob, and where the ladder had been set up connecting earth with heaven. That she was much beloved and deeply mourned is evident from the fact that the oak under which she slept the last deep sleep received the name of the Oak of Weeping, from the loud and long lamentation that was made over her death, and also from the peculiar way in which the sacred narrative announces the sad event. It contrasts it with the gladness connected with the consecration of a new altar to God at Bethel, and says, "*But* Deborah Rebekah's nurse died:" as if it had said: "What availeth this joy when there is a great sorrow in the home?" This was the dark cloud that blotted out the sunshine; and the peculiar expression shows how serious was the interruption caused to the happiness of the household by the death of this aged servant. It made a great difference, and

left a great blank in the daily life of the home. It is said after her death that God appeared again unto Jacob and blessed him—or, as the original word should be translated, *comforted* him, as one who had sustained a sore bereavement.

In the light of this respect paid to Deborah we see an appropriateness in the name which she bore, implying, as it did, a kind of prophetic authority. The bee was an Egyptian symbol of regal power, and among the Greeks it was applied to poets, and especially to the priestesses of the oracle of Delphi; while we are reminded of the beautiful fable how the sacred bees of Parnassus distilled their honey into the lips of Plato, the wisest man of the ancient world. Mahomet says in the Koran: "The Lord spake by inspiration unto the bee." Between Deborah's name and her character there must have been a correspondence. She must have been the wise woman of the patriarchal household, as well as the nurse, whom all consulted in difficulty and trouble, and whose advice was invaluable. This, I think, is distinctly shown not only by the way in which she was buried, but also by the holy and historical character of the spot. If she had been a mere nurse, a mere ordinary woman, however faithful and devoted, she would not have been laid to rest under a kind of tree which had become sacred, because it marked each successive step of the patriarchal migration in the Land of Promise, and had in every case an altar to God erected under its shade. The Allon-bachuth that extended its protecting branches over her grave became in after-years one of the most famous trees in Palestine, a conspicuous landmark to travellers over the central highlands. It grew into a sanctuary, where the people came from far and near to worship. Under the wrongly translated name of palm-tree, it was the seat of assemblies gathered in this locality in the time of the Judges; and a greater and better known Deborah—a queen-bee of Israel—lived there, and administered justice in those distracted times. It was at this oak that the spirit of prophecy came to Saul when he was anointed by Samuel as the first king of Israel; and it was under this oak that the prophet from Judah sat when he was divinely commissioned to declare the awful fate which should come upon the altar of Bethel erected by Jeroboam for his calf-worship. This celebrity attached to her last resting-place showed that Deborah was no common woman, and kept her memory green to many generations as a mother in Israel.

In the Scripture notice of Deborah we have the record of a human life of which nothing more could be said than that she lived and died as the nurse of Rebekah. Though associated with the patriarchs, her life contained none of those important outstanding events by which their history was signalised. It was a monotonous expanse of level common experience. It was a life of servitude, prosaic and unromantic; and yet we see what love it drew forth, with what honour it was crowned, how sincerely and deeply it was mourned when it was ended, and how long its memory remained to affect succeeding generations. The case of Deborah teaches us how the common drudgery of life may be made honourable and worthy of being commemorated in God's Holy Word among the heroic achievements of patriarchs, kings, and prophets. Most people have nothing more appointed to them than was appointed to Deborah: a lowly position, a common round of duties, service to others. They have to impart whatever romance they can to humble experiences, and to find occasions of heroism in the endurance of common toils and the resistance to ordinary temptations. But the greatness of any work depends not so much upon its outward magnitude in the eyes of men, as upon the loftiness of the moral qualities that are infused into it. Heavenly principles and the powers of the world to come can be brought to bear upon and to redeem the most commonplace tasks. They can be performed with unselfish loyalty to the Divine Master. There is a wonderful picture in the Louvre in Paris, painted by Murillo, in which is represented the interior of a kitchen; but the servants doing the work there are not mortals arrayed in sordid garments, but beautiful white-robed angels. Gazing upon this common scene, you feel how it is transfigured by the nature of those who move in it: how very noble even the humblest details of kitchen work may become when it is performed by heavenly beings. And so, if men and women realise that they are heavenly servants—immortal ones, doing their work not as unto men, but as unto the Lord, how will this feeling refine and ennoble it until there is more of heaven than of earth in it! And besides the good that such lowly service may do to the individual, its results will live in the total sum of human influence. There may be no possibility of following out its history—of separating it from the service of others. It may mingle with the vast whole of the world's achievements, and be indistinguishable to human eyes; but He who makes each seed sown in the spring to yield its own separate ear of corn in the great mass of ears that wave in the general harvest field, will identify each one's share in the total outcome, and accurately proportion individual reward to individual service.

We are apt to think that the conditions of domestic service in the ancient world were the same as those in our own country at the present day. But those who did the work of the household of the patriarchs were not free, but bond. Liberty and voluntariness, which enter so essentially into our ideas of the relation between master and servant, had no existence in the ancient world. Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, was a slave, the possession of her mistress; and it showed not only what a soul of goodness there was in the evil of such a lot, but also what a strength of noble character Deborah must have possessed to rise above her circumstances, to have been so much appreciated when living, and so sincerely mourned when dead: to have had her history associated with that of the patriarchs and her name written in the Word of God. We know that the condition of many of the saints of the New Testament was that of slaves, like Onesimus, the absolute property of their owners; and the Epistles reveal to us the striking fact that the will of God in very many cases was done nobly, and the life of faith and heavenly purity and love lived in the hardest circumstances of servitude, and amid the foulest

corruptions of pagan homes. Not merely in their leisure moments, but even in the performance of their servile duties, multitudes of Christian slaves manifested their devotion to Him who had purchased them from a more dreadful slavery, and translated them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. As the bond-servants of Jesus Christ, they regarded their servile state not as an iron fate by which they were bound, but as the condition in which they could best serve God of their own free choice—the slaves of men, but the reedmen of Heaven.

The example of Deborah and of the Christian slaves in the time of the Apostles is instructive to those who occupy similar positions in our households. The law of Christ has effected a wonderful transformation in all the relations and dependencies of life. It has entered homes, and changed slaves into free and willing servants. It places on the basis of a common brotherhood in Christ all human relations and duties. It enables the extremes of society to sit down together before the memorials of a Saviour's love, and there eat the same spiritual meat and drink the same spiritual drink, and in finest sympathy of heart and soul pray that they all may be one. It assures us that in Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free. More faithfully, then, than Deborah or the Christian slaves of the Apostles' time, should the free servants of our times, who profess to love the Lord Jesus and to serve Him, occupy their sphere of usefulness for the glory of God and the good of man.

Why, it may be asked, do the relations between master and servant exist? Are they mere accidents; or are they merely economical, mere human expedients of domestic or social convenience? That, I believe, is the common view; but it is not the right or Scripture view. God has appointed these relations, and He maintains them as a part of His great plan for disciplining our souls out of sin and selfishness, and preparing us for a state in which such relations shall be unknown and unnecessary. The servants in the households of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were introduced by God into this sphere, not merely that they might serve their masters and mistresses in the common work of every-day life, but that they might share in the education and training of the covenant family: that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob might be their own God. And hence, such servants, sharing in the benefits of the same spiritual education and discipline which their masters and mistresses received, were called not *hands*—as we, in these modern times, are disposed to call those whom we employ—but *souls*. We are told expressly of Abraham by God: "For I know that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." And so it should be always. The work of the servant is not a mere means for getting money or comfort, but is designed to be a moral training for the higher nature; and the relation between master and servant should be a mutual discipline of kindness and consideration. It should be regulated, not by that Mammon which makes slaves of us all, but by that love which makes us free indeed. In these days we are confused with constant struggles and outcries regarding the rights of capital and the rights of labour, the rights of masters and the rights of servants; but the Gospel of Christ speaks not of the rights, but of the duties of men, and holds forth for universal imitation the example of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Deborah was loved and revered as a friend in the family of Isaac and Jacob; and how many Deborahs have grown old in the service of the same household, and have hived up there large stores of kindness and goodness, so that they have long ceased to be called servants, and are known as cherished friends! How often do we notice in the newspapers the death of some aged servant who has been thirty, and fifty, and even sixty years in the same home, doing faithful work until no longer able, ministered to by loving hands to whom she used to minister—the comforter in sorrow, the adviser in difficulty, and the patient confidante and helper of all, and who when she died was followed to the grave by the deep love and gratitude of two or three generations! In the Protestant cemetery at Florence I was greatly struck by two modest tombstones placed side by side: the one was the grave of an English general who served in India, and, coming to Florence, died there; the other was the grave of his man-servant, who had grown grey in his service and had shortly pre-deceased him. On the tombstone of the servant were carved the touching words, "Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved," which St. Paul wrote in his exquisite letter to Philemon, enjoining him to receive back his runaway slave Onesimus. It was not death that made these two, master and servant, equal, but love stronger than death, the faithful attachment and devoted service of long years given by the one, and the deep gratitude and respect and affection given by the other in return; and, above all, the common faith and love of both in one Master—the Lord Jesus Christ. It does one good, in a commercial age like this, when money is made to answer all things, and the relations of social life are regulated by the principles of the market-place, to come across a record of such disinterested affection and Christian devotion as this.

This should be a common experience; and all the relations of master and servant should be based upon the same Christian law. The tie of master and servant concerns only this life, and has reference only to the lower nature of man. But the tie of faith and love in Christ Jesus which binds them together, if they are Christian believers, has respect to the spirit, and falls under the powers of the world to come; and assuredly, if the right place and the full power are given to the higher relationship, the lower must necessarily be purified of all its sinful and selfish elements, and made all that it ought to be. If a mistress looks upon her servant as in Christ Jesus a sister beloved, she will treat her accordingly, she will act towards her in all things in a loving considerate spirit; and if the servant looks upon her mistress as a sister beloved in Christ, she will regard her interests as if they were her own. Love will constrain her to do things which money could never pay,

which no amount of wages could ever buy. And such a servant will not only be loved and esteemed during life as truly a member of the family, and sincerely and lastingly mourned and missed, as was Deborah, when she dies, but will also earn the distinction mentioned in these wonderful words: "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you that He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

"HER MAJESTY."

"Carrying in his arms the self-willed Koko."—*p.* 699.

HER MAJESTY sat in the carriage, well wrapped in costly furs, her short golden curls peeping slyly out from under the soft white cap, which looked as though it had been fabricated by the hands of snow-maidens in sparkling, far-off ice caverns, her big dark eyes roving with quick interest from face to face and object to object, as gay equipages rolled along the crowded thoroughfare. The child kept meeting smiling and friendly glances from many pairs of eyes—glances which she always recognised by a bend of her small head, though it was impossible for her to put names to all mamma's friends who nodded to her in passing.

Mamma had gone to see her dressmaker, to discuss with her some new court robe, and Her Majesty, knowing that the discussion would last a long time, had wisely elected to remain outside in the clear, frosty sunshine; for it was far more amusing to remain in the carriage and watch the ceaseless stream of life flowing by than to sit in a dressmaker's show-room and listen to talk about silks and satins and feathers. And then Koko always stayed in the carriage on these occasions; and Koko was almost as good as a grown-up person to talk to, for he understood quite as much as the average human being—and then he always agreed with every sentiment expressed by his little mistress, whilst there was no real dependence to be placed upon the reply of a grown-up person; although, to be sure, Her Majesty had not much to complain of in the matter of contradiction.

"But though they say 'Yes,' they don't always do

the things," she would often remark in confidence to Koko. "They say it would be very nice, and talk about 'another day, perhaps.' I don't like people to say 'perhaps.' I don't think it's a nice word. I think some day I will tell papa to have a law made, and make people scratch it out of the dictionaries. There are several laws I intend to have made when I grow up."

Then Koko would wag his tail and wriggle all over his long body, and snuggle up closer to his little mistress, and Her Majesty would tell him for the thousandth time that he was the best and cleverest and most sensible doggie in the world.

Koko was a sleek, glossy-coated dog, of a golden-yellow colour, with bandy legs, huge paws, a long body, and very long drooping ears. He was what is called a *dachshund*, and he was worth a great deal of money, as he had taken the first prize at a show, where Her Majesty had fallen in love with him, and had coaxed her papa to buy him for her.

Her Majesty could generally coax papa into doing anything she desired. Of course she could coax mamma, too—that almost went without saying; and, indeed, most people could persuade mamma to do their bidding; but this was by no means the case with papa. Her Majesty was beginning to be aware that everybody, except her own small self, stood considerably in awe of papa—even mamma did, as the child had more than once discovered; and if mamma wanted anything very much, it was Her Majesty who was set on to present the petition.

All this had gradually dawned upon the child without exciting any wonder or comment. Children accept life as it comes to them, without troubling to analyse its incongruities, and it seemed perfectly natural to this little maiden to rule her stern and handsome father with her small rod of iron, whilst everybody else in the house went softly to and fro before him, and addressed him with a certain amount of deferential awe.

Her Majesty was just seven years old. She had no brothers or sisters. She ruled supreme in her own nurseries, and in a manner she reigned supreme throughout the house; for she had at the advanced age of four established her right to enter her mother's drawing-room at will, or even to invade her father's study, into which no foot but her own ever penetrated without special permission; and she drove out in her mother's Victoria, behind those high-stepping bay horses, as often as the fancy suited her.

Up till a few months ago the child had never troubled her small head over any of the perplexing questions which present themselves to us as we emerge from childhood. She had lived with the pleasant, undefined impression that the world and all its accessories had somehow been put there more or less for her benefit. She was kind to everybody, because everybody was kind to her; and she had never even suspected that there was a seamy side to life, of which she herself knew nothing, and which she might go through life without realising, if she chose to wrap herself about in the mantle of wealth and luxury, and close those bright eyes of hers to all she did not wish to see.

But since she had been seven years old, she had begun to learn lessons, and her lessons were given her by a governess, who came for two hours in the mornings and taught her more things than reading and writing. Her Majesty liked the talks almost better than the lessons, though she was ambitious to make progress in her studies so as to surprise papa with the extent of her acquirements. But the talks were the most interesting, because they were about real things and real people; and Her Majesty began to understand the meaning of some of the sights and sounds of the great city through whose streets she drove day by day, and to feel within her very vague but very real feelings of sympathy and sorrow, combined with a great longing to put right all that was wrong by the exercise of that sovereign power which at home appeared to be without limit.

When she spoke to Miss Entwhistle of these vague dreams, they were listened to with ready sympathy, though Her Majesty was surprised to hear that papa could not make all the poor people rich and happy by bringing forward a Bill in Parliament. Her Majesty had hitherto believed that papa ruled the nation through Parliament, and that she ruled him; and after her own childishly magnificent dreams, the advice of the governess sounded a little flat and tame.

"I don't know, dear, if it would be good for everyone to be rich, and neither your papa nor anybody else could make them so; and besides, being rich would not always make them happy. Money has very little to do with happiness, and happiness is far more precious than gold. What you can try to do, dear, is to go about with your eyes open, dropping little seeds of kindness wherever you go, not looking for grand results, but trying to throw a little of the sunshine of your own life into that of others. It is not very often that any of us can do very big things, but we can every one of us do little ones. You must look out for the little opportunities, and then the big ones will take care of themselves."

Her Majesty had been very much interested in this theory, and had made Miss Entwhistle explain it to her a good many times over. And ever since, she had been on the look-out for these small acts of kindness to others, without having satisfied herself that she had done anything worthy of being called by the name.

Her thoughts wandered off on this tack this bright, cold morning, as she sat in the carriage watching the stream of life as it flowed by. There were many miserable-looking beggars who passed along in that shifting throng, and Her Majesty would very gladly have bestowed upon them the money which her little purse contained; but Miss Entwhistle had distinctly told her that it was not wise or even really kind to give away money in the streets to beggars who might look wretched; and the child had still that complete confidence in the opinions of the grown-up people which is such a happy thing for the little ones.

"I wish something would happen to-day," thought the child, as the carriage, which had been slowly moving along, turned and drew up once again beside the big shop over which the dressmaker's rooms were situated. "Mamma is going to be a long time gone—

she said so her own self. It would be such a good opportunity for something to happen. I do wish it would. Oh! where is Koko gone?"

These last words were uttered aloud and anxiously, for Koko had slipped so quietly from the carriage during his little mistress's reverie that she had not even missed him till this moment.

Now, this was rather a naughty trick of Koko's. He loved sometimes to slip from the carriage and go and make the acquaintance of other dogs running loose on the pavement; and this was the more naughty and foolish of him as he was rather a timid dog in the streets, and had a way of getting under the feet of the horses when his mind was intent upon some game of play; and he had already had several narrow escapes of being run over.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Her Majesty, standing up in the carriage and peeping anxiously about. "That naughty dog! I wonder where he is? I really must speak severely to him if he does this sort of thing. That is the worst of having him in the Victoria; there is no door, and he can sneak out as he likes. Oh! what are all those people shouting for? Oh, dear! I do hope it isn't Koko getting run over! I do believe it is! I wish I could see. Oh, my dear, darling Koko, what shall I do if you are hurt?"

There certainly was some commotion going on not far away, and in another moment Her Majesty saw approaching towards the carriage—as it seemed in answer to some signal from coachman or footman—a tall, pale boy, whose coat was very much splashed with mud, whilst he himself was carrying in his arms the self-willed Koko, who had put on a limp, die-away appearance, as though anxious to propitiate his little mistress and win forgiveness for his delinquency.

Her Majesty threw back the rug, and sprang out of the carriage to meet her darling.

"Oh, I am so very much obliged to you for bringing him back. How did you know he had run away?"

"I was afraid he would get run over, little lady," answered the boy, in a very gentle and refined voice—a voice which struck Her Majesty as being somehow familiar, she did not know why; "but I do not think he is hurt. Shall I put him in the carriage? He is too muddy for you to touch."

"Hurt!" echoed Her Majesty, turning pale. "Was he run over?"

"No, I don't think so; but the wheel went very near him, and all the people shouted, and the poor dog was frightened, and didn't seem to know which way to turn——"

"And you ran in and picked him up? Oh, how kind of you! I hope you didn't get hurt yourself. Oh, I'm afraid you did! You have hurt your foot?"

"Only very little. There were so many things in the way, and it was rather difficult to pick up the dog. He seemed so frightened."

"That is just like Koko—he does so lose his head. It's very bad of him to try and run away out of the carriage," said Her Majesty, shaking her head severely at Koko, who lay with the most abject air in the bottom of the carriage, looking as though he had never known a naughty or disobedient thought in his life; but for once Her Majesty was not engrossed with her pet, but was more interested in the pale boy who had rescued him from a great peril. He had such a nice face, and eyes that somehow were like mamma's; and there was a pinched look about his face that somehow went to the child's heart; and she was afraid every moment that he would go away, and she did not want him to do that yet. She wanted to talk to him first. Suddenly a bright thought flashed into her mind. She looked up eagerly into the boy's face, and said—

"What time is it?—do you know, please?"

There was a clock hanging over a shop a little way up the street, and the boy looked and said—

"One o'clock, little lady."

"I thought it must be—I am so hungry. It is my luncheon time. Are you hungry too?"

A deep flush rose for a moment in the boy's face, but, meeting the clear, frank, friendly glance of the child's eyes, he answered, in a low tone—

"Yes."

"I'm so glad!" said Her Majesty, with a beaming smile. "Now we will go and have lunch together; and when mamma comes out she can thank you for saving Koko. She would like to do that, I know.—Walters," added the child, addressing the footman with an air absurdly like her father's, if she only knew it—her gentle mother never spoke quite so imperiously—"if her ladyship comes out, tell her that we have gone to Ericsen's for luncheon.—Come along, boy. We will leave naughty Koko behind. Walters must look after him. He will not want to run about any more to-day, I think."

The boy hesitated, but another imperious, "Come!" from Her Majesty settled the matter, and, with glowing cheeks, he followed her into the big confectioner's where she had often lunched with her mother, and which she called "one of our shops," because her mother never seemed to pay anything there, but ordered what she wished, and went away without troubling to pay. Her Majesty had never before gone in except with her father or mother; but she was perfectly equal to the occasion, walked forward into the inner room, and motioned her companion to a seat at one of the marble-topped tables with the air of a princess at least.

"Lunch for two, waiter," she said to the bland official with a napkin under his arm; "and be quick, please, for we are—hungry," she was going to say, but, not quite sure if that sounded well, she substituted the phrase "in haste" instead.

"Very good, my lady," answered the man; and in a twinkling the plates were brought, and the pale-faced boy was discussing tender beef-steak and mashed potatoes with a relish which plainly showed how seldom such good things had been his of late.

Her Majesty's hunger was soon appeased; which was scarcely wonderful, seeing that her early nursery breakfast was always supplemented by additions from the late breakfast of her parents, at which she always appeared; but she found it very interesting to watch her companion, more and more struck by the strange likeness he bore to her mother. Even the voice was like; and, although his clothes were very thin and

"'Don't you like it?' asked Her Majesty, disappointed."

worn, and looked as though they could never keep out the cold, his manner was so gentle and refined that the child knew he was a gentleman, and began to feel as though she had at last got her wish, and had found somebody whose life was not bright, but which she might perhaps be able herself to brighten if she could only think of the way.

"Can you finish my meat for me?" asked Her Majesty presently. "It isn't nice to leave an untidy plate, Nurse says, but I can't eat any more myself."

The boy coloured almost painfully again, but the child spoke in such simple good faith that he took her at her word, and the good things speedily disappeared again.

"We'll have some sweets now, waiter," said Her Majesty; and when the man had gone to do her bidding she said to her companion, "I like sweets better than meat, and they are very good here. The waiter will be sure to bring us something nice, because he knows me. Would you like any wine? I forgot to ask, because I don't like it myself; but I think men always do. Would you like some? and please will you tell me your name?"

"Donald," answered the boy, smiling; "and I will not have any wine, thank you. I do not know if I ought to be here at all. Will not your mother be angry?"

"Angry with me!" asked Her Majesty, opening her eyes very wide. "Oh no! Mamma is never angry with me. I don't think she knows how."

"I meant angry with me for coming," said Donald.

"I told you to come. She couldn't be angry with you. Everybody does what I tell them to," answered Her Majesty, with calm assurance. "Here comes the waiter with jelly and sponge cake. I hope you like jelly and sponge cake, Donald—I do, very much. I think the waiter knows it; he's a nice man. I shall give him a shilling out of my purse when we go. Mamma always gives him something, though we don't have to pay for what we eat."

Her Majesty attacked her jelly with alacrity; but presently noticed that Donald did not touch his, but sat looking at it with a strange expression on his face.

"Don't you like it?" asked Her Majesty, disappointed. "Oh, well! you shall have something else."

"It isn't that, little lady," answered Donald, flushing and hesitating, yet encouraged to go on by the kindly sympathy and interest expressed in those childish eyes; "but I have a mother at home, and she is ill, and there are so many things she wants that I cannot get for her. The doctor says she would get strong again if she could have all she wants; and this jelly would be so good for her, and she would enjoy it so; and the sponge cake, too; and I have had *such* a dinner; and—and—please don't be vexed, little lady."

"Vexed!" echoed Her Majesty, "vexed because you are a nice, kind boy, and are good to your mother? Oh! how could anybody be vexed at that? Do you want to take it home to her? Oh! how nice that would be. I wish I hadn't eaten mine, and we would send it all; but the waiter will be able to get some more.—Waiter, please will you get a box, and put all that jelly into it, and some more, and anything else nice that you can think of for somebody who is ill? Oh! and some sponge cake, too; and bring it to us quickly, because I think I ought to be going, and I want the box first."

The friendly waiter beamed upon the child, and whisked off rapidly to do her bidding, whilst Donald, his face all in a glow of mingled shame and gratitude, murmured words of broken thanks, and felt as though he had suddenly stepped into the midst of a fairy tale.

And then there approached down the long room set with tables, a tall, graceful lady, wrapped in velvet and furs, her lovely face, full of gentle sweetness, turned full upon the little pair at the table so earnestly engaged in talk. What was it that she saw which made her stop short, as if in sudden amaze, whilst the blood ebbed from her face and then came back in quick crimson waves, and her breath fluttered through her parted lips as though under stress of deep excitement?

"Why, here is mamma!" said Her Majesty, and ran forward to greet the lovely lady; but she, with but one tender glance for her own child, passed on to the spot where Donald stood, a half-framed apology on his lips, and, placing her hand gently upon his shoulder, she said, in trembling tones—

"Tell me your name, my boy."

"Donald Leslie, my lady."

"I knew it—I knew it," she said, in strangely vibrating accents; and then, to Her Majesty's great surprise and to Donald's unspeakable astonishment, she stooped her head and kissed him on the lips, saying—

"Donald, I am your aunt, your mother's only sister. Tell me of her. Tell me of Helen."

"Are you Lady Egremont?" asked the boy, in mute amaze.

"I am your aunt Lilias," answered the beautiful Viscountess, as she held in her own the boy's thin hands and gazed hungrily into his face. "Tell me of her! Tell me of my Helen!"

Whilst the boy was telling a short sad tale of widowhood, poverty, sickness, and want, there swept through the titled lady's mind the shifting visions of the happy girlhood in the old home, and the sequel so common and yet so infinitely pathetic: the sister who gave up all for love—parents, home, sister, friends—and went trustfully forth into the unknown world, hand-in-hand with him who had won her faithful heart; but whose portion of this world's goods was so small that all her house had turned against her for obstinate folly in cleaving to him. And then her own lot in life, wooed and won by one of the richest young viscounts moving in the gay world of fashion, persuaded, dazzled, hurried into the match, hardly knowing what she did, to find herself one of the stars of the brilliant world of fashion, but mistress of a home where the domestic side of life seemed to have no place. Her husband gave her all she wanted, went out with her, was proud of her—the world called them an attached and well-matched pair—but Lady Egremont had long been conscious of an aching want in her own life, and even the caresses of her little child had not entirely filled the void.

For years she had known nothing of the sister to whom her heart still clung. She had been a betrothed wife when Helen had married the artist; and her husband had sided entirely with those who held that Helen must not expect to be noticed any more. Lilias submitted; hers was a nature always to submit and to suffer. Nothing had ever been heard of the lost one; but her image was ever fresh in the sister's heart, and when confronted by the breathing image of what that sister had once been, nature for one moment got the upper hand of all beside; and scarce had Donald's tale been told before she took the boy's hand fast in hers again, and said—

"Take me to her. I must—I will see her. Take me to her now."

The waiter had meantime come up with a box, of which Her Majesty had now taken possession. There was nothing to wait for, and it seemed as though Lady Egremont dreaded to lose a single instant. Was she afraid that some lingering qualm—some fear of her husband's displeasure, would come upon her, and hinder her from carrying out her own passionate wish? The child, who now grasped the astounding fact that Donald was her cousin, and that the sick mother was her aunt, was filled with a vehement though silent enthusiasm of love and pity. She had an aunt and a cousin who were poor, quite poor, and she had everything she could possibly want! A few weeks ago she would not have realised what poverty could be like; but she began now to have a glimmering notion about it, and her heart swelled within her at the thought.

And how much more when she, holding her mother's hand very tightly, ascended the dark, close staircase of a London lodging-house, and entered a small, bare room, full of draughts and damp, with only a handful of fire glimmering upon the hearth. Blinding tears rose in the child's eyes. She could scarcely see the thin form lying on the couch in the warmest corner of the room. She heard a broken, gasping cry of "Lilias!" and a tremulous answering whisper, "Helen!" and then Her Majesty slipped her hand from her mother's, and backed to the door, running headlong down the dark staircase till she reached the street again.

Nobody heeded the child's movements, and she was quickly back again, watching mamma feed the pale, wan invalid with the jelly brought at such a timely moment. Soon a flush of colour stole into the white cheeks, and the eyes began to brighten till the likeness between the two sisters became a little more distinct, and there were more smiles and fewer tears as the two whispered long and eagerly together.

Her Majesty pulled Donald into a corner, and, by means of the close cross-examination so well understood by young children, discovered more of the realities of poverty than might have been hers to know for many years to come in the natural order of things. Her eyes almost flashed as she heard the answers to her questions, and the tears of pity were not far away. Her own aunt and cousin—though she never knew she had either one or the other—living in the very same town—and often they had neither food to eat nor fire to warm them; whilst she had everything in the world she wanted.

Her Majesty was very single-minded, however, and her tears were held in check by the happy visions opening out in the future. When she saw by her mother's gestures that she was about to go, she whispered to Donald to run and get his mother's walking things.

"For you know you are going home with us now," she said. "We will not leave you in this horrid place: there is lots of room at home for you."

Donald stood doubting and astonished, whilst Her

Majesty crossed the creaking floor, and took the invalid's hands in hers.

"Mamma," she said, "I told coachman to go home with the Victoria and to bring the landau instead, and to tell them to get the best spare room ready, and one for Donald, too. I think he will have had time to come back by now. I told him to be quick. So there will be room for all of us now, and I think we 'd better be going. I'm in such a hurry to have Aunt Helen at home to make her warm and comfortable."

The quick flush that had dyed Lady Egremont's cheek seemed to be reflected in that of the invalid. Mrs. Leslie did not look at her sister, but only into the resolute but sunny face of the child.

"I think that will scarcely do, darling," she said. "Mamma must talk first to papa."

"Oh no! We will let it be a surprise for papa. He doesn't often get surprises now, and it will be *so* nice for him."

"Darling, you do not quite understand. Your papa might not be at all pleased to find us in his house without his leave."

The child's face flushed, and her eyes brightened.

"You don't understand. My papa is a good man; my papa is a kind man. He loves mamma, and he loves me; and you are mamma's sister and my aunt. He would be very displeased with us if we were to leave you here. We will take you home first, and then you shall see what my papa will say."

A strange wave of feeling had swept over Lady Egremont's face. She laid her hand upon her sister's head, and said—

"The child is right, Helen. You must come home with me. You shall see for yourself what my husband says."

Her Majesty was vastly content. Aunt Helen, clad in one of mamma's soft, pretty silken tea-gowns, was lying on the couch of the best spare bed-room, by the glow of a roaring fire, and mamma was sitting beside her, pouring out tea from exquisite silver into dainty china; and the talk was of those "old times," so infinitely sweet and precious to those who meet again after long years of absence and parting. Koko was lying on the hearth in huge contentment. Donald was down-stairs, simply immersed in the treasures of a library such as he had scarcely dreamed of in his life before. Everything was charming and perfect in its way, and the child was bubbling over with happiness.

But all through the peace and happiness inseparable from this reunion of the sisters, hung a certain sense of trembling uncertainty; and Her Majesty had by this time gathered that this fear and doubt arose from their uncertainty as to what the master of the house would say on his return.

"As though papa would mind!" said the child again and again to herself; but when his voice was heard below, and she saw her mother turn white as she rose with nervous haste, she just pushed her gently back into her seat once more, and said—

"It was me that brought Aunt Helen home. *I* want to be the one to give papa the surprise. Let *me* tell him, mamma dear."

Somehow Her Majesty always got her own way. Lady Egremont sank back into her seat with a sigh, whilst her sister said faintly—

"Oh, Lilias, what will he say? Is it fair to let the child bear the brunt of it? Will he be very angry?"

"I do not think he *can* be very angry with her," said the mother, a soft light in her eyes. "He has been softer, gentler, kinder, ever since she grew old enough to claim his notice. 'His little Queen' he always calls her. It is wonderful what she can do with him; but for her I do not think I dare have done it."

"'A little child shall lead them,'" murmured Helen, dreamily. "Oh, Lilias, sweet sister, what peace this is! But there must be no heartburnings, no division, on my account. I cannot come between husband and wife, be the sacrifice what it may!"

"Let us wait and see," answered the Viscountess, pressing her hands closely together; and for half an hour the sisters sat, hardly speaking, until Lilias started up, saying—

"I hear his step. He is coming here. Oh, Helen! help me to be brave."

The door opened, and in came Her Majesty, beaming all over, holding and clinging to the hand of a very tall and imposing man, before whose frown many persons both at home and abroad trembled and quaked, even if conscious of no wrong.

But there was no frown upon the handsome, powerful face now, only a smile bright and frank and full, not unlike the sunbeam smile of the golden-haired fairy dancing at his side.

"Well, Helen, a welcome home for you!" he said, and bent down to kiss the flushing, quivering face half-raised from the silken pillows. "Lilias must get some roses to bloom in those pale cheeks before long; and as for that boy of yours, I shall take him in hand myself, and train him into a private secretary—a personage I am beginning badly to want. We are hardly a large enough party for the house, and Lilias wants a companion, now that my Parliamentary duties are so increasing upon me. It is a capital idea of her small Majesty's, bringing you here *nolens volens*.—What do you think about it, eh, wifie?"

"Oh, Egremont!" murmured the Viscountess, her lovely face quivering all over; and for the first time of late years she felt her husband's arm about her, and an unexpected kiss upon her lips. Lord Egremont never did things by halves. His child's pleading had opened a long-closed door in his heart, which now stood wide, and from that heart flowed a good-will and a genial kindness which were strong enough to embrace all the world.

"Mamma dear," said Her Majesty, sitting up in bed as her mother stole softly up to say a last "Good-night," "I think it is nice to try and make people happy. Will they always turn into relations if we do?"

"Not quite as they have done to-day, darling," answered the mother softly; "and yet in one way I think they are all relations: brothers and sisters in a sense you are perhaps too little to understand now, my sweet, but which one day you may understand better than your mother; and at least we have always this

to remember—that no little act of kindness can ever be really wasted, because there is One who has said of all such acts as these, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'"

"It was Jesus Who said that," said the child softly, with wide-open, wondering eyes.

"Yes, darling, and to-day my little girl has done something for Jesus."

The idea was new, and a little solemn; but the mother did not want those dark eyes to be wide-open at this hour, and soothingly re-arranged the bed-clothes and kissed and caressed the child into drowsiness.

"Have I done something for Jesus?" thought Her Majesty, as she settled again to slumber. "It was very nice. I should like to do something for Him every day."

E. E.-G.

"SWEET BELLS—JANGLED!"

BY THE REV. J. R. VERNON, AUTHOR OF "GLEANINGS AFTER HARVEST," ETC. ETC.

SWEET bells! Whose heart does not gladden or soften at the cadence of the mellow wedding-bells? He must be a cynic indeed whose set look does not relax, nor his eye grow kind, at the sudden outburst of their glee. I have, in my time, married many a youth and maiden, but the power of the ecstatic peal over my old heart is ever the same—ever new. After the wedding was over, and the gay procession gone, how often, as I picked my way with ruth between the bruised and forsaken flowers, have I been suddenly brought to, as it were, by that pathetic burst of bells! There had been a pause of silence, and there was no thought of the bells, when, as though a door had been thrown open, they tumbled out one after another, like boys out for a holiday, mad in their glee, not to be denied in their ecstasy; and yet there is ever the feeling in my breast that their gladness is close on the very verge of tears.

Ah, the marriage-bells! Is it the irony underlying their mirth that causes this feeling? their knowledge how, in too many an experience, the smooth peal has broken into "sweet bells—jangled"? Is it their age, and the many times they have rung? the remembrance that they have of youth that has grown old; of beauty that could not last; of intoxicating hope, that jarred into bitter disappointment? To us, creatures of a day, is there a menace in their many years; in their outlasting, unchanging, our changes? Is it thus that, as they race, and ring, and fire, they cast abroad cypress with their orange-blossom?

"Joy and happiness to you!" their cadence seems to say; "others have fallen in the race, but we will start you fairly; others, gay once and bright as you, are wrinkled, worn, and grey, but we will start you gaily; others, fond and trustful as you, are bitter-hearted and broken, but we will start you bravely; others, hopeful and loving as you, are estranged and love no longer, but we will start you blithely; others, exuberant in life as you, lie under the green grass sod, but we will start you freshly!"

And so their ironic-pathetic peal saddens and gladdens, and gladdens and saddens, through the wonderful marriage-day.

There are spaces of silence, and then—just when you think they have said their last say—as a stream that has slid on in smooth silver to the edge of a rock, and then flashes into a sudden cataract, the peal of bells falls, with no warning, into the silence! O how they race and run, and plead and rejoice, and persuade us to tears, and reproach us for not being merry, and pause to fire, and then trip on in silver-footed chime again!

And now the day wanes, and

> "A shade falls on us like the dark
> From little cloudlets on the grass"—

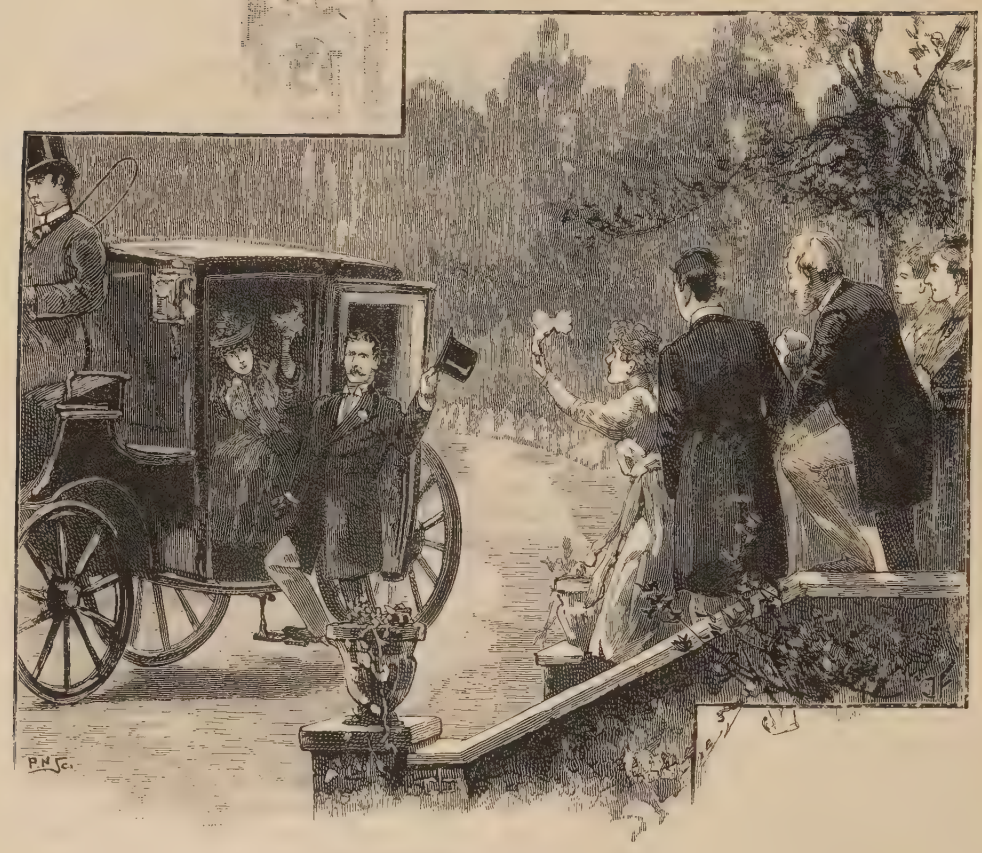
because the bridegroom and the bride are going, and it is her farewell to her old life and to her old home; and she has said a half-tearful "good-bye" to it and to us all—

> "Farewell! we kiss, and they are gone!"

But the bells spied them starting, and just then awoke from their reverie in the belfry, and ran out one after one with farewells to them, and told the world that they were going; and told the world that they were married; and told the world that they were young; and told the world that they were hopeful; and told the world that they were happy; and through all (it seemed to me), they told the world that they would grow graver; and told the world that all was not to be the flower-strewn way that the morning foreshadowed; and told the world of thorns and rough places that would try the satin slippers; and told the world that "sad" rhymes with "glad," and that either would well stand for the octave of the peal; and told the world that the young grow old; and told the world that the day must come for them to die; and all this with a hurry which never lost its calmness, and with a melancholy which never lost its gladness; and with a depression which never lost its exhilarating joy.

And thus do I remember the gay pathos, the bitter-sweet of oft-heard marriage-bells.

After thirty years, to hear again, at a wedding, the



"A half-tearful good-bye."—*p.* 703.

very peal of eight that rang on our own golden day of so long ago, what rush of memories, what aching sweetness of sad thoughts, the passionless gladness of their joy-notes brings to the mind! How much! how much! has happened since that day! What happiness, and what sorrow! what gratifications, and what regrets! Ah! there is truth in what one sadly writes concerning memories—

"Memories are bad company. If evil memories, wholly bad; if sweet memories, bad company still; since what they speak of is gone and lost to us, useful only for the further furnishing of that House of Regrets for which in youth we bake the bricks—of which in manhood we build the walls—wherein in old age we live."

How true! we cannot but say, in many cases of married memories. And why?

Well, marriage is too often lightly undertaken. Marriage is—I say it gravely—no jest. Yet it is constantly treated as though a jest it were.

Marriage is holy—a solemn thing. How little so regarded in the world! How casually entered upon! "A good match;" what *is* this in the world's notion of things? The world considers the *accidents* of marriage, not the *essence* of it. It regards the *environments*, and not the *suitability*. "A good match!" Look at Orchardson's depressing pictures in the Royal Academy, if you would prick this bubble-jargon of the world.

Marriage is a solemn thing. It is an awful thing. Yet how lightly spoken of in common parlance! How ready and easy a butt for the jester's irreverence! What a fund of amusement there is in it for the pages of the comic prints!

Yet what tragedy there may be in marriage! How we laugh at Du Maurier's children playing at being Father and Mother, and revealing—oh! what misery—to the astonished old bachelor.

Is it, however, a jest? Ah, God help us all!

We want to adjust matters. We want to have marriage rightly regarded. Rightly regarded—marriage is no jest, but a very holy thing—"a great mystery," St. Paul calls it.

So he sets before us an ideal of Christian marriage. "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Let us take to heart this fact. Marriage is not always—nor necessarily—happy. This, understood, would be something towards our end of warning off rocks and sand-banks. What dismay, what very keen wretchedness—when it is realised that all was a mistake—a bad venture!

Adventurers—like Mr. Lammle and his wife, in "Our Mutual Friend"—we do not much pity them when they arrive at the miserable *dénouement*. But simpler-minded adventurers are there than these—merchant-adventurers with no *malice prepense*—well-intentioned adventurers into the unknown sea of Matrimony, as new and wonderful to them as though

> "They were the first that ever burst
> Into that silent sea."

And all was to have been so well and so happy; so peaceful and loving and glad. But—

> "'T is true, 't is pity; pity 't is, 't is true!"

that we must say sometimes, with the poet:—

> "'T is hard,
> A man that 's married is a man that 's marr'd."

And sad for the once happy bride that weeps alone and sighs—

> "In the Winter of the present for the Summer of the past."

But this often comes from taking for granted that to be married means, of necessity, to be happy. How pathetic in sadness the title of a book that is widely read: "How to be Happy *though* Married!"

"The once happy bride that weeps alone."

Besides that, the true probabilities of happiness, from fitness of disposition and adaptableness to the husband's state of life, and from the tastes in which the wife-to-be has been educated, are often not weighed; the marriage compact, with its conditions, is not always considered: is often scarcely at all understood. The duties are *reciprocal*. The "give" and "take" of married life are to be allowed for. *Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.* Ah! but let the husband see that he deserves the reverence of the wife. She will, anyhow, have to make allowances. She does not expect—certainly will not get—perfection. But how can she reverence a drunken brute, or—not to go so low—an utterly selfish fellow, a boor, a surly churl?

Then, to change round: *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.* But if the wife be ever on the look-out, by sly ways and underhand tricks, to get her own will against his, to trick him (the nature of a man not suffering him to be suspicious of these underminings) into giving-in to her, and then goes off and boasts how cleverly she "manages her husband," is not this to sow a "root of bitterness" in his heart? If she is ever trying to edge him out of his rights and position as head of the house, and having manœuvred him out of half his throne, is constantly endeavouring to edge him out of the other half; if she prefers self-assertion, and power, and swagger, to the old protecting care, that was her due; then how can a man love such a wife, or be other than bitter against her? If she prefers to be partner in a concern—with the continual struggle to be regarded as *senior* partner, using any slips of his, not as his helpmeet, but as his would-be supplanter; picking up his careless reins, not to return sweetly to him, but to retain them, if possible, herself—why, then she may, through his unguardedness,

"Silver may streak the dark hair."—*p.* 706.

attain to something of the importance which is her aim. She will do it, however, most certainly at the expense of her husband's love. A continual bitterness, a jealous watch over her now detected designs and schemes, will take the place of that proud cherishing which loves to support that which leans on the stronger arm loving to be supported and guided. Take the very extreme case of Mrs. Proudie. Recall the wretched bishop's involuntary thought when she had gone, that the letter-bag would be brought to *him* now! etc.—that, in fact, he would no longer be a cipher in his own palace. Yet this woman may have meant well at first. But the appetite for power grows imperceptibly, as does the love for opium.

Power (or rather, the striving for power)—power or love? For which of the two does the woman's heart crave? She cannot (if her husband have the soul even of a chicken) have both these.

How wise was the choice of Mary, who, when called to the throne, perceiving a barrier arising between her and her husband, and discovering, with a true wife's sweet intuition, that it arose from the feeling that the *Wife* would now be the *Queen*, and the *Husband* (though this William would never have endured, but would rather have gone back alone to Holland) *gentleman-usher* to the wife—discovering this, at once gave up the *power* to the husband, preferring to retain *him* and his love; and wrote indignantly to her champion, Danby, who was for asserting, on her behalf, the right she so sweetly resigned.

A woman's true power comes from her yieldingness, gentleness, and sweetness. "A soft tongue breaketh the bone." There is true nature in that story of the husband who proposed to his wife that they should mutually tell each other of their married faults. She agreed; he brought before her some small matters, concerning which she meekly promised amendment. Then, asked by him, in her turn, to note any faults in her husband, she protested that she knew of none! Astonished, he himself suggested certain little selfishnesses, of which the consciousness lay in his heart (though he very likely would have resented her mention of them). But she answered him, with tears, that she *liked* him to do this and that, if it made him happy. The very neighbours noted, after that, how attentive her husband had become, and how paramount in his thoughts was consideration for his wife.

Some wives, however, prefer "equal dignity:" others

> "Rather would, by far,
> Clasp with the closeness of the loving vine
> Than stand apart in equal dignity,
> Blending some few far boughs."

Of course, there are tyrants who would trample on weakness. But not seldom a husband's brutality may be found to be the enraged trampling of the trapped elephant.

How sad it is to mark estrangement, alienation, repugnance, where once there was, or seemed to be, love. What sad stories appear, in almost every newspaper, of those who were once "proud groom and happy bride"! How sad when, even if kindliness remain, yet the subtle essence, love, has fled! If—

> "Courtesy and kindness take the place
> Of the dear dead child, Love, that laughed so gaily."

Yes, when kindness, as Coleridge allegorises*—

> "With face averted and unsteady eyes,
> Her truant playmate's faded robe puts on;
> And, inly shrinking from her own disguise,
> Enacts the fairy boy that's lost and gone.
> O worse than all! O pang all pangs above,
> Is Kindness counterfeiting absent Love."

Let us think, then, of safeguards which may preserve the delicate and fragile thing—married love and married happiness.

I think I would follow the Apostle's guiding, and set before the married the ideal mystic union between Christ and His Church.

So let the bridegroom protect, uphold, direct, guide. So let the bride lean, trust, follow.

It is no empty ceremony, but a real and solemn compact—the thing, marriage. Let each on the recurring anniversary read or recall the service, and see how far the ideal has been attained. Has the wife given reverence and surrender of will in all things lawful? Has the husband given deference and been reasonable in his directions? Has he kept the dearness of the lover in the intimate relations of the husband? Has he allowed for the *femininity* of the being he has taken to his heart? He would hate to find in her man's strength; is he sufficiently tender, then, with woman's weakness? Does he give honour to her, even *because* of this?

Not too much is to be expected—not perfection—on either side, "here, where all things limp and halt." But let there be sweet and ready acknowledgment on either side of fault and shortcoming. This will stop the "little rift" ere it become a formidable cleft: the "little pitted speck" before it can spread.

Let there be full confidence—not fidgetiness in small matters. Let there be discretion allowed in some reticences; in the case, for instance, of requirement of common reading of *every* letter received.† We are, in some things, "hermit spirits." And, though the boy and girl cannot bear to think that this must be, yet—

> "Not even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
> Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh."

The only perfect sympathy is that of God, who "knoweth the very secrets of our hearts."

Let, in fine, the fear and the love of God be alone relied upon to keep fast and enduring the devotion of bridegroom and of bride.

Time will pass on. The wedding presents will lose their newness and the first lustre of their beauty: yet the true silver will retain its value, if not its glitter. The delicate wares and the art furniture may break, may wear out; but these can be replaced. The freshness of the bride's cheek will fade, and silver streak the dark hair, and lines mark the smooth brow; but she may abide ever beautiful in the sight of her husband if she relies on no evanescent adornments, on no fading charms, but wears ever the talisman of beauty, the jewel which is, indeed, no fairy-gift at marriage,

* "The Pang more Sharp than All."

† I may venture to refer, for an enlargement on this theme, to the tale, "Second Blossom," in "Gleanings After Harvest."

but the gift of the Spirit of God: even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God and of man, of great price.

She will ever please, ever be lovely in his eyes—a bride thus adorned for her husband.

So let Victor Hugo's benediction close our musings—a reminiscence of his words at a wedding breakfast: "And now, you who are young and beautiful and happy; who have freshness and brightness and hope as your dower—what has Age to offer worthy of your acceptance? From its empty treasure-chest what can Age produce to add to the full stores of youth and joy and love?—Age has nought but its blessing to bestow: my children, Age gives it to you!"

MYRTLE'S HERO.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TUNE ST. ELWYN'S," "A ROSE BEDEWED," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"WELL, dear, it certainly will be interesting to meet him again after so many years. Quite like the first chapter of a story."

"*Et tu, Brute!* Anna, I *am* surprised at *you!*"

"Surprised? Why? I'm not aware that I have said anything very shocking."

"I *did* think *you* were above all that—that vulgarity! I imagined it was enough for Mrs. Greene to sidle and smirk, and Myra to titter and suppose that 'something' will be likely to come of it, and the little Miss Trotleys to be putting their silly little heads together, and to feel that all the feminine spy-glasses in Burfield are centred upon me, without my wise, calm, common-sensible Anna joining in the persecution. It is mean and cruel of you!"

"O Myrtle!"

Mrs. Rushton's hands fell idly in her lap, and she leaned back in her chair with a gesture half of amusement, half despair. "O Myrtle!"

They were as great a contrast to one another, these two friends, as might well be conceived. Anna Rushton, more than ten years the elder, with her composed air and quiet matronly grace, served, folks said, as an excellent foil to the nineteen-year-old maiden whom it was her office so often to chaperon. And never was the contrast more striking than at the present moment, when the pale refined face of the one, crowned by its dainty widow's cap, shone out, marvellously softened, from the twilight shadows, and the vivid, untoned beauty of the other—carmine cheeks, and black-fringed eyes, and the glory of bronze-brown waving hair—was intensified by the amber firelight, in the glow of which, low on the rug, she sat.

"Don't say, 'O Myrtle!' in that martyr-like tone!" expostulated the young girl, flashing upon her friend a pair of darkly blazing, indignant eyes. "It is I who am the martyr, I think."

"I'm very sorry."

"No, you're not! or you wouldn't join the multitude in tormenting me to death about that wretched man. It's *not* interesting—not in the very least. It is a horrible nuisance. I heartily wish his mother and mine had not been such dear friends: and more, that he and I had never entertained one another with milk-and-water and bread-and-jam, and fought over Noah's wife——"

"Oh! you quarrelled sometimes, did you?"

"Yes; and I slapped his face, I remember, and made him cry. I'm glad of it! I feel as if I should like to do it again."

"I'm afraid it is of no use to reason with you, Myrtle."

"Not an atom!"

"Or else I should like to ask you if you think it fair towards this unoffending young man to entertain such feelings as those."

"He isn't unoffending," protested Myrtle wilfully. "He has offended me deeply."

"By coming back to his childhood's home, and seeking out his childhood's friends?"

"By publishing abroad how very fond we were of one another in those remote days, and setting all Burfield on the *qui vive*. So perfectly idiotic of him! You see, we were in our teens when last we met—at least, he was—and all the sentimental old maids, and all the simpering young ones in the place, will be on the watch for symptoms of the tender passion. Fond of him, indeed! I couldn't bear the little sop!"

"Was he that sort of boy, Myrtle, really?" asked her friend in some surprise. For she had fancied that the girl's antagonism to her former playfellow was occasioned solely by the revulsion of a proud and sensitive spirit from the foolish gossip of would-be matchmakers at village tea-tables. "I understood from Mrs. Thompson that he was a remarkably gifted child, though delicate."

"He was a miserable little cry-baby at the age I best remember him," was Myrtle's uncompromising reply. "Pale, thin, and yellow-haired, with weak red eyes. Frightened of everything, from a black-beetle to a brass band, and generally suffering from mumps."

"Poor little fellow!" exclaimed Mrs. Rushton, though laughing in spite of herself. "But was he not clever?"

"He had a very big forehead, and was kept away from school because of a supposed tendency to St. Vitus' dance. They were the only signs of genius I ever heard of," said Myrtle, with a wicked relish.

"A nice embryo hero for your 'first chapter of a story,' eh, Anna?"

"Not the conventional type, certainly," admitted Mrs. Rushton, with some reserve.

"But if he were endowed with every charm of mind and person (as the old fairy tales say), he should receive no grain of encouragement from *me!*" protested Myrtle with emphasis. "The knowing folks who have made up their minds that Arthur Grey is coming to Burfield on purpose to marry Myrtle Vayne, and that she is ready and waiting to say, 'Yes, please!' shall find themselves, for once, mistaken. I mean it," she added, nodding her pretty, proudly poised head with an air of great determination. "I shall snub him from the first."

Anna smiled, but went on with her knitting in silence, while her thoughtful gaze passed from the bright, wilful face at her knee, to rest in the ruddy heart of the coals. She was wondering what kind of discipline would be needed to temper the impulses and prejudices, to curb the passionate "wills" and "won'ts" of this immature, though potentially fine nature. She doubted not that, whatever training were the best, orphaned Myrtle, as the child of the one undying Father, would receive.

"I can well sympathise with your annoyance at meddlesome tattle," she began. "But, dear, if I were you, I would not be too positive——"

An impatient reiteration of her resolve was already forming itself on the girl's rebellious lips, when a servant tapped at the door with a letter for Miss Vayne. One glance at the superscription changed the whole current of Myrtle's thoughts.

"It's from *Pen and Ink!*" she eagerly cried. "I know you will excuse my tearing it open."

"'Excuse,' my dear! I am as anxious to learn the contents as yourself. (The gas, Esther, please.) Of course it is about your poem?"

But Myrtle, eagerly scanning the lines by firelight, and trying to devour their import at one glance, was lost to all else. Anna saw a great radiance break over her expressive face.

"Rejoice with me! Rejoice with me!" she cried, springing to her feet and waving the letter aloft. "I've won it—the five-guinea prize!"

"Is it possible? Oh, my dear, I do indeed congratulate you. How splendid, Myrtie—oh, how splendid!"

"And the examiner, they say, speaks highly of it," continued Myrtle, her eyes and cheeks ablaze with exultation. "Fancy, to be spoken highly of by *him!* That is honour, if you like, Anna! Just think of it!"

"Who was the examiner?"

"*Who?* Why, Cleveland Kestin—the future laureate; the greatest poet (next to Shakespeare) who ever lived. And my poem has been 'spoken highly of' by *him!* Anna, shall I ever be able to sleep again?"

"You excitable child! Will you think me a great dunce, Myrtle, if I confess that Cleveland Kestin's works are all but unknown to me?"

"She felt, rather than saw, that Arthur Grey was standing a couple of yards away."—*p.* 710.

"Then they must not be so another hour! I will fetch you 'A Wayside Garland.' I made sure you had read it long ago. I thought *everybody* had. Such gems, Anna! all about flowers and children and Nature generally—no love-nonsense! To have won the prize is very nice, and the five guineas will be particularly useful; but—to have been 'spoken highly of' by *Cleveland Kestin!*—that is the reward, Anna, that is the crown. Why, Nancy, I should feel honoured beyond expression to be allowed to clean that man's boots!"

She danced out of the room in a perfect whirlwind of ecstasy, and "Oh, Myrtie!" half sadly, was all that her friend could say.

CHAPTER II.

Arthur Grey's conduct had not been quite so "idiotic" as Miss Vayne imagined. He had not "published abroad" any exaggerated account of the attachment that had subsisted between himself and little Myrtle in their childhood. He had only, with touching ignorance of the weaknesses of womankind, confided to his particular friend, Mrs. Wright, the fact of his having still in his possession a tiny doll which Myrtle had once given him in exchange for a gilt whistle. Mrs. Wright, thinking the incident "so pretty, so *very* pretty!" had repeated it to Mrs. Greene, who had in her turn retailed it to Mrs. Thompson and the younger Miss Trotley. Before the week was out, indeed, all Burfield had heard of it; but that was not Arthur's fault.

It was beneath Mrs. Greene's roof that the ex-playfellows first met after their seven years' estrangement, and their hostess contrived, with short-sighted self-gratulation, that Mr. Grey should take Myrtle in to dinner. Had she possessed one particle of really sympathetic insight into either character, or appreciation of the foibles of one or the other, she would carefully have avoided such an arrangement. But, like most conceited folks, she frequently blundered.

Arthur Grey, the shy, quiet student, always at his worst in company, and especially unnerved at the prospect of once more coming face to face with his boyhood's ideal, was little prepared for the honour thus conferred upon him. The rosy, red-haired hoyden whose dash and daring had led him captive a decade earlier, had developed a stateliness positively regal, while her beauty—her rich, bronzy hair, burnished by the gaslight, her softly glowing cheeks, her "daisy eyes," dark and starry with excitement—dazzled him as would the mid-day sunlight a belfry owl. He scarcely dared to look at her, and his tongue, the more he longed to utter some graceful and agreeable speech, the more seemed tied.

The girl herself, as we are aware, was already the centre of observation, and her conjectured feelings were the subject of much idle gossip. For Burfield was a small place, whose small happenings were few and far between, and Myrtle Vayne was its chief heiress and belle. Her annoyance therefore was only natural; nor was it likely to be soothed by Mrs. Greene's ordering of affairs, and the consequent glances of would-be sympathetic interest which Miss Trotley ever and anon cast at her across the table. But this was no excuse for the unkind frigidity of her demeanour towards her companion: bare courtesy, under the circumstances, should have prompted some degree of cordiality; and his evident embarrassment, had not her most womanly instincts been warped by prejudice, would have made her kind.

"Just the same top-heavy head!" she was saying to herself, with a sidelong glance at his massive brow. "I wonder what sort of a mouth he hides behind that imposing beard? Weak enough, I daresay; but I forget. His eyes are still like a ferret's, evidently, which is the *raison d'être* of those blue spectacles. How disfiguring they are! He is certainly broader and better grown than I should ever have expected; but a good tailor can manage all that.—Thank you: a little water, please."

"Fire? a smell of fire?" someone was saying. "Yes, surely there is. It is the odour of wood smoke."

"I smell it, too!" said someone else.

"Jecks!" cried Mrs. Greene to the servant, "find out where it comes from, will you?"

"It's only the gardener burning up branches, ma'am; and the wind brings it all this way."

Thus answered Jecks, promptly allaying all fear.

But Mr. Grey was ashen pale, and trembling so violently that Myrtle took the water-jug from his hand only just in time to save its contents from being spilt.

"Thank you," he said gently. Adding, after a few moments' pause, as he wiped his face, "I am ashamed of myself for being so much affected, but a peculiar faintness comes over me invariably at the bare mention of *fire*. You remember my weakness of old, I daresay."

His tone was appealing, and the shame he confessed only too visible on his crimsoned brow. But Myrtle was boiling over with contempt.

"It is one of the few things that I do remember," she cruelly replied.—"Miss Trotley, would you be so kind as to lend Mr. Grey your vinaigrette?"

The instant the words had left her lips, Myrtle felt as mean as she deserved; and beneath the focussed gaze of the whole table experienced a deeper, because more justly merited, share of confusion than her victim.

Not another word was interchanged between them during the remainder of the meal.

It was useless for Myrtle to argue with herself that Arthur Grey's pusillanimity was despicable—that no being worthy the name of man could permit himself to give way to such weakness. She felt as though some hunted creature had fled to her for sanctuary, and she had basely betrayed it.

She passed the next hour like one in a dream, all the surrounding brightness quenched by an overwhelming sense of her own barbarity. Her every emotion was intense and all-absorbing, and, outwardly calm and stately, she passed into the drawing-room with her whole soul bowed in remorse.

Mrs. Greene at her side was asking if she did not think Arthur vastly improved; and who would ever have expected that delicate boy to grow into such a

fine young man? His forehead was really grand, and those tinted glasses which he was still compelled to wear when in a strong light were, in her opinion, rather becoming than otherwise, and imparted quite an intellectual air. His extreme nervousness, arising, doubtless, from a highly strung organisation, was indeed sad to witness; but in this respect he resembled the poet Cowper, of whom she had read that his fear of fire was so great that at one period of his life he was in the habit of feeling the stairs every night as he went up to bed, to assure himself that they were not already growing hot. Yes; she considered Arthur now quite a desirable match.

At any other time this talk, from its obvious intention, would have exasperated Myrtle into pungent retort; but just now all her exasperation was expended upon herself, and she replied "Yes," "No," and "Really!" with such docile acquiescence that Mrs. Greene was puzzled.

When at length she cooled down a little, and became able to pay proper attention to what was going on about her, a volume of Indian photographs lay on her knee, and Lieutenant Richards was pointing out in one of them the fort near Poonah, whence the last of the Mahratta kings saw his kingdom lost in a decisive battle with British forces. The young officer was a frequent guest of Mrs. Greene's, and was especially fond of exhibiting this album of views to lady friends.

By the way, had he ever told Miss Vayne of the brush he once had with a man-eating tiger, not twenty miles from that very spot? No? Well, it was about the closest shave he had ever had in his life. Would it bore her to hear about it?

"No; please tell me!" said Myrtle, with a meekness new to her, and, as the lieutenant thought, most engaging.

Thereupon she was treated to an exciting account of the said adventure, which struck her as remarkable chiefly for the great number of capital I's it contained, and the phenomenal exhibitions of prowess with which they were connected.

"Do you really mean to say you were never one bit afraid?" she asked, with her great eyes turned darkly upon him. She felt rather than saw that Arthur Grey was standing a couple of yards away. "Not even when you saw the tiger crouching to spring upon you?"

"My dear Miss Vayne," returned the young officer grandiloquently, "to the British soldier, fear is a sensation which is absolutely unknown."

"I am surprised," said Myrtle, in her clearest tone: "for I have heard it said by one who thinks deeply that there is no possibility of true courage except in those who have experienced and conquered terror. How *can* anyone who has never been tempted to cowardice know what it is to be really brave?"

Having thus delivered herself, and evoked a laugh of ill-concealed vexation from the lieutenant, Myrtle subsided, doubting whether she had not made matters worse by her attempt at reparation.

The young soldier, once started on his favourite theme, treated his audience to several further accounts of his own valour, winding up with a story of the marvellous "luck" which attended him during the war in Burmah, when a bullet, which otherwise had been almost certainly fatal, was stopped by striking against a button on his coat.

"But I always was a lucky dog," he concluded; "and they say it is better to be born lucky than rich."

Myrtle, despite her wilfulness, was far from devoid of serious feeling. The flippancy of the young man's tone truly shocked her. She felt that such a remark ought not to pass unreproved. But everyone in the small circle of listeners was light and worldly, and comments of "Ah! that's true," and "Yes, indeed!" paralysed the remonstrance she fain would have made.

"Some would call that not 'luck,' but 'God's providence,'" said a low voice from behind; and, half turning, she saw Arthur Grey, crimson to the roots of his hair, and grasping a chair-back to steady the twitching of his white, girlish hands.

Having nerved himself for the utterance of this protest, he hurried away with bent head to the obscurest corner of the room, and during the remainder of the evening he came near Myrtle no more.

CHAPTER III.

"THERE! Shall I do? Do I look fit to present myself to such a—shall we say, such a constellation of intellectual brilliance as will be assembled at Sydenham to-night?"

Myrtle, as she spoke, swept into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Rushton was already waiting for her.

"Yes, dear, you will do very nicely, I think," replied Anna quietly, though her eyes and smile were full of admiration for the slim but statuesque figure that stood before her, robed in velvet of the richest pansy shade, and with a single scintillating diamond clasping the foamy lace at her throat.

"I hope I don't look like a common fashionable miss," Myrtle continued. "I want to give the impression of a person of at least *some* mind. I'm sure *he* would despise a girl who was frivolous and silly. Oh, Anna! I wonder whether he will have anything to say to me beyond just 'How d'you do?'"

Anna knew perfectly well that the unnamed "he" was the adored poet whom Myrtle worshipped from afar.

"I daresay that, as the writer of that prize poem, you may receive rather more than ordinary attention from him," she replied.

"How I wish I were pale!" cried Myrtle, catching sight of herself in a glass as she drew on her gloves. "Who ever heard of a woman with an ounce of brains having such milkmaid cheeks as mine? Ugh! What *could* I do to give myself an intellectual aspect just for to-night?"

"Borrow Mr. Grey's blue glasses!" suggested Anna, laughing. "You know Mrs. Greene's opinion of them."

"Ah!" said Myrtle, becoming suddenly grave; and she did not speak again until the two ladies were nearly half-way to their destination.

Rather more than an hour's drive brought them to

the outskirts of Sydenham, and five minutes more to the residence of the genial editor of *Pen and Ink.* Here were assembling most of the contributors to that pleasant little publication, with a favoured few of the most promising winners of its weekly literary prize. It was a red-letter evening for our girlish Myrtle, who, with youthful enthusiasm, was almost ready to enter the presence of such celebrities upon her knees. She expected her small ray of genius to be permanently inspired and brightened by a couple of hours' contact with these great but kindred souls. She was somewhat taken aback, on finding herself among them, to see that they appeared very little different from ordinary men and women.

Eagerly her eye scanned the various groups of talkers for a face and form which should at once proclaim the bright particular star of all that galaxy. She felt sure that she should recognise the author of "A Wayside Garland" the moment her gaze rested upon him. "Something" seemed to tell her that he was tall and dark, with an eagle countenance, thoughtful and pale, deep-set eyes, keen yet meltingly tender in their glance, and with loose waves of coal-black hair flung nobly back from his high and gifted brow. His mouth—well, clairvoyant as was her mental vision with regard to his other features, Myrtle had not quite decided whether the poet's finely moulded and sensitive mouth should bare its lines of beauty to the vulgar gaze, or be veiled by a silken moustache. It was the only point on which her intuition failed.

"He is not here," she whispered.

"Who?" asked Mrs. Rushton, rather densely.

"Cleveland Kestin. I'm sure he is not. There is no one here, I am certain, who would be capable of producing such thoughts as his. The editor particularly said that he would be present, too."

"He may come later on," said Anna consolingly. "What a prevalence of spectacles and eyeglasses, Myrtle! And how fond the ladies seem of short-cropped hair!"

"Yes," Myrtle assented dreamily. On the whole, she was genuinely disappointed with the outward and visible form of these literary luminaries; and at the thought that her poet-hero might not after all arrive, her eyes grew moist with tears.

Suddenly she gave a sort of gasp.

"Anna!" (under her breath). "*Who* is that? Look! Don't you see him? Next that lady in black silk. How *in* the world did *he* get here?"

Mrs. Rushton followed Myrtle's gaze, and her own was arrested by the pink-flushing face and blue spectacles of Arthur Grey!

"Really!" she exclaimed, as much surprised as her companion. "How very odd! But possibly he may be a private friend of the editor's, or have been introduced by someone else."

"How astonished he will be to meet us here!" said Myrtle. "I suppose we must speak."

"You have never mentioned to him your connection with *Pen and Ink?*"

"Oh, no."

Myrtle did not add that, although during Mr. Grey's sojourn at Burfield, now extending over a period of several weeks, she had met him at friends' houses many times, scarcely half a dozen sentences had been exchanged between them.

Indeed, so far from presuming on past intimacy, as the girl had feared he might, Arthur had appeared to avoid her carefully. This Myrtle attributed to inability to forgive, or at least to forget, her cruel rudeness to him at Mrs. Greene's. This grieved her the more that her own heart was still sore with regret. The fact, discovered by means of scraps of conversation overheard between Mr. Grey and other gentlemen, that, whatever his constitutional frailty might be, he was by no means mentally deficient, possibly increased this remorse, inasmuch as she felt that she had been unjust as well as unkind.

Half an hour later, Myrtle was chatting with the lady winner of the latest essay prize, her eye furtively watching the door and her ear only half attentive to the subject in hand—nothing more elevated, by the way, than the delinquencies of maid-servants—when the editor's fussy little wife came bustling up to her, followed with obvious reluctance by Mr. Arthur Grey.

"Miss Vayne, my dear," she said, "my husband tells me that you have so often expressed an interest in the author of 'A Wayside Garland'; and Mr. Kestin, I'm sure, would like to know the young lady whose poem on 'Winter' was so fortunate as to meet with his special approval in our late competition.—Mr. Cleveland Kestin, Miss Myrtle Vayne!"

"Most happy!" murmured the poet, with crimsoning ears and the air of one who would have been thankful to take refuge beneath any article of furniture that seemed handy.

"But—but—*Arthur Grey!* I don't understand!" faltered Myrtle.

"The other is my pen-name," explained Arthur awkwardly. "You—you didn't know I wrote?"

"I had not the faintest idea of it! And the 'Garland,' too! It seems impossible!" Myrtle gasped, while the room and all in it seemed to swim around her, so great was the shock of this amazing discovery.

"Oh—ah—yes," rejoined Mr. Grey, fidgeting with his cravat as though it were choking him. "I did that ever so long ago."

Silence. Miss Vayne appeared absorbed in twisting the tassel of her fan, and the poet in the contemplation of the toes of his boots.

"I admire your book very much," said Myrtle next. "I am never tired of reading it."

She flashed one glance up at him from those wonderful eyes of hers, then their dusky fringes drooped lower than before; but that brief glimpse of glory was sufficient to retard the recovery of Mr. Grey's self-possession.

"Oh—er—did you? I mean, are you? That is to say, most happy!" he mumbled.

It was a wretched interview. Myrtle did not know whether to laugh or cry. Both were supremely thankful when it was abruptly brought to a close.

"So fortunate, my dear," said the editor's wife, "to have been able to have Mr. Kestin with us this evening—we always call him by the name we were first

familiar with. He has been telling my husband that he has just accepted an appointment in New South Wales, and must set sail the end of next week. Such a loss he will be, both personally and as a contributor to our magazine. A dear, nice fellow he is! and *so* kind and truly good!"

CHAPTER IV.

A YOUNG silvery moon was peeping between the still leafless branches of the aspen-trees as Myrtle paced the garden alone in the spring gloaming. Ever and again she paused, peering into the far dusk, where a sprinkling of lights indicated the position of the railway-station, and turned her head aside to listen.

A strange restlessness had possessed her for hours past, and she was now drawn out of doors by a futile, irresistible desire to hear the approach and departure of the train which was to convey Arthur Grey on the first stage of his journey to the Antipodes.

For a while, following that startling revelation anent the writer of "A Wayside Garland," it had been doubtful whether Arthur Grey would rise to the honours of Cleveland Kestin, or the poet descend to the level of poor Arthur Grey. Disenchantment is a painful process to enthusiastic youth, and the substitution of the real for the ideal often involves a fearful mental wrench. But it is the real, after all, that throbs with feelings like our own, that may be strengthened by encouragement or crushed by neglect. The struggle in Myrtle's breast was not for long: her ideal poet of the raven locks and eagle eye melted into thin air, and she accepted the blushing, timid playfellow of her childhood as the human channel of those sublime thoughts which had so often lifted her above herself, and filled her with love and yearning for the Divine.

She drew her fleecy wrap around her, and leaned upon a railing, lost in pensive reverie. She would not own, even in the depths of her own innermost consciousness, that Burfield would seem colder and life greyer when Arthur was gone out of it; but she would have liked to tell him, humbly and gently, how sorry she was for her unkind, her insulting behaviour to him at their first meeting, and to have received from his own lips an assurance of pardon. Never yet had an opportunity of doing so presented itself, for the young man's shy shrinking from her, by no means diminished by their singular *rencontre* at Sydenham, hindered the securing of even one minute's *tête-à-tête* with him. It was this, she told herself, this still unremitted wrong, that weighed so heavily upon her spirit now that he was going away—in all probability to return no more. Of course he would forgive her. No doubt he did forgive her, even without her asking—he, so gentle and generous!—unless, indeed, the incident had long since passed from his mind; but this were scarcely possible.

A trembling glow shot upwards into the blue-grey sky, and as suddenly died. It came again—a strange red light, waxing and waning intermittently for a few seconds, then burning brighter still. A subdued hum was growing in the air, becoming articulate at last in the dread cry of "Fire!"

It was not in the direction of the village that the warning glow arose, but from a group of cottages lying half a mile further up the London road, and so much nearer to Myrtle's home.

Full of sympathetic excitement, the girl rushed back to the house.

"A fire! a fire, Anna!" she cried. "Carter's End is alight! Put on your hat and come!"

"Carter's End! Poor Snooks's place? Are you sure?"

"Quite sure. You can see the glow from the end of the garden. I am afraid more than one cottage must have caught. Come, Anna! Be quick!"

"We cannot do any good by going," said Mrs. Rushton reluctantly. "Women at such a time are always in the way."

"More shame for them, then!" rejoined Myrtle warmly. "*I* shall go, whether you do or not. We might be able to help by passing water-buckets, or something."

In less than five minutes both ladies were at the scene of action, albeit the elder vainly sought to keep at some considerable distance from the crowd.

It was the end cottage of the block that was alight—not Snooks's, but the next, inhabited by a labourer, with his wife and children. It had been no difficult matter to get them all safely out, but now strenuous efforts were being made to save their poor little home. The wooden beams and thatched roof of the place blazed like a pile of faggots, and there was not a moment to lose.

"They have saved most of the things," said a familiar voice at Myrtle's side. "They will have to give over now."

Startled beyond expression, she turned, and saw the slight figure of Arthur Grey—slight and small indeed in comparison with the stalwart sons of labour among whom he stood.

"I thought you had started ere this," she said.

"I found that the next train would serve me quite as well," he replied, reddening even in the fiery light to find that she had noted the hour fixed upon for his departure. "And," he added, in an almost inaudible tone, and with averted face, "I thought I would make one more effort to conquer my weakness. So I am here."

"I am *so* glad," murmured Myrtle. "I have been so sorry ever since——"

But her long-delayed apology was even now arrested on her lips by the heart-broken wail of a little child at their feet—one of those that had been brought out from the burning house.

"My kitties! Oh, my kitties! Oh, my dear, dear little kitties!"

"What is the matter, dear?" asked Myrtle, stooping to take the child's hand.

"My kitties! They're all burnin'! They'll be all burnt up! Oh—oh—oh!"

"Be thankful for your own life, and don't yell like that for a cat's!" said a woman roughly. "You might ha' been burnt up yourself."

But the little girl was inconsolable. Evidently the recollection of her pets had just crossed her mind. "My kitties—in the basket! Oh, my dear kitties!" she sobbed.

"I'm afraid it is too late to save them now," said Myrtle. "Poor things! How cruel that they should have been forgotten! The roof looks every moment as if it would fall in."

She turned to speak to Arthur again, but found, instead, Mrs. Rushton at her side.

"'Myrtle! Myrtle! What *is* he going to do?'"

"Myrtle! Myrtle! What *is* he going to do?" the latter was excitedly asking. "It is madness! Surely they will never let him?"

"Has he gone to get my kitties?" asked the child.

Myrtle stood white and rigid, her eyes wide and fixed with terror, her breath all but stayed.

"It is sheer insanity!" Mrs. Rushton cried. "He will never come out alive. Yes—here he is! No—yes! and he has got them!"

"Hurrah! Hip—hip——"

But the ringing cheer died away in a groan of horror. The upper windows, with part of the wall, fell forward, and Arthur Grey was buried in the ruins.

* * * * * *

White and weak, he leaned among the pillows of his invalid chair, and his right arm lay for ever helpless at his side; but the unconquerable rosy red surged warmly as ever over his worn temples as Myrtle came in, radiant as the May sunshine, and laid a bunch of gold-crowned narcissus in his hand. She smiled down at him with wistful tenderness; he smiled up at her admiringly. A tabby kitten—one of the rescued three—uncurled itself upon his knees and began to purr.

Myrtle stroked the little silky ball with gentle touch, but the kitten was not in her thoughts.

"Do you know," she said, after what seemed a long silence, as she watched her own white fingers smoothing the striped fur, "that they are going to hold a

thanksgiving service in the church-room for your recovery?"

"I had not heard," he replied. "It is too much—altogether too much."

"You are the hero of Burfield!" said Myrtle.

"I was afraid—horribly afraid!" he owned. "That was why I went to the fire. I determined, with God's help, to conquer my despicable cowardice. And they were all His creatures—I mean the sobbing child and her poor little pets—and I could not bear the thought of it. But I was sick with fear all the time."

Myrtle was silent, but her heart was swelling with thoughts too deep and—shall we own it?—too tender for words.

"I've lost that appointment," Arthur resumed. Then added, as by a sudden impulse, "Do you know why I accepted it so hurriedly?"

"No. How should I?"

"It was to get myself out of the way. Out of your way—and his!"

"Whose?" Myrtle gasped.

"Young Richards'. I thought—I thought you cared for each other. And I feared that I might, if I did not put it out of my power, try to work upon your liking for *Cleveland Kestin* to supplant him. I was afraid I should not be able to resist myself. I could not stand—cowardice again, you see!—but I *could* run away!"

Myrtle's tears welled over, and dropped upon the flowers in his hand.

"And I despised you, and thought you weak!" she murmured. "Oh, forgive, forgive!"

"Should I have done right, Myrtle?" he whispered.

"No, no, *no!* Lieutenant Richards is nothing—he never was anything to me! Oh, how I misjudged you! You—braver than the brave!"

He drew her scarce resisting head downward to the pillow beside his own, and leaned his brow, unchidden, against her wet cheek. Her lips were quivering with sobs; she could not speak, but her soul was deeply glad. What mattered his weakness, his shrinking, his shyness, now? What cared she that the fleshly garb of her poet wore blue spectacles and had but one arm? Beneath it all throbbed the mighty heart of a hero, and that heart was hers.

JENNIE CHAPPELL.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

SHEPHERD, whom seekest Thou
In the desert drear?—
Dark are the mountains now;
Night is drawing near.
Why is Thy raiment red,
And Thy feet so torn?
Whence is Thy weary head
Pierced by many a thorn?

Far from the pastures green,
Far from Eden-shade,
Wild have our wanderings been,
We like sheep have strayed.
Thou through the barren lands,
Searching far and wide,
Reaching out tender hands,
Drew us to Thy side.

Thou in the scorching sun,
O'er the thirsty plain,
Sought for us, one by one—
Found the lost again;
Through nights tempestuous,
Through the dark and cold,
Bare us and carried us
All the days of old.

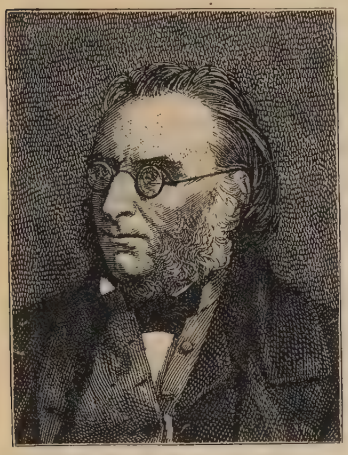
Call, and I follow Thee,
Shepherd of my soul!—
I, by Thy bonds set free,
With Thy stripes made whole.
Lord, when these earthly dreams
Melt into Thy day,
Lead me by living streams,
Wipe my tears away.

M. C. GILLINGTON.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES ON CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

"WHEN I DIE, MAY THE POOR REGRET ME."



SIR CHARLES NAPIER.

So wrote in his journal, not long before his death, General Sir Charles Napier; and the desire was fulfilled. Even now his kindness is remembered by the poor around Portsdown Hill, near Portsmouth, where he lived after retiring from the army; and on the pedestal of his statue in Trafalgar Square may be read: "Erected by public subscriptions, the most numerous contributors being private soldiers."

"IT NEITHER SMELLS NOR TASTES."

Once an old woman in Edinburgh was asked how she liked the water with which the town had been newly supplied. Not so well, she said, as the water they had before, for "it neither smells nor tastes." Many people are like this old woman. They find fault with everything, or if they cannot do this they imagine faults. If they do not get what they think is perfection in their possessions, they despise them. They are not content with the things that they have, for they think that the things which their neighbours have are far better. A man like this is very hard to live with. Other people may praise his wife, his children, and his servants, but he only sees faults in them. If his horse has any small blemish or disagreeable habit, he will not pet it nor care about it. Though they may be much better off than they deserve, and better off than thousands of others, these grumblers are always thinking that they are the most unfortunate people in the world.

A REVEREND COW-KEEPER.

Near the home of the late Mr. Spurgeon might be seen a cart with his name painted on it, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon, cow-keeper." He sold the best milk to his neighbours at a fair price, and devoted the profits to the support of two elderly ladies, who had no idea whence the monthly cheque came. He quite chuckled at the thought of their ignorance of the method in which their wants were supplied. There are rich people who do not know how to use their money. Let them give, carefully but not ostentatiously, as freely as they have received. Cow-keeping or any other work has a religious sanctity when it benefits others. The great preacher became a cow-keeper in obedience to the injunction that we should labour working with our hands the thing that is good, that we may have to give to those in need. He fed his people faithfully with the sincere milk of the Word, and he also knew how to put the literal milk of cows to a religious use.

NEVER BEFORE THE TIME.

It is never before the time to be religious, but it may well be after the time. How happy are those who can say of their first consciousness of Divine grace what César Malan said, "My Heavenly Father woke me early with a kiss!" It is a terrible mistake to fancy that religion can be ignored without unhappy results until we come to our death-beds; and the lowest possible view that can be taken of it is to think that it is a sort of insurance against risk in another world. If people only understood that true religion is a life and an influence ennobling and beautifying this present life, as well as giving hope for a future one, they would not think, however young they may be, that it is before the time to come to Jesus. They would feel that, every year and month and day they were without His influence, they were leading lives less beautiful and happy, and on a lower level generally than they might lead. In some respects the young have more need of religion than the old. They require it to keep in check the force and passion which belong to youth. The old can do comparatively little good or harm, for the fires are nearly burnt out, and there is little steam in the engine; but what shall keep youth, with its health and strength, from rushing furiously down to destruction?

PEACE AT THE LAST.

A Scotch minister said to a God-fearing member of his congregation who was dying, "Well, my friend, how do you feel yourself to-day?"—"Very weel, sir," was the calm and solemn answer; "very weel, but just a wee bit confused wi' the flittin'." If even a good man is in this way "confused wi' the flittin'," how can those who in youth and health and strength have never given a thought to that part of life's business which consists in preparing to leave it—how can they expect to be calm and collected on their death-beds, and to have peace at the last?

ABSORPTION IN GAMBLING.

A friend of the writer was staying at Mentone at the same hotel with a man who used every day to

go to Monte Carlo and bet very heavily. One day at *table d'hôte* the man remarked, "Well, Monte Carlo is a hell, but it is one from which I cannot keep away." At last he began to stake on each occasion the largest sum possible. In about five minutes he lost nine hundred pounds, and our informant says that his face was purple with excitement. Other sad cases of this absorption in gambling are told. When asked why she played so heavily, one woman explained that she had lost her only child, and that nothing but gambling could make her forget herself and her sorrow for a moment. How sad that she did not know the only source of real comfort!

ANGELS AT WORK UPON EARTH.

In one of Murillo's pictures in the Louvre we see the interior of an old-world kitchen. Those, however, who are doing the work are not represented as mortals in old dresses, but beautiful white-winged angels. One is putting the kettle on the fire to boil; one is lifting up a pail of water; one is reaching down plates from the dresser. The painter makes us see how busily and earnestly all are working, but we also see that the kind of work done is quite redeemed from its drudgery and toil by the refinement thrown into it by the busy little angels. We all know that the word "angel" means a messenger; and it is a fact that in every honest business men can here upon earth, and before they go to heaven, be angels and do God's work. As to the department of the work to which they are attached, this is a detail. All departments are in God's sight equally useful and equally honourable, if the work be done in a right spirit.

MINISTERING ANGELS.
(From a Photograph of part of Murillo's Painting in the Louvre.)

SOME NEW BOOKS.

Memorials of Mr. Spurgeon come thick and fast from the press. Of two which Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster send us, one, entitled "From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit," is by an old contributor to THE QUIVER, the Rev. R. Shindler; and the proof-sheets were revised under Mr. Spurgeon's own supervision. A final chapter, concluding the great preacher's life-story, has since been added; but the closing scenes are more fully dealt with in "From the Pulpit to the Palm Branch," which is a sequel to the first-named book, and contains also a report of the funeral services. Both are attractive volumes, abundantly illustrated.—From the same publishers we have received a sketch of the life and work of Pastor Archibald G. Brown, written by Mr. G. H. Pike—whose name is well known to readers of our own pages—and intended as a memorial of the completion of twenty-five years of devoted service in East London.—Professor Sir R. S. Ball has collected, under the title of "In Starry Realms" (Isbister), a number of popular astronomical papers which have previously been published in other publications. No doubt many who made their acquaintance in this form will be glad to meet them again in their new and more enduring guise. All have been carefully revised by their distinguished author.—From the same publishers we have received one of the Bishop of Winchester's thoughtful works, which we are sure our readers will prize. It is called "Questions of Faith and Duty," and was written during last year, when the Bishop was too ill to preach the Gospel, but felt constrained to write it, in the hope that what he thus penned might carry comfort and encouragement where his voice would not have been heard. We trust that his hope may be fulfilled, and we think that it will, for his pages are replete with kindly counsel and earnest faith.—In "The Huguenots in the Seventeenth Century" (Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.), Mr. Charles Tylor gives us a most exhaustive history of the French Protestants and their struggles. His work is fully illustrated, and is well worthy the attention of students, while every library should possess a copy of it.—The weakest feature about Mr. James H. Wilson's "Zalmoxis: and other Poems" (Elliot Stock) is the title, for the verse, though not always equal, is often above the average in quality.

LOVE'S OPPORTUNITIES.

When death takes away a friend from us, the bitterest drop of our cup of sorrow is undoubtedly the memory of little unkindnesses inflicted and deeds of love not done. The members of some families get into the way of neglecting at home those small everyday courtesies which they show to strangers. This

is a great mistake, for it deprives domestic life of much of its beauty and happiness. We know a father whose feeling of remorse was most bitter after the death of his boy, his only child, because he had got out of the habit of kissing him when first he saw him in the mornings. The energetic business-man who will not make time for words and deeds of love, and the self-regarding person who has no heart for these things, let slip golden opportunities daily of giving and receiving happiness.

SYMPATHETIC REPROOF.

The reproof which has most sympathy in it will be most effectual. It understands and allows for infirmity. It was this sympathy that prompted Dr. Arnold to take such pains in studying the characters of his pupils, so that he might best adapt correction to each particular case. Fault-finding is not resented when it is known to be a surgeon's lancet, and not a weapon of offence. When St. Paul speaks to the Philippians of those whom he calls "the enemies of the cross of Christ," he does so "even weeping." He would much rather have spoken in praise of them, if he could have done so; and no doubt it was more painful for him to find fault than for them to be found fault with. There is a time *not* to find fault; but a person with tact and sympathy will easily feel when that time is. It certainly is not the time when the person who is to be found fault with is in the presence of others. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." To find fault with a brother before others is the last way of gaining him. To do so puts up his back, and pride prevents him from acknowledging that he has done wrong.

BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING.

There is no doubt whatever that where there is a good ending there has generally been a good beginning. Not but that there are many instances where men who have made a bad beginning have seen the error of their ways, and turned round, and done well at last. But there is nothing like making a good start; and if we do this when young, we generally keep it up for our lives. Let us look at a few cases illustrative of this. No doubt most of our readers remember the honoured name of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States during the great War of Secession. He died in the highest position which he could hold; but the beginning of his life was spent in hardship and poverty. No means of improvement were provided for him, but he made them for himself. We are told that he read and studied hard, writing out summaries of all he read, and getting them by heart; he would study arithmetic at night by the light of the fire; and cipher, or copy, with a pencil or coal, on the wooden shovel, or on a board. When this was full, he used to shave off the board and begin again. When he could get paper he used it, but the boards generally had to do the work. Elihu Burritt, the blacksmith, whose name as a philanthropist is known amongst

LIVINGSTONE AT THE LOOM.

the most prominent benefactors of mankind, mastered something like forty languages while he was at the forge. His own words are these: "All that I have accomplished, or hope to accomplish, has been and will be by that plodding, patient, persevering process of accretion which builds the ant-heap, particle by particle, thought by thought, fact by fact." James Garfield, another honoured President of the United States, was the son of a poor widow who had scarcely food enough for herself and her children. By work in the fields, or at the carpenter's bench, or as a canal boatman, he kept himself, and paid for his own schooling until he could go to college. Josiah Mason, who had in his employment over a thousand workmen, who gave £300,000 to an orphanage, and £60,000 to a college, and nearly £250,000 to its endowment, was a humble hawker of cakes, vegetables, and fruit. When he was not selling, he was trying to teach himself to read from sign-posts and placards, and books and papers in the windows. He apprenticed himself to the shoemaking business, and taught himself to write. The great Livingstone was obliged to work at the loom from six in the morning to eight at night; and when at the loom, he had his book fixed up before him, so as to improve any spare moments which might occur. All these, and hundreds more, began at the very beginning of

unassisted drudgery. They did not wait for opportunities, but made them; they started life in earnest, and ended it in success.

RICH, BUT NOT HAPPY.

"A farmer named Donnelly, of County Armagh, Ireland, the legatee of a miser named Murphy, who died on Christmas Day of starvation, although possessed of wealth amounting to between £30,000 and £40,000, has gone out of his mind in consequence of coming into such a large fortune, and has been committed to the Armagh Lunatic Asylum." The above cutting from a newspaper illustrates a fact of which every thoughtful person is aware, but which the unthinking cannot realise, the fact that money by itself cannot make people happy. How often we hear it said, "Oh, if I had a few thousand pounds a year, how happy would I be!" This poor miser, however (very suggestive is the derivation of the word!), this miserable man, could not even get a living out of his money. Then the care of money and the trouble of investing it are often enough to drive the person who becomes rich late in life into a lunatic asylum. Not that a wise man ought to profess to undervalue money. It is a great force for good or evil, according as it is used. It is a good servant, but a hard master.

AN OBJECT IN LIFE.

Many people complain that they have missed their vocation in life, and that they can get no congenial work to do. They are listless and full of *ennui* because they seem to have nothing for which to live. To such persons the Lord of the Vineyard says, "Hast thou kept thine own vineyard of which I made thee a keeper? Is there no work to be done in the garden of thy soul—are there no weeds to be pulled up, no branches to be pruned, no flowers and fruit to be planted?" Here is a work that can never be said to be done.

PREACHERS' BOOKS.

The Book of Job is one of the most difficult books in the Bible, and at the same time one of the most suggestive from an expository point of view. Its unquestioned antiquity, and the apparent impossibility of defining its exact position in the chronological order of the Scriptures, combine to wrap the book in an atmosphere of mystery, which preachers and thinkers would reverently pierce. The Rev. R. A. Watson, D.D., to whom the exposition of this book for Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton's "Expositor's Bible" was entrusted, has already contributed a scholarly volume on "Judges and Ruth" to the same series, and with this work in mind we turn with added interest to the outcome of his later and more difficult task. It would be impossible, in the space at our disposal, to follow Dr. Watson in his helpful study of the book as an unfolding of the old but ever-new struggle in the mind of a man who, "convinced of Divine sovereignty, yet has to seek room for faith in a world shadowed and confused." So long as men think, the problem will continue to present itself, until each has

"Made a stronger faith his own."

And whenever preachers, to help their struggling fellow-men groping for light, turn to the Book of Job, they will find Dr. Watson's book full of scholarly and earnest suggestion.—A beautiful series of twenty-five lessons is contained in the first volume of Dr. Alexander Maclaren's "Bible-Class Expositions" on St. Matthew's Gospel (same publishers), and carries us into the fourteenth chapter. Bright, pithy, and powerful, these lessons from a masterhand should prove helpful to many a preacher, and many a hard-worked leader of a Bible-class.—We despair of saying anything fresh of the Rev. J. S. Exell's "Biblical Illustrator" (Nisbet), in which the volume on Exodus has just been published. Suffice it to say that, like its predecessors, this volume is in itself a library of comment on the book it handles. Chapter by chapter, and verse by verse, Mr. Exell surrounds the sacred text with illustrative passages, anecdotal, homiletical, and expository, culled from the best writers and teachers of the old world and the new. It is a monument of painstaking research, and a storehouse of helpful thought.—To the late Dr. Allon's "The Indwelling Christ" (Isbister) attaches a melancholy interest. This collection of some of our friend's sermons was intended in some measure as a memorial of the jubilee of his connection with Union Chapel, Islington, which he was hoping to keep next year. But he was called away a day or two after he had corrected the last proofs for the volume, and so this "memorial of a lengthened pastorate" comes to us as a voice from the dead. Our readers need no words from us to induce them to take up a collection of Dr. Allon's discourses, which is thoroughly characteristic of our genial and valued contributor. The difficulties inseparable from the production of an illustrated magazine like THE QUIVER rendered it impossible for us to make any timely allusion to the loss which English Christianity, and our readers in particular, have suffered in the removal of Dr. Allon. We take this opportunity to bear no ungrudging testimony of our sense of the gap which his death has made in our ranks.

THE TEACHING OF COMMON PHRASES.

In the commonest words and phrases of our social intercourse there are often enshrined the deepest truths. This is the case with the words we use when we meet a friend. We ask, How are you? or, How do you do? We desire, no doubt, to know in what state is the health of our friend; but the health of the body, however important, is not the only kind of health. There is the health of the mind and of the soul to be considered, and if we believe that it is

of the greatest importance to be well in these respects, we shall put a much deeper meaning than perhaps is generally done into this common salutation.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

As he walks on a lovely summer evening along the side of a still river which reflects the sun's beams, even a prosaic commonplace man, if he be at all thoughtful, must see in the river a picture of life. It flows along rapidly, yet its movement is almost imperceptible. Are not our days passing as quickly and in the same gliding imperceptible way? Nothing ruffles the surface of the water; and the same stillness and calmness characterises long stretches of the monotonous life of most of us. The water is clear and transparent, and so are our lives—not indeed to ourselves, but to our neighbours and to God. Our pride, too, must be humbled when we consider the many generations of men this river has seen, so to speak, pass away. Men come and men go, but it flows on for ever.

"Its movement is almost imperceptible."

UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE.

When Mr. Spurgeon first went to stay at Mentone, he visited that beautiful place Monte Carlo. He would not go into the Casino, but he walked through the gardens that surround it, and was introduced to M. Blanc, who built the Casino and founded the present gambling establishment. Mr. Spurgeon, on being introduced, began rather to apologise for walking in the gardens, as he had never been inside the Casino and had never contributed any money to the maintenance of these pleasure-grounds. To Mr. Spurgeon's horror, M. Blanc replied, "Monsieur Spurgeon may not have spent any money, but he has given us something far more valuable—the influence of his respectable name. Respectable people will come to see Monte Carlo when they learn that Monsieur Spurgeon has visited it, and we shall make money from them. If only disreputable people came to us it would never do." This cynical homage of vice to virtue gave Mr. Spurgeon a painful illustration of the power of unconscious influence.

MORAL COURAGE.

The following illustrates the happy result that comes from a determination not to be laughed down. Talking to his chaplain, a recruit said, "Last night, in the barrack-room, before going to bed I knelt down and prayed. Very soon boots were thrown at

me, and there was much laughter."—"Well," replied the chaplain, "but suppose you defer your prayers till you get into bed, and then lift up your heart to God?" A week or two afterwards the chaplain and the young soldier meeting, the former asked, "You took my advice, I suppose? How has it worked?"—"Sir," answered the soldier, "I did take your advice for one or two nights, but I began to think it looked rather like denying my Saviour, and I once more knelt and prayed at the side of my cot as before."—"And what followed?"—"Not one of them laughs now, sir, and some of them kneel and pray too."—"I felt ashamed of the advice I had given," said the chaplain who related the matter. "That young fellow was both wiser and braver than myself."

THE CHOICE OF A CALLING.

Of all the troubles of the young, nothing is more troublesome in many cases than the choice of a calling in life. "A calling in life." Think of the meaning of those words, and you will know where to look for sympathy, comfort, and guidance in your present state of indecision, which many know from experience is a very painful one. A "calling" implies a caller—one who calls us into the state of life where He wishes us to glorify Him and serve man. We are called to our positions by God Himself, who by giving us certain tastes and talents, which suit and fall in with one kind of business rather than another, may be said to call us to our proper vocations.

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from April 28th, 1892, up to and including May 24th, 1892. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver*" *Waifs Fund:* A Glasgow Mother (25th donation), 2s.; J. J. E., Govan (55th donation), 5s.; A Degraded Civil Servant, 10s.; H. J., Manchester, 5s.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

97. What was the immediate effect of the first Gospel sermon?

98. What mark of earnestness was manifest in the lives of the first Christian converts?

99. What was the first miracle performed by the Apostles after our Lord's ascension?

100. What is known of the gate called Beautiful?

101. What were the regular hours of daily prayer among the Jews?

102. What first stirred up the opposition of the Jews against the Apostles?

103. Quote passage in which St. Peter declares Jesus to be the only Saviour of the human race.

104. What was there in the preaching of the Apostles which made such a deep impression upon the Jewish leaders?

105. On what second occasion did the Holy Ghost come down upon the Apostles with an outward manifestation of His presence?

106. Who is mentioned as being the first to contribute to the funds of the infant Church?

107. Which of the early converts were punished by death for an act of wilful deception?

108. What is known concerning the burial of the dead at that time?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 639.

85. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him." (Nahum i. 7.)

86. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth—yea, all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall do Him service." (Ps. lxxii. 8—11.)

87. Tartessus in the south of Spain, and the islands of the Mediterranean. (Ps. lxxii. 10.)

88. "Judah and Israel dwelt safely every man under his vine and under his fig-tree." (1 Kings iv. 25.)

89. Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, and the two sons of Mahol. (Ps. lxxxix. [title]; 1 Chron. xxv. 5; 1 Kings iv. 31.)

90. "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth." (St. Matt. xxviii. 18.)

91. He lifted up His hands and blessed His disciples. (St. Luke xxiv. 50.)

92. Both St. Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles are addressed to the same person, and in the latter reference is made to a former treatise by the same author. (St. Luke i. 3; Acts i. 1.)

93. The giving of the Law on Mount Sinai and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. (Ex. xix. 1—16; Acts ii. 1—4.)

94. The inhabitants of the island of Candia or Crete in the Mediterranean are of the same race as the Cretans mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to Titus. (Acts ii. 11; Titus i. 12.)

95. The election of St. Matthias to fill the place of Judas Iscariot. (Acts i. 24—26.)

96. St. Peter, when he was afterwards speaking to the people, mentions that it was *then* only the third hour of the day, *i.e.*, nine o'clock in the morning. (Acts ii. 15.)

IN THE GLOAMING.

THOSE OTHER MOTHERS.

SPRING FLOWERS.

"On the cold kerbstone."

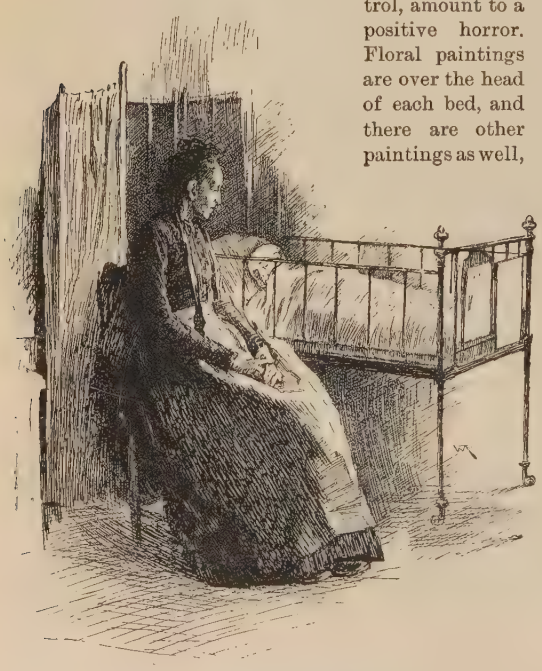
IT was a glorious spring morning when I set out for Shadwell, with considerably less idea of how to reach my destination than if I had been bound for the Italian Lakes. Favoured, however, by fortune and the patronising care of a railway porter who evidently took incapacity for the sign-proper of a West-End woman, I reached the district in due course: and never had I seen a tract of habitable land so absolutely hopeless and sad. The streets are long and narrow and grey-looking; the smells go far probably towards filling the hospital, and are various of their kind: the greater part of the commerce of the neighbourhood is conducted on hand-barrows by costers, and the police are stationed in couples. As for the people themselves, they are poorer, and their lives generally are more squalid than they used to be; for since the great dock strike the elder men have not been taken on again, and loaf perforce about the streets, maintaining their families more or less miserably on casual jobs. Then, again, the better class have migrated towards Stratford or Forest Gate, so it is only the very poor who are now left; and Shadwell's return on the last census as a decreased population means a consequent increase of poverty and suffering. The women are bareheaded, with the dirty untidy shawl they so affect flung carelessly over bowed shoulders; while the children, often white of face and rickety of limb, move listlessly, and neither play nor laugh.

Is not this sad? Children without laughter! Why, one could as soon picture a world without sunshine or flowers! But their world *is* without much sunshine, and it boasts no flowers; and their little children are without laughter. Orators talk of the sharp differences of classes, but surely this is the strongest demarcation of all. Some will say it does not exist; but, believe me, if you think so, it is only because you have not gone sufficiently low down. When the pressure is heavy enough, when the one meal is skimped because it is dubious where the next is to come from, even the babies learn to share the burden, and leave that most delicious music in the world, the happy babble of the children, to blither little ones.

Except the church, with its open door and inviting bell, the chief landmark in this never-ending stretch of dreary streets is the big red building whose imposing name of THE EAST LONDON HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN has been shortened by many a little tongue into the one word, *Home*. And if that be translatable as a Haven of Rest, the synonym might be more ill-chosen; for although the idea of suffering children is well-nigh unbearable in theory, when actually confronted with it, as at Shadwell, one realises more of the true proportion of things, and shares the little ones' own feeling of contentment that for the time being they have been snatched from cold, and wretchedness, and starvation, and lie in their cosy cots, warm and safe from very possible harm.

The hospital contains three wards—boys', girls', and babies'—and in each division, surgical cases line one side of the walls, while medical cases face them. A block for infectious ailments stands isolated from the main building, while the rest of the huge pile is taken up with nurses' quarters, those assigned to the out-patients, and with laundry-work and servants' rooms. It is not the purpose of this little paper to enter far into the subject of finances, but something of the importance of what is effected by this house of healing may be gleaned from the fact that last year the number of attendances of out-patients and casualty cases was 42,717, while it afforded relief to no fewer than 1,107 children within its walls.

It is such a pretty place! In the girls' ward the Kyrle Society have been at work, and a dado of olive-green with a frieze of daffodils does away with the monotony of the plainly distempered walls, which with some sick folk, whose imagination is beyond their own control, amount to a positive horror. Floral paintings are over the head of each bed, and there are other paintings as well, which are mostly pictures of little ones who have gone to God, and for whose dear sakes their parents support the *in memoriam* cots. Two small beds suggest brighter associations, and proud indeed are those who lie between their snowy sheets, for they are endowed by the readers of *Little Folks*. Their occupants showed me a volume of the magazine with evidently a profound gratitude to the book itself!



"Spend the dark hours night after night."

The boys seemed cheerful enough, too, but in a sober fashion; for here again, in spite of the caressing tones of the kindly matron, the children had not been born to an inheritance of smiling, and their grave features but seldom relaxed. The chief trouble appears to be hip-disease, which is all the sadder that it usually springs from preventable causes. They were grateful indeed for some spring flowers, which, with a remembrance of one's own baby days, were put into their hands to be theirs by right of possession, instead of being placed in vases for the general good of the ward; and if those who, when in the country or at the sea, take a pleasure in packing up fragrant hampers for their friends in town, could send even a little of their parti-coloured wealth to cool the hot cheeks and rest the tired eyes of these Shadwell children, their thoughtfulness would win a rich meed of love.

The babies' ward was the saddest. Perhaps it merely so befell that day that it was here the Angel of Death stood with drooping wings and pitiful unseen presence, while the frail uncertain breath from tiny parted lips came and went fitfully; or perhaps it was that vitality naturally falls to its lowest ebb in the case of an infant; but certain it was that voices grew hushed and footfalls more gentle here. These suffering mites, so light a weight in their cradles that the blanket seemed hardly indented, so short a length and so motionless that one forbore to place bluebells on them, because it was too like covering a grave—they were all someone's darlings, they were all treasures of those other mothers who are so much more hardly circumstanced than are we. One hears so much of the cruelty of the poor to their offspring, that one almost grows to consider a roughened heart must correspond to a roughened exterior; but this is merely so because in the numerous appeals presented to us on behalf of the waifs and strays of our streets, and more especially what we hear of them through the police reports, it is as a matter of course that the blackest side, and nothing but the blackest side, is shown us. But that want, and, alas! too often worse than want, can dim the divinely given mother-love, the matron of the hospital distinctly denies, and it is obvious that she is in a position to judge. The little ones are often kept away from the doctors long after the ceaseless wailing betrays the evil at work, because of the passionate dread of being parted from them; and when the little patient is pronounced in grave danger, women who have to go to their work with the first streak of the grey dawn spend the dark hours night after night by the cot-side.

This crowning terror never comes into our own homes. When our babies hover between life and

death, no inexorable command drives us from them for hours at a stretch, with the alternative fate that if we disobey the daily bread will fail, and our other children perish of want. We are never forced to leave them to the care of strangers, as are they, and it is in remembering this that one realises that the pain connected with a hospital lies less in the wrung lip and tortured limb than in the weight which crushes down the hearts of the patient watchers.

One other trouble is added, in the case of those other mothers, to the many connected with illness which encompass rich and poor alike, and this is a removable one. In other words, it is one which, if our prayers at a tiny bedside—and in what household are they not either a fact or a memory?—were earnest and true ones, if our thanksgivings to God at a blessed recovery were other than mere lip-service, we cannot choose but lift from our sorely taxed poor. And this is the trouble which comes with convalescence.

"Caught him up in her arms."

When our own darlings are on the borderland of past sickness and future strength, all efforts are redoubled to speed them towards complete recovery. We take them away from London to whatever spot the doctor may suggest; nourishing food, unfaltering care, are lavished upon them. "I went to the sea that time; it was quite my favourite illness!" a small friend announced the other day; and the dreariness of the reverse picture is in keeping with most other things at Shadwell. A child, cured of pneumonia or some such lung trouble, leaves the hospital with a delicate chest, and goes straight back to its home, which is possibly a damp cellar. Another, with its hip still very liable to trouble—but the bed is wanted for a yet more urgent case, and out the child must go—is still flagging in strength, and spends most of its time seated on the cold kerbstone, where, at all events, it is left in peace. What would you? This is no unkindness on the mother's part. She is out charing, perhaps, or has a day's job of some sort, and it is certainly safer to lock the child out of the room than to leave it there to tumble out of window or set itself on fire. Only the poor hip pays the forfeit, and back goes the boy to the hospital.

Of course, what is wanted is a convalescent home, for that would solve the whole difficulty. By payment it is sometimes possible for the authorities to send away a girl, but no single home will receive a boy; and in any case the children have to be so far recovered as to need no nursing. But if this convalescent home could be obtained—or rather sufficient money to hire some house at the sea, for the managers would not wait to build—the children could be sent there instead of back to a badly fed existence, and the cure which is at present so unfinished would be made complete. An anonymous offer of £1,000 has been made on the proviso that £2,000 shall be raised by other means, and it will be hard indeed if, with such a munificent incentive, the latter sum cannot be raised.

A sad-faced woman was waiting that day to take her boy away. He had had typhoid fever, and though perfectly well so far as the actual disease went, he was so weak that he could scarcely walk steadily down the long room to meet her. It did not need much sympathy to note the hungering love with which she caught him up in her arms. "He shall be the one to lie in the bed," she said, as she carried him away. Poor mother! This meant that besides herself, her husband, and the two youngest children, little Dick too should be placed in the bed instead of returning to his place with the others upon the sacking on the floor.

It is fresh air they are asking at our hands; it is sea-breezes; it is life itself; and these not for themselves, but for the little ones they love. Can we not give it them? Can we not teach them that, however dark this world may be, there is a God-given sympathy in it still? And if not for the sake of old memories and that agony of grief we most of us at some time have shared, if not for the sake of the piteously appealing children themselves, then may not it be for the sake of the Christ Who made such work a privilege to us when He said, "Whatsoever ye have done unto even the least of these, ye have done it unto Me"?

"Without laughter."

Mabel E. Wotton.

A LINCOLNSHIRE LASS.

BY C. E. C. WEIGALL, AUTHOR OF "THE TEMPTATION OF DULCE CARRUTHERS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER X.

"The world in which a man lives shapes itself by the way in which he looks at it, and so it proves different to different men."—SCHOPENHAUER.

HEN Nan entered the drawing-room at the sound of the gong—having timed her entry most cleverly—she found Miss Dempster and the three men standing round the fireplace.

As the door was at the far end of the room, she had some distance to advance under fire of the four pairs of critical eyes, all turned upon her with a world of different expression in each face.

To most girls the progress would have been one of shy timidity, but Nan, whose mirror had told her that she was looking her best, advanced with the air and carriage of a young empress.

She was dressed in a Grecian costume of black gauze, arranged so that the sleeves, fastening on the very point of the shoulder, fell away, leaving her lovely white arms in perfect relief against the sombre folds. It was fastened again loosely at the throat, and her neck, delicately white and soft, rose with no ornament to distract the eye from its beauty, half-hidden by the transparent stuff.

She held a fan in her hand, composed of the petals of a full-blown white rose, on which "Nan" was written in silver thread, and which had been Miss Dempster's latest present.

There was a faint tinge of colour in her clear pale face, and her wonderful eyes, full of triumphant laughter, were looking straight at the little group with a becoming touch of shy curiosity.

Miss Dempster was completely satisfied at the effect that Nan's appearance had created. She recognised in the electric shock that ran through her three companions that the girl had surpassed herself, and that her lessons had not been in vain.

"Nan dear!" she said, softening her voice, and taking the girl's hand with a suddenly assumed touch of motherly affection that made Dempster turn away to disguise a ludicrous desire to laugh, "let me introduce you to Sir Vernon Basset, and Mr. Hume, who is to paint your portrait."

Nan gave her hand with a brilliant smile to Basset, and bowed to the artist, who was standing a little in the background.

In her first comprehensive glance, she saw that Sir Vernon was tall, and possessed a head slightly bald, and inclined to taper to a point at the summit. His face, in its natural repose, could boast of no special feature worthy of notice, save a finely developed moustache, and an expression which was bored in the extreme.

At Hume her glance was so casual, that she caught sight of nothing but an earnest, somewhat grave face, and a pair of dark eyes, which had an almost short-sighted intentness of expression in them—the result, perhaps, of his profession.

Nan found herself at dinner seated between Dempster and Sir Vernon, while the artist occupied one side of the table alone. But he seemed in nowise disturbed by the arrangement, and ate his soup in a perfectly placid manner, apparently ignoring the fact that Miss Dempster addressed as little of her conversation to him as possible; and that she appeared to regard him as a creature of a different calibre, whose position was somewhere near an undefined line of demarcation between the servants' hall and the dining-room.

Sir Vernon proved to be an exceedingly dull neighbour until Nan adroitly hit upon the subject of horses, when he roused himself slightly, and even forgot his drawl for a few moments.

As Dempster was in a fit of the sulks, and deigned to bestow his attention upon nothing save his dinner, Nan found the ball rather difficult to keep rolling, until a complicated question as to the pedigree of the last Derby winner brought a quick response from the other side of the table.

"Well, all I can say is, Hume," answered Sir Vernon, with drawling insolence, "how on earth is a fellow like you, who sticks at his brush all day, to know anything about horses? I don't believe that 'Barebones' *was* sire to 'Olla Podrida,' or that Mr. Fraser is his owner."

"Pray believe only what you like of my story," said Hume, with a slight smile. "Only, unfortunately, you see, Mr. Fraser is my uncle, and I have ridden 'Olla Podrida' two or three times when he was out at exercise. In fact, I have known him intimately since he came into the world in my uncle's stables."

Sir Vernon had the grace to mumble something that might pass as an apology, and Miss Dempster furtively surveyed the man whom she could not now afford to ignore.

"What made you take up painting as a profession?" she said abruptly.

Hume smiled again.

"Because it was the only thing for which I displayed any talent, and because my father is a poor curate with a large family, who could afford me no education; and, finally, because my grandfather, a landscape painter of no mean standing, offered me my art education free, gratis, and for nothing," he said simply, seemingly unaware that his hostess was regarding him with an expression in which contempt was gradually becoming mixed with curiosity.

Nan, suddenly awaking from a dream of herself and her surroundings, became aware that the artist was decidedly interesting, and was not receiving his due share of civility. So she smiled brilliantly at him.

"Do you live in London all the year round? Because I always fancy that London life cannot be conducive to new ideas for landscape painters," she said.

"I spend half my time in London, and half—my happier half—in a little Cornish fishing village on the southern coast, where the light and the scenery are as exquisite as anything nature can produce, and where I grow, morally and artistically," he answered, with grave courtesy—for he confessed himself puzzled with Nan in the few short moments he had spent in studying her; and he did not know whether he approved of her beauty, or whether it had something that savoured of defiance in it, subtly marring every line and expression of her otherwise perfect face.

"Of course," said Miss Dempster, in her usual pleasant fashion, "you are a freethinker or an atheist of some sort? All the greatest artists, poets, and men of letters have been of that way of thinking."

He looked calmly across at her. "I hope that my faith and my art are one as deep as the other," he answered. "To my thinking, it would be impossible to be a great painter without at the same time being a true Christian."

"I forgot your parentage, of course," sneered Miss Dempster. "But I was always brought up under the impression that the shoemaker's children are generally the worst shod."

"And therefore," said Hume, eating his jelly with precision, "that a clergyman's son himself must of necessity be an atheist. Freethinkers are created by careless homes, Miss Dempster, or by fretful straining after gnats; or, in some cases, by minutiæ of religious detail too strictly enforced. I have great reason to be thankful for the atmosphere in which I was brought up—in which freedom and happiness were built upon a foundation of an intense religion."

Miss Dempster shrugged her shoulders. "Dear me! it must be years since I last heard a sermon," she said. "What a loss the Church sustained when you became a painter!"

"On the contrary," he replied. "Laymen are often far better able to serve their Church in their lives, and to set a good example to other people, than the clergy, whom we naturally expect to be all that is good, and to whom religion comes as easily as preaching.—Do you know Cornwall at all, Miss Fawcett?"

Nan started on being addressed, for something in his words had struck a painful chord in her heart, and reminded her of her father.

"No, not at all," she answered hurriedly.

"To my mind," he continued, addressing himself to Miss Dempster, "it is a more art-inspiring country than Italy itself. There is something so intensely unconquerable about its scenery, and so mysterious, that days of study often fail to reveal all the subtle features and hidden beauties of its marvellous colouring."

"I am afraid that you will not find Lincolnshire a very art-inspiring county—now that all the corn is carried, and nothing left but the bare brown fields," said Dempster, breaking in upon the conversation for the first time.

"It is rather more of a sportsman-inspiring country just now, eh, Basset?"

"I have brought down a huge sketch-book, which I intend to fill with mementoes of my visit, in my leisure time," said Hume. "Lincolnshire is a county I have often wanted to study. Its clear skies and marvellous sunsets over the level plain are unique, I have heard, and I am anxious to make a good study of this house both outside and inside, if you will allow me," turning courteously to his hostess. "I have seldom seen a place that struck me so much at first sight."

"I say, Hume," said Sir Vernon heavily, "what's become of that picture of yours I wanted to buy, and which wasn't finished—with that rubbishing bit of verse at the bottom?"

"Don't you approve of that, Sir Vernon? I am so sorry! But I could call the picture nothing else but—

> "'And such are daffodils,
> With the green world they live in.'

Nothing would have suited the whole idea of the picture so well."

"Oh—ah—what is it? I forget now. Some sort of Johnny in a yellow dress, and a lot of flowers stuck about."

"How wonderfully explicit!" said Dempster softly. "I quite seem to see the whole thing. Sir Vernon, you are a master of rhetoric."

"It would perhaps do my poor picture more credit if I were to blazon it, as we say in heraldic speech," laughed Hume—though a little line of annoyance crossed for an instant his broad forehead. "In the foreground stands a girl—a harmony in yellow, with daffodils in the skirts of her gown—and the background is a line of forest, green with the fresh tints of spring, and a meadow spangled with daffodils waving in an April wind."

"I am bored," said Miss Dempster, suddenly breaking in upon his words. "Tell me the last bit of London scandal, Sir Vernon."

Hume quietly relapsed into silence as the conversation drifted into society life, in which he took little interest. Sir Vernon and Miss Dempster edged their chairs a little closer to each other, and began, partly in undertones, to detail scandal about Lord this and Lady that. And Nan, who knew none of the names she caught now and then, turned to Reginald, and began a desultory talk on the last book she had been reading—every now and then furtively regarding her opposite neighbour, and wishing that he would join in and give them his opinion on literature, which would be sure to be as original as his outspoken ideas on other subjects.

But Hume was perfectly happy in the world of his own thoughts.

He had no desire to intrude upon anybody's conversation, as he did not wish to call down upon his head anything fresh in the way of snubs from this curiously cross-grained party.

A man with the least atom of self-consciousness would have been miserable at this dinner-table. But Hume was too modestly self-contained, too true a genius, to suffer from such a complaint, and therefore went through life far more easily than hundreds of his acquaintances and associates.

After dinner, when the men joined the ladies in the drawing-room, music was proposed, and Nan went to the piano.

"Will you allow me to play your accompaniment for you?" said Hume, following her; and she assented, much surprised to discover another talent in him.

He was so thoroughly musical, in his own quiet way, that, being pressed to remain at the piano, he slipped from fugue into gavotte, and from gavotte into bourrée, with the most fascinating ease.

"I should be quite charmed with your artist if he wasn't such a canting humbug," Miss Dempster whispered to Sir Vernon as they bade good-night.

"Oh, well! I will say *this* for him," he replied: "he is not a humbug. He regularly believes all the nonsense he talks. Perhaps he is mad. Any way, he is fashionable, and will do justice to Miss Fawcett's simply exquisite face."

"Do you admire her? I am so glad," said Miss Dempster carelessly. "Dear little Nan! She is such an innocent, simple child. I am longing to take her up to town, and show her the world."

She sent a keen glance at him as she spoke, as if trying to read his inmost thoughts.

"Yes," he replied meditatively. "She wants style in some ways. But I shouldn't wonder if she was all the rage next season."

"Assisting the artist by hints and suggestions which, somehow, irritated Hume."—*p.* 729.

Much to the surprise of the two men, Hume proved to be far their superior at billiards, and in the morning-room his conversation on dogs and guns showed that he had an intimate acquaintance with the art of sportsmanship.

Dempster relaxed so far as to give him a fairly cordial invitation to accompany them next day on their tramp among the turnips, but he laughingly waived the question.

"Oh, thanks! It's very good of you, but I am down here on business—not on pleasure, you know. I've had my few days with my uncle on his Scotch moor already, so I am absolutely satisfied."

Hume retired early to his quarters, and sat down during his leisurely undressing to meditate with amusement on the household in which he found himself an inmate.

"If it were not for Miss Fawcett, I should be off to town by the next train," he said to himself. "For anything more deliciously insolent than my hostess I have never met. However, she is something new to study, and perhaps I may be able to turn her to good account some day. But the girl—poor child—there is something behind that gaiety and frivolity which I want to fathom. She puzzles me more than Miss Dempster herself, and I refuse to believe that she is absolutely without a heart, as her conversation leads me to suppose. Why have I never kept a diary? Ah, 'dear diary!' how useful you might have been to me on this occasion. My impressions of Dalton might have been jotted down, and committed to posterity—though I am not a Sir Walter Scott—and perhaps they would hardly, at present, do for the public eye."

CHAPTER XI.

NAN was an exceedingly difficult subject for a portrait painter, and this Hume found before the first sitting was over.

Her expression was never the same for long together, and varied with every breath, every passing thought, so that he had to abandon the idea of making a lifelike copy of the original, and contented himself with endeavouring to catch her in her most charming mood of *riante* loveliness.

The room that had been made over to him for his work was a long, low apartment at the end of one of the corridors, lighted solely by a skylight in the roof. It was furnished with heavy oak, and the walls were hung with marvellous copies of the Bayeux tapestry, while Nan's seat was a lounge covered with the richest gold brocade, against which a scarlet curtain fell in luxuriant folds, making a marvellous background to the white gown and simple draperies of the girl's figure. She had, at Hume's request, put on no single ornament, for he had calculated rightly that her soft outline of form and pale, perfect colouring, needed no extra adornment; and not even a flower distracted any attention from the central figure.

Sir Vernon Basset insisted on being present at every sitting, and assisting the artist by hints and suggestions that he thought would be exceedingly valuable to a young and rising painter, but which, somehow, irritated Hume to a pitch almost beyond bearing.

"Dear me! Do you think that that flesh-tint is good?" he said critically one day. "*I* should put a decided dash more carmine on the palette, and transfer it wholesale to the cheek. I never saw Miss Fawcett so distressingly pallid before!"

"If you kindly allow me to *finish* Miss Fawcett's portrait," he said, "I shall be open to any suggestions you may then have to make as to its improvement; but at present, in its unfinished state, it is hardly fair to criticise it."

"I wish that you would not make so many remarks on my picture, Sir Vernon," said Nan, pouting charmingly. "I want Mr. Hume to finish it quite according to his own ideas. He knows far more about art than we do."

She felt that the artist was being ill-used, and, in spite of herself, she could not help taking up the cudgels on his behalf; and the glance that he gave her in return for her words made a wave of rich colour sweep over her face up to the very roots of her hair.

Unconsciously, this grave-faced man was beginning to exert a strange fascination over her.

If he glanced at her with pained surprise, the flippant, careless words died away on her lips—her reckless mood softened with tenderness—for she had begun to care far more than she knew for his good opinion.

Miss Dempster, during the hours of sitting, sat at the further end of the room, with her work or a book. She was by way of being Nan's chaperon, for she looked upon the whole business as a daily advance in the love affair between Sir Vernon and her *protégée*.

The portrait was merely a means to the end; for, in her arrogance, she looked upon the artist as so far removed from their illustrious sphere that any idea of a tender feeling arising between himself and the fair sitter she regarded as an absurd impossibility. Nan, by becoming the *protégée* of Miss Dempster, of Dalton Court, was as far above Cecil Hume, the portrait painter, as the moon is from the earth.

She did her best to throw Nan and her admirer together as much as possible.

If the house-party were shooting, Nan went up with Miss Dempster and the lunch basket, and they all gathered in the woods.

If the men preferred riding or walking, Nan was always paired off with Sir Vernon, while Reginald, moody as a bear with a sore head, had to put up with his aunt, or Hume, as a companion.

While Nan was still unengaged, Miss Dempster would have no attractive girl to stay in the house. She feared to distract Sir Vernon's attention from the one figure she wished him to contemplate with all his power; for she felt, like a wise woman, that for the present, Nan showed to greater advantage when alone.

That the bird was almost snared was palpable to all observing eyes, for Sir Vernon could do nothing without referring his intentions to the lady of his admiration.

Her remarks were listened to by him with all due deference, and when they were in the same room his eyes sought hers constantly—grateful if she deigned to give him one of her brilliant glances. If she was not in the room, he was restless and uneasy; and as he never by any chance took up a book, he would wander round the drawing-room, upsetting a vase here and there, or overturning a photograph in his agitation, until she reappeared.

From these signs Miss Dempster augured great things, and Nan was so flattered by the attentions of a man who could fulfil all her aims and ambitions by aid of the immense wealth he possessed, that if he had proposed to her the second day of his visit she

would have accepted him at once, and have felt all the triumph of success.

But Sir Vernon, besides being a lover, was a cautious one, and dared not risk all his happiness on one throw of the dice, for fear lest Nan should turn out to be either not in love with himself, or not the one woman in the world calculated to make him happy.

Although Nan might have accepted her suitor had he proposed to her within forty-eight hours of his arrival, when she had been in intimate association with Hume for a week of his stay, she felt the difficulties of her position—for she knew that with all her heart and faculties she was beginning to care deeply for the young artist whose nature was as noble as his work. Association with Hume called out all the better side of her nature—roused all the deeper dormant sensibilities into play—and reminded her that she was a woman with a soul to be saved, and not a girl of the period with an inordinate capacity for admiration and fine clothes.

And yet Hume never preached at her. His religion was as much a part of his daily life as eating or sleeping—he simply lived it out in every thought and word, and by his example forced those around him to take a higher view of existence, and to aim at the lofty ideal which was the standard of his own life.

But, at the same time, Nan knew that Sir Vernon was the *Ultima Thule* of Miss Dempster's hopes on her behalf. She must either marry him or be cast on the world again to live a life of poverty. And so, with all her feeble power, she strove to crush the new feeling within her for Cecil Hume, and to attract, and be attracted by, the wealthy baronet.

Her temporary fancy for Reginald Dempster had died out as speedily as it had arisen. And she was ashamed of the very thought of an affection which had had its beginning in secrecy and stolen meetings, and its end in scorn and contempt.

She had a great deal to occupy her mind during the second week of Sir Vernon Basset's visit, and Miss Dempster interpreted the occasional fits of depression which she underwent as most favourable symptoms of her growing affection for her much-to-be-desired suitor; and Nan was careful not to undeceive her.

One exquisite September morning Miss Dempster bade her *protégée* join the shooters as usual in the Court woods for luncheon. She herself would follow rather later in the pony carriage, as she did not feel much inclined for the walk that day. Hume would no doubt accompany her, and see that she reached the coverts in safety.

Miss Dempster spoke much as if the artist were a sort of superior footman, in whose charge the young lady would at least be guarded from all fear of tramps; and Hume, with a slight smile, bowed in acquiescence, glad to be able to have a few moments' conversation with Nan away from Miss Dempster's prying eyes.

His visit was to end on the morrow, and he was half-glad, for his fortnight's close contact with beautiful, wayward Nan had resulted disastrously for his own heart, and he was as deeply in love with her as a man with his reserved depth of character could be. He knew that it was no passing fancy, to be lightly overcome, but the love of his life.

He recognised all the grave faults of her character; but he knew also the best side of her strange nature. For, alone with him, she let him catch glimpses of a heart and higher feelings which he felt convinced only required the sunlight of a pure love to be nursed into existence.

Her intense selfishness was certainly the chief cause of all her faults, and to eradicate that, the stern discipline of life would be necessary, which would certainly be forthcoming, were she to be true to herself, and refuse to marry Sir Vernon Basset, for whom it was evident that she cared no more than she did for Miss Dempster herself.

But he knew that for the present his lips were sealed, unless Nan were to give him some opening to declare his feelings towards her by showing how distasteful was the mere idea of marriage with a man whom she did not love.

"I wish to goodness that Sir Vernon would speak before he leaves us on Saturday," said Miss Dempster, as she paused to give Nan some directions as to the luncheon basket half-way down the corridor. "To-day is Thursday, and I can't think why the creature delays. However, he is sure to propose to-morrow, any way, if not to-day. Play your cards very carefully, young woman. A baronet is not to be caught every day."

"You are really most unfair upon me, Miss Dempster," said the girl, with rising spirit. "I am not going to inveigle Sir Vernon Basset into proposing to me. I intend to become the wife of no unwilling husband."

"Unwilling fiddlesticks!" said the old lady crossly. "Who 'd be unwilling to marry *you*, child, with that most becoming colour in your cheeks? Get along with you! You 're a tiresome monkey—but a pretty one into the bargain. What a blessing the artist fellow goes to-morrow! We shall be well rid of him. I 'm sick to death of his cant."

The last remark was due to catching a glimpse of Hume in the corridor below, and Nan, with an impatient shrug of her shoulders, ran down-stairs to meet him, and they set off together.

The Court woods were glowing in the mellow light. The trees, scarcely changed by the touch of dying summer, were more rich in their luxuriant shade as the two young people passed through the gate, and seemed to be tempting them to turn aside from the road and wander down one of the sun-dappled green glades that led away as far as the eye could reach, till it ended in hazy distance.

The clumps of gorse and broom which fringed the banks of the stream looked like blossoms of pure sunlight which had lost their way, and come wandering earthwards.

"I am so sorry to be leaving this place to-morrow," said Hume at last, after their walk had been passed in silence.

"And we shall be very sorry to lose you," said Nan, in the sweet and gentle voice which so few people were privileged to hear, looking up at him from beneath her big black hat.

She felt a sudden strange tightening of her heart-strings—a sensation she was utterly powerless to analyse.

"I have had a most delightful visit in some ways," went on Hume dreamily, fixing his eyes on a scrap of blue sky caught between the arching trees. "And I have learned a great many new things, of which, even in my varied experience of life, I was unaware, or, at least, thought that they existed in the diseased brains of novelists alone."

"And what are they?" said Nan, looking away at a tuft of branches quivering in the faint breeze.

"You would not like to hear them," he answered quietly.

"If I tell you that I wish to hear them—nay, that I demand to be told——" she said imperiously.

Hume looked at her with a curious smile—wondering how she would take his words, and if she would turn scornfully away from him, and deem him unworthy of notice for the remainder of his visit. But at any cost he would risk the truth, for it might be the saving of the bright, beautiful girl at his side.

"Well, if you must have them," he said, "I will tell you the two principal things that have struck me in my visits to Dalton Court. First, the novelty of the idea that a girl could leave her family to live with such an intensely disagreeable person as my hostess; and, secondly, that the same girl could, in so short a time, lose religion, love, and happiness for the sake of a loveless marriage and a gorgeous home. Surely a worthy ambition——"

Nan put up her hand suddenly with a shiver, as if to shield herself from some blow.

"Don't!" she gasped; "you hurt me terribly. What love, what happiness have I given up?"

"The love of your brother and sister, the happiness of a home that even poverty cannot darken," he said, having heard from Mr. Ricardo the whole history of her life, and not wishing to spare her now.

"You do not know how terrible poverty is to me," she answered, with a sob.

"I know that you are afraid of it. If it had not been so, I might have hoped that you would have listened to a story of love from my lips; but my poverty is an inseparable bar."

She turned white to the very lips.

"I did not know that *you* cared for me," she said brokenly. "If I had known it before it might have made a difference in my life."

"Is your mind made up, then, to marry Sir Vernon Basset, for whom you care no more than a moth does for the lamp round which it so fatally revolves?"

"I cannot bear being poor," she moaned, clasping her hands in painful agitation.

"Be true to yourself for once, Nan," he said quickly, with sudden force and passion in his voice. "No true woman marries for money; and, believe me, you will regret it all your life long—till Death parts you and him. Even if you cannot think of me as I would have you think, pause, at least, before it is too late—before you give yourself without love—before you sell yourself for a few diamonds and a handle to your name."

Nan was sobbing unrestrainedly now, with her face buried in her hands.

The force of Hume's words had come home to her in their terrible truth, but she knew that she had not as yet the strength of mind to give up her present life.

Hume, with infinite tenderness, drew away her hands, and forced her to look into his face.

"My dearest," he said; "do you love me, Nan?"

"Yes," she sobbed; and for one instant he held her closely clasped in his arms.

She lay exhausted on his breast for a moment, feeling the peace of perfect love after the storm of her daily life, but when she realised the consequences of her own actions, she suddenly drew herself away from him, pushing him back at arm's length, while she faced him, determined and vigorous.

The softened expression that had transfigured her face for that one brief moment of happiness died away, and in its stead came back the old, hard, determined look of something like defiance, which held him at bay.

"I love you," she said, "but I cannot marry you. I can only vow never to set eyes on you again; for I am not strong enough to bear poverty for the sake of love."

Hume looked at her in silence; there was no contempt or wonder in his face, but merely a lofty determination, which lent a touch of sternness to his expression.

"And I, for my part, tell you, Nan, that you shall never marry Sir Vernon Basset while I have the power to prevent it. Now that I know you love me, I am strong enough for anything, even to conquer your dread of poverty and to teach you what life is without the influence of worldly ambition," he said.

Nan shook her head and walked rapidly on without a word; and when they reached the covert and found the two men eagerly waiting for them, no casual observer could have told, from her fair smiling face, that she had endured a perfect storm of agitation during her walk.

CHAPTER XII.

MORNING broke on the little house in Chelsea, and breakfast-time found a subdued party sitting round the table.

Cyril and Gloire—though, of course, they knew nothing of the events of the night before—could not help gathering from Alec's white face and Mary's forced attempts at cheerfulness that something had gone wrong.

Wyndham was to reach town that afternoon, and they expected to see him shortly after five o'clock, when he had deposited his portmanteau at the house of the aunt with whom he was to stay, and who had just returned from abroad, after some considerable absence, which had prevented her from making the acquaintance of the young Fawcetts.

She was to come with him to Back Street, to play chaperon, and to make the boys' acquaintance while her nephew was occupied with Mary.

Alec was going off to work as soon as breakfast was over, but Mary stopped him, and drew him aside into the next room.

"Dear Alec," she said, "here is the money you owe that wretched man." And she counted twelve sovereigns into his outstretched hand.

He glanced at her in speechless surprise, and then saw that she was minus her watch and chain, her mother's ring she always wore, and the gold studs usually at her wrist.

"I have parted with everything," she said, with a sad smile: "and with the few shillings of savings that we possessed the sum has been made up."

Alec, without a word, bent down and kissed her quivering lips. The thought of his sister going out at daybreak to rake together the money to pay his debts was so bitter to him that his shame was increased tenfold. He crossed the room, but turned as he reached the door, and faced round.

"God helping me, I will never touch a card again," he said abruptly, in a voice hoarse with emotion. Then he went out, and closed the door.

He returned rather earlier that afternoon from his office, and his face was a good deal brighter, and wore more of its ordinary expression. But he confessed to his sister that he had had a very hard time of it when he had paid Povey his debt and torn up his paper, telling him at the same time that he had resolved to have nothing to do with betting and gambling henceforward and for ever.

Of course his fellow-clerks had jeered at him and called him all the evil names that had occurred to their minds, and he had been sent to Coventry for the remainder of the day—a proceeding intensely galling to a boy of his sensitive temperament.

But he had been prepared for trouble and difficulty, and at present greeted them with something like ecstatic joy, as the outcome of just retribution.

The house was *en fête* as the hour of five approached, and the four young people, in their best clothes, wore a most radiant appearance.

The little tea-table was covered with an appetising spread of bread-and-butter and dainty little sandwiches, cut by Mary for the hungry traveller. Nurse Allison was fidgeting in and out of the room with the butter and a plate of hot muffins, and Gloire, from her station in the window, giving everybody electric shocks with wild announcements of cabs proceeding down the street.

"Bless you, Miss Gloire," said Allison, when, for the fourth time, she had whipped the muffins from the hob on to the table and back again, "the best place for *you* would be bed, I 'm thinking, till this muffin 's eaten and done with. Mr. Wyndham won't have been used to suchlike games—for leathery cakes is not what people get in Lincolnshire."

"Well, Allie, you needn't believe me *every* time," said Gloire indignantly, interrupting herself with a shriek of "Here he is!" and dashing vigorously down the stairs.

Mary followed more quietly with the others, in time to see her small sister fall headlong over the doormat into Wyndham's arms.

Mrs. Hughes, a pleasant-faced woman of middle age, stayed considerately in the background until the two lovers had greeted each other, and had told one another with the eloquence of loving eyes that they were overjoyed at their meeting, and that their love was absolutely undiminished by time and sorrow.

"Oh, I forgot," said Wyndham suddenly, drawing back, with a laugh. "Mary, this is Aunt Rose;" and the girl was greeted with motherly warmth by her new relation.

"My dear child! How often I have longed to see you and the little family I have heard so much of!" Mrs. Hughes said, in her pleasant full tones. "This is the rosebud, I am sure?—Well, Gloire, will you acknowledge a new aunt, and show her the way upstairs?—as the progression of part of this assemblage seems likely to be a slow one!"

When tea had been done ample justice to, and the sandwiches duly praised, Mary and Wyndham went off to the private sanctum in the roof to have a quiet talk for an hour or so.

"You are looking thin and white, my queen," he said tenderly, holding her at arm's length from him, and looking down into her happy eyes. "I am quite certain that you have been doing too much, and that you must give up your own naughty wilful way and become Mrs. Wyndham at once, and let me look after the troublesome little family."

"No, no, Basil," she answered gravely. "You could not live in London, and out of London my two boys could not find work; and how *could* five people live on a fixed income of little more than £300 a year? And I could not possibly leave them alone, for they are so young."

"And you so old—of course," he answered, half-angrily. "Mary, when will you give up bearing everybody's burdens, and think of yourself sometimes?"

"When Mr. Basil Wyndham becomes a mass of selfishness, and not until then," she returned, with an attempt at sprightliness. "And we are very happy here; only of course we have our troubles, like everyone else."

Bit by bit, as she sat on a stool at his feet, the story of Alec's temptation and fall came out, and he listened sadly, thinking how hard it was that a girl so young should have the weight of so much responsibility on her shoulders—longing to be able to share it with her.

"I am obliged to return to Gainsford to-morrow," he said, when she had ended, "as we have an unexpected press of business; but I think that I will go for a little walk with Alec before I go back to-night, and try and help him with some advice—that is to say, if my dear one approves."

She assented eagerly, and the conversation drifted back into more personal topics, till the hour flew by on golden wings, and they were summoned to earth again by Aunt Rose's voice, telling them that it was time to return home to dinner.

As Wyndham was not leaving next day until the exening, Gloire and Mary were to be escorted to Ebury Street by him next morning, and were to spend the whole day with Mrs. Hughes.

Wyndham managed to get his walk with Alec, but what the outcome of it all was never transpired, only the boy, with shining eyes, whispered, as he wished his sister good-night—

"Basil is a brick! A talk with him does you more good than twenty sermons."

Early the next morning Wyndham again made his

appearance in Back Street, and carried off the two girls in a hansom to his aunt's little house.

Mrs. Hughes was very far from being a rich woman, but she had furnished her home comfortably, if not luxuriously, and each corner of it displayed innate taste, and the marvellous things that clever fingers can effect in spite of a limited purse.

That day was a red-letter day for ever in the two girls' minds. Gloire was petted to her heart's content, and went to see some London sights in the afternoon; while Mary, alone with her lover, passed the happiest hours she had known since her father's death.

Before Wyndham left, he gave her a little sealed packet, which he told her was not to be opened until after his departure, and which proved to contain every single article that she had pawned that morning, and, in addition, a tiny gold bangle, with these words inscribed on the inside:—"To the best sister in the world, from Alec and Basil."

She recognised the generosity that had prompted both the gift and the inscription, and which had put the brother's name first, even though his share in it must have been very small; and she thanked God in her heart for her lover.

She and Aunt Rose had a little private talk in the twilight, as they sat together, which was all to the glorification of the man of their affection.

"Ah, Mary, Basil has won a treasure in you, I know; but you are little aware yet as to what he is. He is my realisation of Chaucer's words, 'a very perfect knight,' and he is a lover of whom any girl might be proud."

"I *am* proud of him," answered Mary softly; and, with one of her rare impulses of demonstrative affection, she put her arms round Mrs. Hughes and kissed her suddenly. And from that happy day there sprang up a warm friendship between the two women—a friendship that considerably lightened the dreariness of the girl's life.

But as the autumn wore into winter, Mrs. Hughes was obliged to return to the south, for she could never winter out of Torquay or Ventnor.

The Fawcetts missed her terribly, and they settled down to their work with a little feeling of depression and sadness.

The flowers from Dalton Court came regularly every week, and Nan generally slipped a short note into the box with some account of her doings.

Miss Dempster intended to come up to town in February, and she held out hopes of meeting them very often. But Mary, with a sense of bitterness, felt that the line of demarcation between Back Street and Park Lane was going to be strictly maintained.

The winter turned out a terribly hard one, with days of rain, and sleet, and bitter wind, when the sun never struggled through the murky atmosphere, but London was fog-bound for more than a fortnight together, and the Fawcetts never saw each other's faces save by the flicker of the gas-light.

This was horribly new and strange to the country-bred children, and Gloire tried in vain to restrain her tears, when day after day she got up, always hoping

"She found Gloire on her knees trying to call back to life the white, inanimate figure."—*p.* 734.

for a glimpse of blue sky and weather in which she need no longer be mewed up in the house, with only Nurse Allison to talk to.

For Mary struggled bravely about on her housekeeping expeditions, and backwards and forwards from Mr. Smith's studio, where she was engaged for a few hours now and then over some new sort of work, which was bringing more grist to the mill.

One wretched afternoon in February, when fog and rain were struggling together for the mastery outside, and the fires were burning dully and unwillingly inside, Gloire sat on the hearthrug, trying to coax a cheering flame from the sulky grate.

She was expecting Mary every moment, and the kettle was singing cheerfully on the hob, and a crumpet reposing in the fender.

A black kitten was rolling over and over on the rug at her side, trying vainly to extricate itself from a doll's frock in which it was ridiculously wrapped from head to tail; while Gloire, in her funny quavering little voice, was cooing a nursery rhyme—

> "'Puss-cat mew' jumped over a coal,
> And in her petticoat burnt a great hole,
> So 'puss-cat mew' can't have any milk,
> Till her best petticoat 's mended with silk.

"It isn't the least bit of good you're going on like that, pussy," she continued, gravely. "Now, if you could only sit up straight as your tail, you would look quite nice in Araminta's frock, and you *might*—yes, you really *might* have a bit of teacake by-and-by. But bad cats get—— Oh! here is Mary, after all."

And the child sprang to her feet with a little cry of joy.

There was a step outside on the landing, and a hand fumbled at the door. And into the firelit room stepped an uncertain, tottering figure. "Mary," shrieked Gloire. "Oh, Mary!"

But she was not in time to catch the falling figure; and when Nurse Allison rushed up-stairs, terrified by the child's cries, she found Gloire on her knees trying to call back to life the white, inanimate figure, from whose black dress the rain dripped heavily on to the carpet.

Allison caught Mary to her breast, pressing the pale rigid face to her heart.

"Oh, Allie, Allie, she 's dead!" wailed the frightened child, shrinking back in terror at the mere thought of so awful an ending to their quiet family life.

"Dead, Miss Gloire! not a bit of it. Worn-out with caring for you all, and living the life of an old woman before her time. Bless her lovely face! my bonny Miss Mary! there, then, you're safe with old Allie."

For the girl's sweet eyes had opened once more upon the world, although there was no consciousness in their wild blue depths. And Allison, with sinking heart, carried her off to her own room and laid her on her bed.

(*To be continued.*)

SPIRITUAL FAILURES.

V.—JONAH.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

JONAH is one of those unhappy men whom we cannot help pitying. That gentle feeling is preferable to a stern and rigorous blame, only that pity is half-brother to contempt. And whether on the way to Tarshish or under the gourd at Nineveh, the breath of contempt rises like an Eastern wind upon the cowardly prophet. He was one of those many instances where men succeed in public, and fail in private: one, too, of those more marvellous instances of spiritual success amongst the public, and, in his own person, of spiritual turpitude.

There is no truth more easily disguised than this: that the private and personal life of a religious man is the real index to his public religious work. Some men are able to lead two lives; but of all men, religious workers ought to lead a life that is one, homogeneous and compact. It is what Christ styles the single eye; and this apparently is the reason why He denounces, in language fired with scorn and indignation, the pretences and hollowness of hypocrisy. Statesmen have been found appealing to the eternal principles of purity and freedom; advocates to those of justice and integrity; and they have scarce exchanged the halls of the Senate or the solemn associations of the Court before they have fallen into actions that belied the ostentation of their virtue, and proved that virtue is sometimes professional—kept in stock as a marketable ware.

The prophets of the Bible have, as a rule, won and deserved an honoured place in the esteem of the world. They are indeed the picked men who, with or without special training, heard the voice of God and obeyed it. They are like the great names that stand out in the Christian Church: heroes and saints that none ever think of accusing, and everybody loves and reveres. They are the Augustines and Chrysostoms, the Martins and Ambroses, the Andrewses, Halls, and

Wesleys in the history of the Cross. But the rest of their fellow-learners have sunk into the vast flood of the unremembered and unknown; stained, as many probably were, with grave sins; or weakened, as thousands no doubt were found to be, with spiritual or mental incapacity.

It is well to recall this fact. The halls of the colleges of the prophets turned out sorry stuff from time to time. The hereditary priesthood of Israel was in many generations as bad as its worst enemies could desire. The supplemental agents of prophecy or preaching did not always or often rise to their advantages and opportunities. And we ought hardly to wonder that nowadays other halls in other colleges do not pour forth into the Church a crowd of orators like South, of organisers like Wesley, and of saints like Newton. Prophets, preachers, pastors are, after all, men; and whilst they ought to be of a true and lofty nobility—with grand ideas grandly realised—we shall befool ourselves if we expect to find any of them as perfect as angels.

Jonah, indeed, was very far from being an angel. If a child were asked what was the most prominent feature in his character, he would answer, *cowardice*. This is bad enough in the spiritual world. St. John tells us in the Revelation that the cowards form the first class of those who are outside the Great City. Not one of them was admitted. Their drivelling hearts would have sullied the lustre of the pearly gates as they went through. As soon as they got in they would have discovered that there was no society there for them. Jesus Himself tells that they are the people He is ashamed of. They have not the heart to confess Him upon the earth; in common justice, they cannot look for recognition from Him in heaven. There is no likeness between the coward and Christ.

And that was the first part that Jonah acted; and, like all cowards, he found that Scylla was worse than Charybdis. The great fish was a sorer enemy than the haughty king of Nineveh.

Jonah's cowardice is easier to understand than Jonah's fish. Many shrewd persons were delighted when they discovered, in the happy progress of knowledge, that a whale could not swallow a man. The man might be very diminutive, but even his boots could hardly get down the whale's throat. And so they concluded that the Book of Jonah was a pleasing fiction. It was like Voltaire, in the last century, after he had quarrelled with Frederick the Great, and sought solace in the mocking of solemn things along the lovely shore of Lake Leman. He argued that Daniel could not be true, because he had made a calculation that the story would involve an angel's travelling at the rate of fifty miles an hour. Yet ordinary human beings, who are not angels, and not even poets or philosophers, fly through many parts of England to-day at a swifter speed than that.

There is no argument valid upon a premise of inherent impossibility. It used to be concluded beyond question that there were no black swans, because it is impossible to conceive a black swan. But one harmless and unconscious black swan from the Antipodes put all the ingenious thinkers to rout. Hume argued from his conception of a true induction that the major premise must include all possible cases. This he thought conclusive against a great deal of popular belief. But what test have we of the possible? It is harder to believe that we have explored and classified the whole field of knowledge, than that a ravenous fish—with no higher and no lower thought in its meagre brain than a plentiful dinner—should have swallowed and then disgorged a man.

Besides, we are not without evidence that such piscine conduct is at least possible. Jonah was sailing in the Mediterranean—right along its whole length—from Joppa in Palestine to Tarshish, in Spain; and it is in this very sea that even at the present day a huge fish, the white shark, is found; and not only this, but the bones of a much larger species now extinct.

For the word used in the Bible is a general term for a large fish, and it includes, in various writers, sharks, tunnies, whales, dolphins, and seals. This white shark attains such a size that it has been known to weigh four tons and a half. One that was exhibited last century over Europe weighed nearly two tons, and very nearly re-enacted the part of Jonah's fish. A British war-vessel was sailing in the Mediterranean when a man fell overboard. A huge shark instantly rose, and the unlucky seaman disappeared within its mouth. The captain fired a gun at it from the deck, and as the shot struck upon its back it cast the man out again, and he was rescued by his companions. They forthwith harpooned the fish, dried him, and presented him to his intended victim.

In the beginning of this century a shark was taken at Surinam, and in it was discovered the body of a woman excepting the head. Instances are recorded upon good authority of specimens being found in the same sea: one with a sea-calf in its stomach as big as an ox, another with a whole horse, and another with two tunnies and a man.

That a man could live there for a considerable time seems by no means impossible. The Jews called it three days if the period in question occupied the whole of the middle day and any portion whatever of the other two. In this way the New Testament speaks of Jesus Christ having been three days in the grave, whereas He was there only thirty-three hours, or thereabouts.

Now, Jonah fell into all this by his attempt to fly from the presence of God. And thus moral cowardice was coupled with scepticism. He thought God would be in Nineveh, but not in Tarshish; or perhaps he was in such a state of mind that he failed to finish his argument, and, without coming to any conclusion about Tarshish, fled from the presence he was sure of meeting in the East. It is thus that spiritual

cowardice continually acts. It frightens our intellect into rash, unreasoning conclusions, and from these there is but a step to conclusions that are the very contradiction of all reason—the quick, sudden transformation by an ill-disciplined faith into doubt and infidelity. Much of the vaunted doubt of men in spiritual things is derived from shadowed conduct rather than from any demands of the intellect.

Thus, Jonah was become the victim of many misfortunes, and all through his one dominant fault. We are not told the name of the land where the fish cast him out. But his repentance of the sin was complete, and God at once honoured and tested him by repeating his old commission. What had been done in Nineveh meanwhile? Did it go on sinning? Was the long catalogue of its iniquity extended? Was it in a state more hopeless when Jonah returned to his allegiance than when he first heard the voice of God? Man is tied to man in destiny and life, in responsibility and influence, by many a subtle bond. We never know what we can do until we have tried our utmost, nor how much we have omitted until we measure the effort of one self-denying act with its marvellous results. Nor, indeed, is it possible for any man to discover the full results of his deeds; they are hidden deeper than any mines of the earth. And all that a man may think of is the duty that ought to be done, whatever the consequences may be. It is a hard lesson to learn that consequences are in God's hands, actions only in ours.

The result of Jonah's fresh energy must have astonished him. No preacher—not the Baptist, nor St. Peter, nor any modern evangelist—had such a marvellous success. He does not appear to have gone half-way across the city when the Assyrians' repentance had begun, and the fast was proclaimed.

But now mark the *second* great defect in his character, and the second cause of his spiritual failure. We can give it no softer name than *churlishness*. He was grieved, or angry (for the word is ambiguous), when he saw the change. He had preached for this purpose, and when he saw it realised he was disappointed. There was a touch of his old failing come back to him; the evil spirit that had gone out came and looked in again. He was like the passion of Fear which Collins describes in his famous poem.

> "He back recoiled, he knew not why,
> Even at the sound himself had made."

This is, in fact, the part more difficult to sustain than that of a mere actor in a strong current of spiritual success. It is not that vanity masters the actor, but rather fear, timidity, and ignorance. He loses his head. He is incapable of directing and controlling and shaping, and he is glad enough to sit down under the protection of even a night-sprung gourd, and complain and weep.

Some good Christian people are occasionally like Jonah. They do not always rejoice when the sinner is brought in. They hate to see the reprobate in their seats at church. They generally stand politely at the entrance to the seat until they make him fear that he is an intruder, and when he feels that—stung and hurt through his whole being—he walks out and they walk in. At a mission some years ago in a great northern city, two men in their working clothes stumbled into a pew in one of the churches, and just before the service began the ladies who sat comfortably there on Sundays appeared, and looked at these men with that stony British stare which says nothing, but means much. There was plenty of room for them in the seat, but they were well dressed and the men were in fustian. After some moments of looking and counter-looking, one of the men said to the other, "Come along, Jim; this is no place for the likes of us."

There is as much churlishness in the selfish and hardened amongst church-goers as in any class of the community. And that churlishness exists and thrives just because they look at themselves and their own comfort and their own salvation, instead of looking at the Lord and trying to become great in the Kingdom of Heaven by being the servants of all.

Even our spiritual luxuries, and the material luxuries which we sometimes squeeze into a singular consistency with them do not stand by us in our self-made misery.

Jonah's rest after work was for a while made delightsome by the gourd which God sent. And Jonah rejoiced because of it, whereas he had not rejoiced one whit because the great city was spared. Jonah loved his own ease: and upon the prevalent principle of our cities at home, was not Jonah made for this one purpose; his mission to Nineveh, and his calling as a prophet being only an accident of his life? But, like people nowadays, he was doomed to disappointment once more. His Mediterranean trip was unhappy; his repentance was miserable; his success more miserable yet: and the one shred of consolation left to him in the world is placed at the mercy of caterpillars, black, innumerable, hungry. And then the east wind rose with the rising sun, the dry, scorching, east wind, and beat upon Jonah in his booth; and for the second time he prayed that he might die.

It is—however we may look at it—a pitiable story. We cannot admire Jonah in any feature of his character. He was a coward and a churl. Meanness comes out at every turn. Jacob revels in a boldness and energy and ability that half-redeem his basest qualities. Solomon at his worst gathers royalty around him in dignity and majesty and achievement; but poor Jonah disappears from history, legend, and tradition with this contemptible declaration: "It is better for me to die than to live."

Adjust this picture of weak humanity with the recollection of the magnaminity and courage, the wholesome method of regarding life, and the manly and straightforward career of St. Paul. Go higher yet, into the calm heights of One who never quailed, who

never doubted His duty, who never hesitated in His actions; and above the human representation rise to the silent sanctifying presence of Him who condescended to use Jonah, and condescends to use us, for the declaring of His mercy to man and beast and the saving of men from themselves. He who has his eye fastened upon that pure glistening height can never fail.

BATH AND ITS MEMORIES.

BY HERBERT RUSSELL.

BATH: FROM THE OLD CITY BRIDGE.

THERE are very few towns in England without significance of their own in respect to historic associations, but Bath must always be particularly memorable for its literary interests and recollections. The writings of some leading eighteenth-century authors abound with references to it. Jane Austen scarcely wrote a book in which the heroine does not figure chiefly at Bath; and some of the most humorous scenes in the best of all Dickens's works are laid in that place. Indeed, to the student in English literature, to think of the city of the Abbey Church is to conjure up a host of recollections of names which loom great and massive through the dim pages of the history of letters; for the literary interests undoubtedly lead the procession of the historic memories, though assuredly the rest of those memories follow in an abundant army.

There is scarcely a house in the old parts of Bath—and most of Bath is old—which is not possessed of

associations more or less captivating. You pass down a comparatively poor-looking street, quaint, if you will, but not the less sordid and gloomy; yet you are told, in that particular house there the famous Earl of Chesterfield wrote most of his well-known "Letters" to his son. A few doors further down the same thoroughfare another house is pointed out—the residence of Lord Nelson after his return from the West Indies. A coal-merchant's shop adjoining the theatre in the squalid-looking Sawclose was once the dwelling-place of fastidious Nash. You turn into a mere alley and pause in front of a silent, deserted house, whose latticed windows gleam darkly back at you; your attention is attracted by a rich and elaborate piece of carving over the low, black hall door, and on inquiry you are told that it is the coat-of-arms of General Wolfe, and that there he lived before he sailed upon his last campaign, which terminated on the memorable Heights of Abraham.

Indeed, the whole city seems to be pervaded with an old-world air. One feels it in wandering among the rows of time-darkened mansions, at any of which one would not be greatly astonished to witness some lady, with patches on her cheeks, and nodding head-plumes, alight from a Sedan chair, and where one experiences a strong sense of incongruity when the door, instead of being flung boldly open by a befrilled and powdered lackey, is timidly unlatched by a housemaid in a print frock.

One feels it, too, in gazing from any of the surrounding vantage-points upon the terraces and crescents which seem to hang upon the green hill-sides, and the fancy is carried back to the days when the Bath stone of which they are built had not as yet exchanged its whiteness for its present sombre tone; when Beau Nash was governing the society of the place by virtue of his office as master of the ceremonies; when those same assembly rooms, which are now almost deserted, were witnessing nightly scenes of routs and carnivals, in the brilliant *ensemble* of which one might look for, and find collected, the wit, the wealth, and the fashion of the kingdom; when the elegant, Grecian-looking pump-room, so far from being dedicated to the invalid, was the *rendezvous* of the gay belles and roistering macaronis of the age; and when, in grand antithesis to all this, the Countess of Huntingdon, whose doctrine has still no inconsiderable following in the place, was striving her hardest to reform the corruptions which naturally grew up with a society whose sole pursuit was one of pleasure. The reality has fled a full century since, but the atmosphere of it still clings to the old town like the faint musty perfume to lavender that has long since faded.

From time immemorial the thermal waters of Bath have been bubbling up out of the earth; and if the threadbare legend of Prince Bladud serves no other purpose, it at least illustrates how very remote was the discovery of their medicinal properties. The Roman baths are a distinct badge of antiquity, such as endless tomes of tradition could never confer. They are out and away the most perfect examples of this species of ancient architecture ever brought to light in England. Discovered, as such relics usually are, by the merest accident, after a lapse of hard upon sixteen centuries, they were found to extend in a regular system at a depth of nearly twenty feet beneath the stone paving of the Abbey churchyard. Judging from the massive ruined columns and crumbling arches of the comparatively small portion which is exposed to view, the baths of Aquæ Solis must have been structures luxurious to a degree that we can only dream of.

There is probably no town in this country which has undergone fewer changes in its appearance within the last hundred years than Bath. For generations, indeed, after its popularity had declined, and fashion ceased to favour it, the beautiful old city sunk almost into a condition of somnolence; but its aspect has remained almost as it was when Curll and Anstey were levelling their satire at its society, and when Richard Brinsley Sheridan sat in the Grand Pump Room, quietly taking stock of the gossiping folk there, and selecting from among them his characters for the well-known work, which he conceived and matured in that haunt of folly and suffering. The stately sweep of the Royal Crescent looks just as it did when Madame D'Arblay, in a very foolish panegyric, described it as combining "all the delights of nature, which beautify the Parades, with the excellences of architecture, which adorn the Circus." In Gay Street one may still see the quaint old carved house at which lived Mrs. Piozzi, and to which she first came as Mrs. Thrale in 1780, entertaining Dr. Johnson there at feasts "that were *dinners* to ask a man to, sir!" The Parades, referred to by Fanny Burney in the passage just quoted, stand unaltered in themselves, and the Circus is exactly as imposing and as gloomy as it looked when Gainsborough, walking round it with his patron Thicknesse, said, "This is like the Colosseum at Rome turned inside out;" or when Smollett wrote "that it was worthy to be called the Cestus of Venus." Nature, indeed, has done much for the city in the simple grandeur of the surrounding scenery, but the genius of the architect Wood lovingly wrought a very gem among the verdant Somersetshire hills. Macaulay, precise and almost austere as he generally is in his writings, calls it "that beautiful city which charms even eyes familiar with the masterpieces of Bramante and Palladio."

Endless almost is the chain of associations with these thoroughfares which sprang up about the middle of last century. One pauses, perchance, opposite an archway, scarcely observable in a long street of shops. It is the entrance to an obscure chapel called the Octagon, but rendered memorable by the long connection with it of Dr. Magee, the late Archbishop of York, or by the fact of Herschel, in his youth, having played the organ there. Or again, you turn into a public place of amusement—a skating rink: the ecclesiastical appearance of the interior strikes you, and, if you choose to inquire, you will be informed that it was originally a place of worship, called Margaret's Chapel, and that it was opened in 1770 by the ill-fated Dr. Dodd, who was afterwards hanged for forgery.

But the pride and glory of Bath is its Abbey Church,

Massive, grand, and rendered sombre by time, looms this impressive pile in the very heart of the city, always the first object to arrest the eye gazing down upon the nestling landscape from any one of the surrounding corona of hills. Its antiquity is not very great, and may be measured by the fact that it was one of the latest specimens of ecclesiastical Gothic architecture erected in this country. From afar, when the sunshine lies full upon it, the Abbey glitters like a great jewel, for it is rich in windows, its ponderous walls being broken by no less than fifty-two, many of them grand and gorgeous, and which have earned for it the name of the Lantern of England. Two points will speedily strike the attentive observer: the peculiar shape of the tower and the extraordinary height of the clerestory, rare conditions which always go together. The transept is singularly narrow, which was done to achieve an effect of greater loftiness. The result is that the central nave was correspondingly contracted, and the tower forms an oblong instead of a square turret. Upon the dim grey walls within, one finds many monuments to linger over. There is the genial countenance of old Quin staring blindly out of the darksome corner to which it was relegated by a certain preacher who found that in its former position, facing the pulpit, the bust attracted his eye and distracted his thoughts: Quin, the friend of Garrick, who wrote his epitaph, and of whom one cannot but think kindly for his brilliant wit and exquisite repartee. There is the quaint old altar-tomb, rich with its faded gilt-work and dim colours, of "the good Bishop Montague." There are monuments and slabs to Lady Waller, Sir William Hargood, Caleb Parry, and, not to wander through a long list of famous names, to poor old Sally Fielding, memorable if only for the sake of her great brother. The church is curious for its many punning devices; a common conceit among the learned of bygone ages. Thus the Prior Birde leaves as his mark what is apparently intended to be a phenomenal sparrow, with his initial W. over it. Bellot, presenting the glass for the grand eastern window, perpetuated his name by causing the glazing to be done in the particular manner which, in heraldry, is termed "bellot-wise." Malet of Enmore decorated another window with his coat of arms, and the inscription *Malet Meliora*—"he could wish to do better." The writer was recently standing opposite this quaint design, when a party of people, among whom was an American gentleman, came along under the guidance of the sexton. They paused abreast whilst the ancient witticism was interpreted. The Yankee appeared deeply impressed. "Wall," said he, in a whisper deep with reverence as he looked up and around, "I guess the 'Mericans would be very glad to swap the State of Ohio, ay, and perhaps Illinois too, for such a church as *this!*"

THE RIVER AVON: FROM NORTH PARADE BRIDGE.

Bath has given its name to several things which

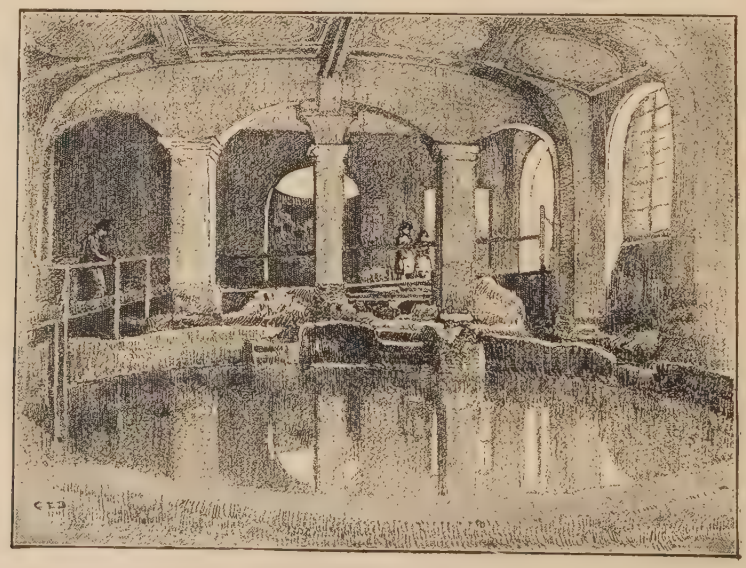
owe their origin to the ingenuity or discoveries of its inhabitants. Foremost among these, the Bath chair claims attention. The history of this simple invention is almost contained in a paragraph which appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* of March 4th, 1824. "Yesterday, died at his house on St. James's Parade, aged 74, Mr. John Dawson, the original inventor, and for many years the sole manufacturer, of the invalid wheel chairs now so generally used, not only in this city, but in every part of the country." Mr. Dawson's invention had already at that time sounded the death-knell of the picturesque Sedan chair. It is not such an easy matter to trace the paternity of the Bath bun, unless, indeed, we attribute it to the famous Dr. Oliver, who certainly left the recipe for the very tasteless biscuit which bears his name, or to old Sally Lunn, of teacake renown, who was likewise a native of the place. Then there is the Bath chap, which, by the way, is not a ham, as so many suppose, but merely a pig's cheek; the Bath stone, of which every building in the place is constructed; the Bath brick; and, to complete this catalogue of associations with the name of the city, a rather rude repartee, the refrain of which is an invitation to the person to whom it is applied to visit that town.

One of the most interesting names in the history of Bath is that of Ralph Allen. It was he who first conceived the idea of establishing a system of cross-posts in the mail service. He communicated his notions to Marshal Wade—the man whose name you are told you would have blessed had you "seen those roads before they were made"—who was so struck by the originality of the suggestion that he used his influence and got Allen appointed postmaster of Bath. His wealth grew apace with the success of his scheme; he built the almost classic residence of Prior Park, and soon collected about him there the greatest wits and literary characters of his age. Warburton married his favourite niece, Gertrude Tucker, and in afterwards writing to Dr. Doddridge, referred to this circumstance as "the tide in his affairs which, taken at the flood, led him on to fortune." And, indeed, there can be no doubt that it was alone Allen's influence with Pitt which, in 1767, obtained for this learned and remarkable man the Bishopric of Gloucester. Pope treated this generous friend of his disgracefully. A difference arose between them on account of Allen refusing some preposterous request made by Mistress Martha Blount, in what Dr. Johnson called "her indecent arrogance." The aspish-tempered little poet, ignoring a long series of past obligations, thereupon cut Allen for life, and added to his will the following item:—

"In case R. Allen, Esq., above said, shall survive me, I order my executors to pay him the sum of £150, being to the best of my calculation the account of what I have received from him, partly for my own, and partly for charitable uses. If he refuses to take this for himself, I desire him to employ it in a way I am persuaded he will not dislike, . . . to the benefit of the Bath Hospital."

Allen bitterly resented this gratuitous affront, and in handing the money over to the hospital, remarked that Pope was a bad accountant, and that had he added another cipher to the amount he would still have been short of the mark.

The Avon, where it flows through Bath, is a picturesque, and in spots a lovely river. The shadow of the tall Somersetshire hills lies upon it from Grosvenor to Limpley Stoke, and the placid stream meanders through one of the fairest vales in England. Very few noisy factories or grimy wharves disfigure its banks, and the water that gushes foaming through its weirs is as clear as glass. Indeed, Bath is singularly free from the turmoil and dirt of a manufacturing city. Its industries are few, and not of a nature to obtrude



LADIES' BATH, ROMAN BATHS.

OLD BATH AND THE ABBEY.

themselves in the shape of vomiting chimney-stacks or the loud clanging of machinery. The hush and repose of gentility hang in a very sensible atmosphere over its streets and terraces. Through all the vicissitudes of its popularity, Bath has always managed to preserve its *éclat*. "For generations," said a London newspaper a few years ago, "Bath, once the most crowded of English watering-places, has seen little of what is known as 'Society.' Half-pay officers and local gentry still affected the town, and by the severity with which they excluded from 'the club' anyone with the taint of trade in his antecedents, preserved for the Pump Room and the Assembly balls a smack of the traditions of a time when Beau Nash was autocrat of the city, and the master of the ceremonies a monarch so potential that when Jones, Plomer, and Brereton were struggling for the reversion of Derrick's sceptre, it was gravely proposed, in order to prevent bloodshed in the Cross Bath, that the Lord Chancellor should make an election by *fiat*." This passage makes one think of the lady who before she had been a week in Bath had discovered its respectability, and was writing that she "had already made very creditable correxions in this here place, where, to be sure, we have the very squintasence of satiety."

Bath has been singularly fortunate in the number and character of her historians. Doubtless there is much in the romantic nature of her annals during the last century of a sort to be exceptionally fascinating to the writer of history. Oliver Goldsmith, in his "Life of Beau Nash," gives us a charming if not a quite trustworthy picture of the place in that age. Warner found the materials for a ponderous volume in the story of the old city. Tunstall, of whom a writer of considerable reputation said "that of all the men he knew he considered Tunstall to possess the largest amount of native literary aptitude and facility," is equally voluminous. The industrious Peach has added to the labours of these men the fruits of a life of the most minute research. The result has been a chronicle of extraordinary interest and fulness. But then, of course, there was plenty for the historian to say. Indeed, the memories of

this classic spot are manifold to a degree which perhaps no city in England short of London itself can approach. The very names of most of the streets are fraught with suggestiveness. Orange Grove recalls the love of William III. for the old town. Pulteney Street perpetuates the name of the famous Sir William, on whose estate it was built. Pope's Walk makes one think of the bright-eyed, deformed little figure that so often trod its soil. But the list would grow wearisome through its length. We may fitly close our brief account of Bath and its memories by recalling the lines of Robert Montgomery, whom Lord Macaulay—himself, by the way, a familiar figure in the streets of the city during his lifetime—so severely criticises :—

"And now, farewell! perchance for aye, farewell!
Queen of the West! from olden time renowned,
Few are thy smiles that, with my future blend,
Though ne'er hath kindly word, or look of love,
Forgotten been; but, treasured in the heart,
They still are felt; and if, in after years,
Haply again I view thy green-crowned hills,
Thy time-worn Abbey, thy religious towers,
And move a stranger through thy voiceless streets,
And watch thy spirit-stars—this farewell hour,
On mem'ry's pensive wing will back return."

ABOUT A CARRIAGE CLOCK

BY MRS. W. K. CLIFFORD, AUTHOR OF "ANYHOW STORIES."

THIS is the story of an effort and of a carriage clock. You will wonder how the two go together, but you will see.

Mrs. Murray had two little girls. The elder, who was called Dorothy, was very tall and pale, and had large blue eyes. She was very fond of her mother; which, by the way, is not remarkable, for most little girls—that is, good little girls—love their mothers. Mothers, too, generally love them back very dearly, even—and this is remarkable—if they are naughty, and it is a sad duty to scold them. Little girls should ponder over this and try to be exceedingly good, never forgetting that, as a rule, poor mothers have far less to cheer them than their children. If you ask how this may be, I should like to point out that they have no dolls, get no prizes at school (don't even go to school), and have very often lost the art of eating sweets, even of enjoying jam tarts. Consider this, dear children, and try to compensate your mother for these privations by being patterns of virtue, by learning your lessons, mending your own clothes, going to bed with great joy the moment you are told to do so, and by any other methods that commend themselves to your youthful imaginations.

But all this, you will say, has nothing to do with a carriage clock, and that is truly a just remark. "Indeed," you may add, "it is rather like a sermon." I quite agree with you, and now we will proceed with the story. Mrs. Murray, then, had two little girls and no carriage clock. It is of course impossible, therefore, as yet to give an account of the last; but Dorothy, the elder little girl, was eleven years old, and Janet was seven. With Janet this story has so little to do that I won't say anything about her, except that she was a very nice child. As she is not likely to see this history, I may safely say, without fear of making her vain, that she was a most remarkable child, for she could eat more chocolate creams and yet survive than anyone I ever came across. I could tell you a strange story of Janet and a box of chocolate creams, but there is no time; besides, this is the tale of a carriage clock, and chocolate creams would be an intrusion.

Every year, like the majority of people, Mrs. Murray had a birthday and birthday presents. She was always grateful for the presents, as people generally are, unless they are very disagreeable. But she sometimes looked at them a little regretfully, and said, "Oh, I wish instead of that toast-rack," or "that fan with yellow feathers," or "that five o'clock tea-cloth with thistles worked in the corners, someone had given me a carriage clock." These remarks weighed on Dorothy's mind. It was a sad world indeed, she thought, not to say a wicked one, since it did not hasten to lay millions of carriage clocks at the feet of her beloved mother.

It happened that Mrs. Murray and her two little daughters went to Montreux for the winter. Montreux is in Switzerland, and is a lovely place, walled up with big mountains behind, and having in front the blue waters of Lake Leman, with the mountains of Savoy beyond. It is supposed to be a good place for invalids to winter in, and Mrs. Murray went chiefly for the benefit of Dorothy, who was not strong. Now, Dorothy noticed that in Switzerland, and especially in the very pretty shops at Montreux, carriage clocks abounded, and, moreover, that they were very cheap. This was not surprising, for in Switzerland hundreds of hands (and the men belonging to them, of course) are employed all the year round in making clocks, and the tick-tick-ticking that they send into the world is appalling to contemplate: think what it would be to hear all at once! But some things are mercifully spared us.

Suddenly a mysterious thing happened. Dorothy, who had always spent her pocket-money with great diligence and much swiftness the moment she received

it, took to hoarding. Her income consisted of threepence a week—not a large sum in itself, but one that, like most others, has the peculiarity of increasing by being added to again and again. Every week Dorothy's hoard was increased by threepence, until at last she had the noble sum of one shilling. But this took a whole month, and the excitement of spending nothing and of thinking over her savings made her almost ill and quite nervous, so that her mother became anxious.

"I really think you had better give up saving and spend your money, my Dody," she said.

"Oh, I wouldn't for the world," Dorothy answered. "I want a great deal of money, too," she added; "it is for—for something."

"For what?"

"I couldn't tell you," Dorothy said impressively; "but it is for something—very particular. You won't ask me what it is, will you, mummy dear?"

"No, dear; you shall keep your little secret to yourself," Mrs. Murray said, stroking her daughter's pretty head.

"And you won't try to guess what it is? You have not the faintest idea, have you?" And Mrs. Murray confessed that she had not the very faintest idea in the world, and that she would not try to guess why Dorothy was saving. And every Saturday threepence was added to previous threepences: but somehow they did not grow into a very large sum.

"Oh, mother!" she sighed in despair one day, "I have been saving for such a long time. I don't remember what sweets—bought by myself, you know—even taste like, and yet I have only one-and-ninepence."

"Let me present you with a humble contribution in the shape of five shillings."

"Oh no, mummy. *You* must not give me even one penny towards it."

"Why not?"

"I can't tell you," cried Dorothy desperately.

"Tell me what you are saving for, Dody dear," her mother said coaxingly. "You will be much happier if you do. You know you don't like having a secret from me."

"No, I don't," Dorothy said, while the tears came into her eyes, "but I can't tell you this one. I can't, indeed. I wish I were very clever and could earn money. I wouldn't mind working like a slave."

"You would work like a slave!" Mrs. Murray was surprised.

"Yes, like a slave, mummy," repeated Dorothy earnestly. "I would do any work, even if I disliked it ever so much."

"You don't like mending gloves."

"No, I don't, but I would do it now."

"Would you mind keeping mine in order for threepence a week?"

"May I?" Dorothy said joyfully. "Oh! indeed I will; and I'll begin this very moment!" And she did. From that day there was never a hole seen in Mrs. Murray's gloves, and threepence was added to Dorothy's weekly income.

October came, and she had three-and-sixpence.

"Oh, it is so little!" she cried, "and I want so much." Then she sat and thought, and as she did so her mother noticed how thin the little face was growing. The chase after money was telling on it. Mrs. Murray ached to help her child, but it was no good offering gifts any more: she felt that clearly. Suddenly a happy thought struck her.

"Dody dear," she asked, "do you think you could do something difficult for money? It is seldom earned without an effort. Do you think you could make one?"

"Yes, mummy," came the swift answer.

"Would you take your cod-liver oil very quietly each time, without saying a word or making a sign?"

Twice a day poor Dorothy was afflicted with a large dose of cod-liver oil, and she did not like it. Few people, unless they are born geniuses, like cod-liver oil; it is a taste that takes years to acquire, and even then is quickly lost again. Dorothy abominated her dose; there is no other word for it. She took up the glass that contained it, and bewailed her sad fate, walked about with it crying aloud, declared that she really couldn't take it, that it was horrid, and made her ill instead of doing her good, held it high above her head, then for a moment to her nose, and recoiled, retired into corners, begging that no one would look at her while she took it; and when at last it was swallowed she dashed down the glass, made faces of a really hideous description, and flew out of the room, declaring that it was horrible and dreadful, and that she wished there was no cod-liver oil in the world.

"Oh, mummy!" she exclaimed hopelessly, in answer to her mother's question.

"You see, dear Dody, you disturb everybody now when you are going to take it. The entire place is upset till it is over. If you would make a great effort, pour out the oil gently, retreat into a quiet corner, and take it quickly, without any groans, moans, and lamentations, you would be learning self-control, and earning——"

"Yes, mummy?" interrupted Dorothy eagerly.

"A shilling a week—I will pay you that sum."

"But I oughtn't to take it. I ought to do what you desire without being paid for it."

"We will call this a matter of business," Mrs. Murray said, in what might be called an official voice that Dorothy found very comforting. "If you agree to my terms——"

"Oh yes, indeed I will," came the joyful answer. "I will take very big doses too, and you shall never hear a sound. But a shilling a week is so much; why, I would take bottles and bottles of it for that. Oh, you dear kind mother! Now I really shall get on; and I have written to auntie and grandma to-day, and told them that as I am saving for something very particular, I want them to give me money for a birthday gift this time."

"You had better tell me——" Mrs. Murray began. But Dorothy shook her head.

"No, dear mother, please don't ask me; it won't make you angry—it isn't wrong—but I don't want you to know what it is till the time comes."

So Mrs. Murray said no more, and every day in silence, but with great dignity—the dignity that came of self-control and of earning money—Dorothy betook herself to her own room, carrying with her a

large dose of cod-liver oil. Not a sound was heard, but in a few moments she reappeared with an empty glass and an air of subdued satisfaction.

And Dorothy grew fat, and a row of empty cod-liver oil bottles on the shelf bore witness as to the reason thereof.

In November her birthday arrived, and with it four letters from England. There was one from grandma, enclosing a pound, one from Aunt Aggie with ten shillings, and one from Uncle George with five shillings. Dorothy literally shouted for joy, and skipped all over the flat.

"Mother, mother!" she cried, "I shall have enough by Christmas: I shall indeed. I shall have enough to buy it."

"To buy what?"

"You dear mummy! you are so curious," she laughed saucily; "but you shan't be told, so it's no good. Oh, I am so happy!"

"Well, I want to give you five shillings as a birthday gift."

"Really as a present, and not just to help me?"

"Really as a present, and not just to help you."

"Then," said Dorothy, with some condescension, "I think, dear mother, I may accept it. Why, that is two pounds to-day. I am growing quite rich."

She spent a most charming birthday. For dinner (on birthdays Dorothy and Janet always arranged the food) there was a plump chicken beautifully cooked by the wood fire, and one of those wonderful tarts of quince jam and cream that Swiss confectioners make with a success known to few besides. In the afternoon there was a concert to go to; in the evening a bright fire and a talk with mother. Janet went to bed a quarter of an hour earlier than Dorothy, and when she had gone the latter sat thinking of the events of the day—the presents and the chicken, the tart and the concert, and last of all this dreamy spell over the crackling fire. She felt as if she did not want to talk: it was a time to think in, not to talk in; and mother seemed to feel that too, for she also was silent. But suddenly looking up, Dorothy saw that mother's face was sad; it seemed as if her eyes were almost tearful.

"Oh, mother," she cried, starting up, "why do you look like that? Is anything the matter?"

"No, my darling, nothing. I was only thinking. Tell me, Dody dear, have you had a happy birthday, and are you growing rich enough?"

"Oh yes, it has been a lovely day, and I never expected to get so much money."

"You will be rolling in wealth by Christmas-time," Mrs. Murray laughed, trying to shake off her sad thoughts. "Why, Dody, Dody, you will be a millionaire soon."

"Only till Christmas-time, then it will be all spent, and I shall not want to save any more; but, dear mummy," she went on, "after Christmas I shall still mend your gloves just the same, and still take my cod-liver oil without groans, only then I shall do it for nothing. I do so like you to wear the things I have mended; and I know you long to see me get very fat and well; and perhaps I shall if I go on taking bigger and bigger doses of cod-liver oil for a long time."

"I shall be glad when Christmas is here," Mrs. Murray said, almost without knowing that she was saying it aloud, "for I think all this excitement is bad for you, and I know the secret worries you."

For a moment Dorothy was silent, then she went and sat down on her mother's lap, just as she used to do when she was very little indeed.

"Mother," she said, speaking earnestly, while she felt her cheeks flush and burn, "if I told you what it was for, would you still let me go on saving—and would you—pretend you didn't know—and would you promise—promise to let me go on?"

"My dear Dody, I will let you do anything that gives you pleasure, and that isn't wrong—it can't be that, for my little girl couldn't wish to do it then; and unless I think it all a mistake, I won't try to prevent you from saving."

"It isn't a mistake, and it is for something that would make me very happy, and someone else—someone else, darling—very happy; and I would give the world to tell you if I could, for I can't bear having a secret from you. I never did, you know, mummy."

"No, my darling, you never did; and tell me this one, if you think it would make you happier to do so."

"It would! it would!" Dorothy exclaimed, clasping her hands. "And if you would only promise to let me go on, and to pretend that you didn't know— if you would only——" But a lump came into her throat, and she had to stop.

"Yes, dear, I will promise," Mrs. Murray said, carried away by her child's intensity. "I will promise anything that will make you happy; so tell me."

"Then, mummy darling," said Dorothy solemnly, while she clasped her arms very tightly round mother's neck, "it is to give you a carriage clock: to give it you all myself. Oh, mother dear, don't be angry! and pray don't laugh."

And mother wasn't angry and didn't laugh at all, but I fear that she nearly cried, for she couldn't speak for a moment, and when she did her voice was very very husky, and she only said—

"Oh, Dody—Dody dear!"

"Yes, mother," her little daughter went on, "it is to give you a carriage clock, to give it you all my own self with my own money: that was why I couldn't let you help me. You will pretend you don't know, and let me go on saving, won't you, mother?" she entreated.

"Yes, I will," Mrs. Murray said; "and I will love it and keep it all my life. It will remind me of my little girl's love, and of all that she did for months and months in order to give it me."

"You kind mummy! And if ever I go away from you, you will think that every tick is a kiss, won't you? for then you will have just as many as I should like to give you. Oh!" she sighed, "I am so glad you know; I couldn't bear having a secret from you."

But when December came, and all the money was saved, and everybody was buying presents to put into the Christmas bag, Mrs. Murray had a really difficult task to perform.

"Mother," said Dorothy one day, "would you mind coming with me to the clock shop? I can't go alone; and I am so afraid of choosing the wrong one if

anyone else goes. Would you mind coming with me and pretending that the clock is for someone you don't know, who likes just what you like? and you mustn't ask anything or think anything, only choose the clock, and then forget all about it."

in a quite innocent voice, "I should choose this one. I may be mistaken, but I think it is by far the prettiest."

Then Dorothy said shyly to the shopman, "This one, if you please;" and turning to her mother, whispered,

"It took a long time to decide on the clock."

"Very well, dear Dody," Mrs. Murray said; and hand in hand they walked along the one street of Montreux—the street beside the lake—till they came to the chief jeweller's. They looked in at the window for a moment, then silently they entered the shop. Dorothy's heart was very full, and her mother knew it well. It took a long time to decide on the clock, but it was done at last.

"Really, if I were your friend," Mrs. Murray said, "Would you mind not listening now, dear mother?" So Mrs. Murray went and examined some things at the far end of the shop, while Dorothy gave some mysterious directions, and pulled out her red plush purse, and paid away the money she had saved with so much eagerness and anxiety. Then, when the address was given, so that the clock might be sent home, she and mother walked back hand in hand along the street again. She did not speak on the way,

and when they were at home she only rubbed her cheek softly against mother's hand and went into her own little room, and sat down on the travelling-trunk at the foot of the little white bed, and wondered if it could be true that the clock was really bought at last.

Two days before Christmas it came home. The servant gave the package into Dorothy's hands. She opened it and looked at the little clock, then put it back into its case, covered it over with the paper, tied it up with string, and carried it into the drawing-room. In a corner was the Christmas bag—a travelling-bag in reality—into which were put all the presents for the little household. Those that would not go in were securely packed and tied outside the bag. Each package was marked with the name of the person for whom it was intended, and the name of the donor. On Christmas morning it was Mrs. Murray's part to pull out the presents one by one, and call out the name written on the paper round it, and each thing was well inspected before another appeared.

"Mother," said Dorothy, going up to the writing-table, "will you lend me your best pen? It is for something very particular," she added, with a radiant face; "and you won't look while I write something, will you?"

"I wouldn't for worlds!" Mrs. Murray answered.

"And now, mummy dear, may I go to the bag? and you won't try to see what I put in, and you won't guess, will you?"

"Certainly not, dear Dickie-bird," Mrs. Murray answered; and Dorothy went to the bag and put in her package.

I think it was the loveliest Christmas morning that ever dawned at all. The snow lay white and thick and crisp. The great mountains round the head of the lake looked like brides covered with white veils, waiting till their lord the sun should come and lift them. The lake itself was still and blue, the mountains could see themselves reflected in it. The fir-trees stretched up and up the heights towards the sky; the little bare vines and the plane-trees seemed to creep down nearer and nearer to the earth, as though they shivered in the glistening whiteness. The Swiss folk walked along the street and the upper road and pathways with an air that showed that the consciousness of holiday-time was upon them. The children, in their bright-coloured caps, thick shoes, and woollen stockings, seemed to be remembering the Christmas-tree that last night had been ablaze with a hundred lights. You knew that in their pockets were sweetmeats and little scraps of gold and silver paper—the ends of crackers. All the world had a look of happy indolence, as though it had not slept too soon the previous night because of the present-giving and merry-making of Christmas Eve, but sleep had been worth foregoing to win the memories of the morning.

Dorothy's first thought was "To-day mother will have her clock." She was the very happiest little girl alive, but she was distinctly the most impatient. She thought mother and Janet would go on eating rolls and drinking coffee for ever and ever; she felt convinced that they would, and that breakfast-time would never be over any more, and opening-the-bag-time never come. But she was mistaken; for if one only waits long enough, all things come and all things pass; and that is a really unnecessary remark, besides being one that you would probably understand better when you are older than you do now.

At last the table was cleared, and Dorothy and Janet sat down, and the two maids, Ruth and Sarah, entered: for they were always present on these occasions; and mother took her place at the head of the table. The bag was put at her feet, so that she could not see what she was going to pull out—and then the ceremony began. The first thing to appear was a long white parcel, addressed to "Little Janet, with Mother's Love," and when it was opened there was a beautiful doll, with the pinkest cheeks and yellowest hair you ever saw in your life. Then there was something very soft and "scrunchy-looking," as Dorothy mentally observed to herself, and that proved to be a frill and a bow for Sarah from Janet; and Sarah was delighted, and it was understood that Sarah's neck would be adorned therewith for many Sundays to come. And there was a work-basket for Dorothy, and presents all round, while everybody waited with a sense of something very important to come. At last mother, stooping over the bag, was observed to look puzzled, and then, with an air of wonderment, she pulled out a square white package.

"I wonder what this is?" she said, in the most natural voice in the world.

Dorothy's face flushed, and an almost choking feeling was in her throat. A little hush fell on the party; for they all knew the secret of Dorothy's saving, and the cod-liver oil, and the glove-mending.

"*For darling mother; from her loving Dorothy,*" was written on the outside paper. Mother tried to laugh as she said, "Why, what can it be?" but she couldn't laugh, for she was nearly as excited as Dorothy. Slowly, while all eyes watched her, she pulled off first one white paper and then another, until at last there appeared a red leather case, and when that was opened there was a carriage clock. Oh, such a pretty little clock! crystal and gilt, as carriage clocks usually are, and low down in front under the dial on the gilt frame were engraved in very small letters just these three words—

"*Mother: from Dorothy.*"

Mrs. Murray looked at it and tried to speak.

"Oh, Do——" it seemed as if she could not say any more, but she opened her arms, and Dorothy flew into them, and she and her little girl gave each other a long kiss that said more than any words could say, and that both will remember as long as they live.

But there was one misfortune. An hour later, when mother had been alone for a time, with the dear clock on her lap, Dorothy entered, and saw that on the nice new leather case there were two blisters.

"Oh, mummy!" she exclaimed. "Do look at those marks; how did they come? They were not there just now."

Mrs. Murray looked at them silently for a moment, and then looked up and smiled; and when Dorothy saw her face she understood, and asked no more

questions. She crouched down and put her head against mother's lap, and felt happy and satisfied, and yet a little sad, with that sadness that sometimes seems to be in even our greatest happiness, as if to leaven it, and make us realise it more keenly than would otherwise be possible.

All this happened years ago now; but the carriage clock is quite well, and ticks away on a writing-table in England. Mother loves it almost as well as if it were a new baby; and Dorothy sometimes sits and looks at it, and thinks what a wonderful moment it was when it came out of the Christmas bag and the white papers were taken off, and—but this is deep down in her heart, where she keeps it quite sacred, and she would not like to see it written about, and it shall not be; so that is the end of the story.

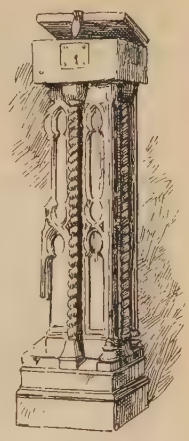
SOME CURIOUS ALMS-BOXES.

IT is written in the records of the session of Tyningham, dated 1644, that George Hay sent seven shillings to be put in the box for the poor, because he had not been able to attend the kirk on the Lord's Day, when his wife was buried, on account of the days being short, and because "the pepill did not conveine so tymeouslie as he expectit." At least three centuries before this mourner sent his little gift to the Tyningham alms-box there were two boxes, called respectively St. Columba's Box and St. Cuthbert's Box, set up in the church on Holy Island for similar offerings, concerning which we may read various particulars in the account rolls preserved in the library of the Dean and Chapter of Durham. In other parts of the country, at different times, many churchwardens have made various entries concerning the alms and donations deposited in boxes, or small chests, placed in churches for the purpose. Over and above these written testimonies from all parts of the kingdom, we have the evidence afforded by the boxes themselves to the effect that the custom of placing these receptacles in churches prevailed over the land for many centuries. They are generally made of oak, and furnished with ornamental hinges and locks. Most frequently they are placed near the principal doorway, but are occasionally to be seen in more conspicuous places, as on a pillar facing the entrance, or on the ledge of a convenient pew. "Remember the Poor' is sometimes carved upon them. One dated 1591, in Bramford Church, has a somewhat longer inscription:—

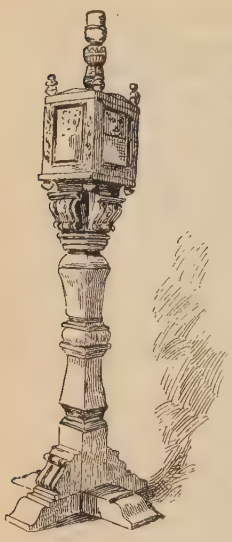
> "Remember the poor: the Scripture doth record
> What to them is given is lent unto the Lord."

They vary in make, from the roughest little coffer fashioned out of a solid block, as in Llanaber Church, to the shapely box raised on an ornamental pedestal, made strong with ironwork that is laid across it, and made to climb up the wall to which it is attached like a broad-leaved creeping plant, as in St. Peter's-in the-East, Oxford. There is an oak alms-box, with a plain lock with a hasp, in Meare Church, Somersetshire, that is raised on a squared shaft ornamented with twisted columns and cusped panels. There is another in Outwell Church, Norfolk, of a more complicated design. It is raised to a convenient height, like a reading-desk, by a stem resting on four feet, and the receptacle for the alms is square, with slits in lions' heads carved on the four panels for the money to be dropped through. There are knobs terminating the four angles, and it is surmounted by a larger one by way of finish. In North Mims Church, Hertfordshire, well known for the numerous sepulchral brasses it contains, and for the net tracery in the greater number of its windows, there is an alms-box dated 1637 affixed to one of the seats in the nave, with the admonition, "Remember the Poor." In Billingham Church, against a pillar in the south aisle, is a carved oak alms-box on a baluster shaft, inscribed, "Remember ye poor, Ano Dom. 1673." More modern examples are sometimes placed on brackets, and have a metal plate attached to the wall above them, with an inscription to the same effect as in the ancient parish church of Alnwick, where there is an exhortation, "Remember the Poor."

There are some interesting associations occasionally found to have accrued round some examples. An alms-box in the Church of St. Beuno, in North Wales, is so strong that it has given rise to a popular saying to the effect, when any impossible task is proposed, that it would be as easy to accomplish it as to break into St. Beuno's chest. It is made out of a solid block of oak, and is furnished with three strong locks. This box was used as the place of deposit of all the money acquired by the sale of such of the calves and lambs belonging to the neighbouring farmers as happened to be born with a peculiar mark upon their ears, which was known as St. Beuno's mark, in virtue of which they were claimed by the



MEARE, SOMERSET.

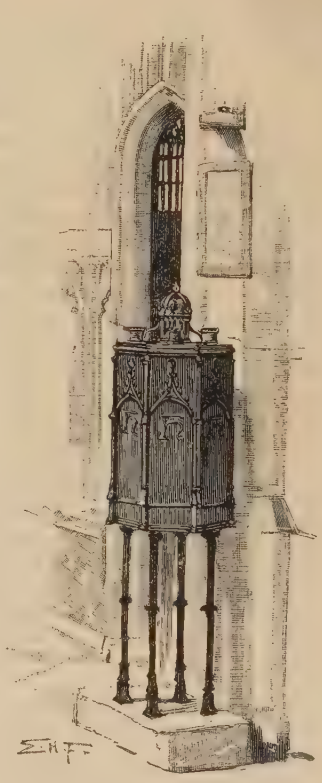


OUTWELL, NORFOLK.

churchwardens as belonging to the saint in question. Probably the keys of the three locks were kept by three different custodians. In an old account-book relating to the parish of Cheddar there are many entries relating to payments for such services as "playinge the orgaines" and "wyppinge the dogges;" and among them is set down, against the date 1666, "p'd for a Latten box to collect money in, 8d.," and "p'd ye Aparitor for bringinge notice of the money collected for London, 6d.," from which we may conclude that the churchwardens went to the expense of a new box to meet the contingency of the numerous collections required in their endeavour to assist the sufferers by the Great Fire. In the churchwardens' accounts for the parish of All Saints', Hereford, there are several entries relating to the "poore man's box"—one is a charge of sixpence "for mendyng the poore man's box," in 1636.

The custom of gathering alms in places of worship is of very long standing. We are told that as the earliest Christians entered their respective churches they gave alms to the poor, who were allowed, or chosen by the ministers, to beg at the doors, just in the same way as the lame man did who was carried daily to the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, and who asked alms of Peter and John. Eventually, evidently, when the number of the poor increased, it became more convenient to collect the necessary alms for them within the building; and in the case of the Church of England it was ultimately ordered that they should be collected at a particular part of the Communion Service, called the offertory, whilst certain portions of Scripture were read that extolled cheerful givers, and mentioned the blessing that was promised to those who remembered the poor and needy. These alms, however, are placed in various receptacles, such as bags, boxes, and dishes or plates, but not in the alms-boxes provided for the reception of promiscuous sums of the kind that have been described. In the large abbeys, in old times, there was generally a room set apart for the distribution of alms. It was called an almonry. It was at first placed near the church, but probably the distraction and disorder of groups of beggars made it expedient to remove them to a distance from it, and these almonries were then placed close to the gates. In the neighbourhood of Westminster Abbey we may still find the memory of this custom in the names of the streets: the Great Almonry, the Little Almonry, and Almshouse Yard.

Looking northwards, we may see there are but few ancient churches that exceed in size and grandeur the abbey church in Hexham, albeit there is no nave to it, but only a choir and transepts. The Scots are accredited with having burnt the nave in 1296. However, it is a magnificent structure as it stands. It looks down upon the Tyne, as it glides through a green country, from its seat on the side of a hill in an environment of houses that have gradually closed it in, and made it a central feature in the ancient town. When all this great work was completed, after many years, and perhaps many delays and reverses of fortune, and after all was accomplished and well ordered, there was an alms-box made with iron fleurs-de-lys fastened upon it, making it strong and rich-looking, which fleurs-de-lys were parts of the hinges of the lid and of the two locks on the front of it. It once stood on a post or pillar, but has now been cut down and carried to the vestry. A sketch of it is given in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-on-Tyne, whereby we may assume it is now safe from being cast away altogether. The latten-box for which the Cheddar churchwardens gave their eightpence in 1666, could scarcely have been compared with this. It is delightful, from a numismatic point of view, to think of the coins that have been dropped into it in old times, any one of which would be a treasure to find nowadays: such as the Plantagenet pieces, the Tudor pieces, the Scottish money, and the Stuart coinage, not to come further down. And then to think of the vanished hands that dropped in the thin, well-worn silver pieces, the occasional gold pieces, the countless

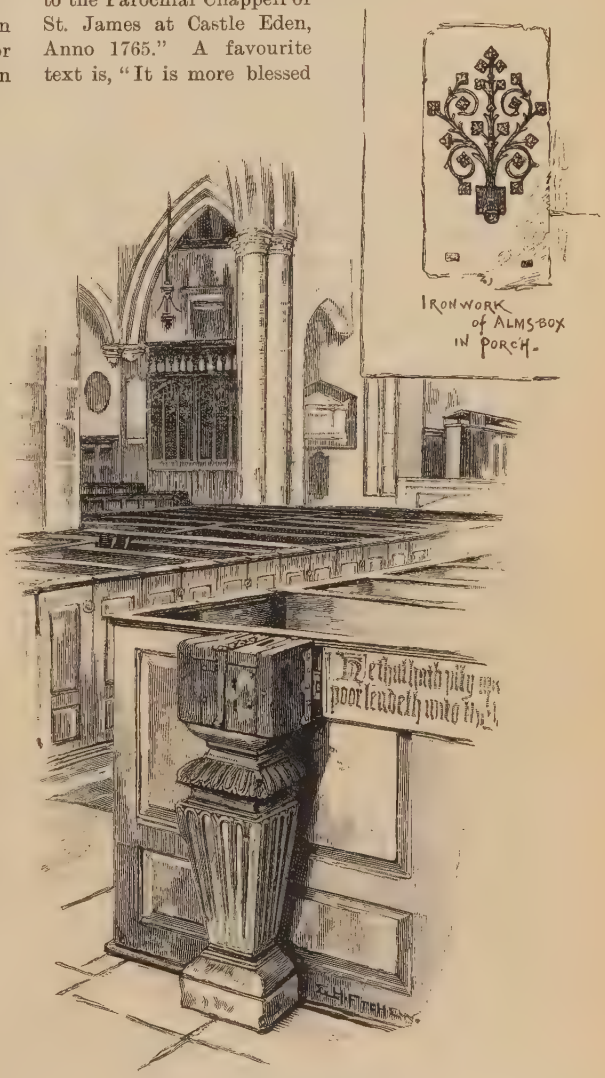


ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR.

coppers with their innumerable devices, English and Scottish, is to picture a host of those who have gone on before us, noble, gentle, and simple, as the various

conditions of mankind were phrased. There came to this box shepherds from watching in the fields, hinds from farm labours, men-at-arms who had seen service, knights and their dames, merchants and their wives, mechanics, peasants, all sorts and conditions of men and women, old and young, rich and poor, time after time, year after year, century after century, from various motives and sympathies; each with an outstretched hand, quiet step, momentary pause, and composed departure. Some, we may assume, gave small coins, that were as great riches to them; others gave much larger sums, that were as naught to them; some gave with their hearts full of happiness; some with their souls possessed with sadness. Love, tender memories, and charity actuated some of the givers; fear, a blind idea of averting evil or of propitiation, may have led others to drop their doles into this box. Its old-world air, its hard, dry, worn appearance, the lavish bit of smith's work, the double lock, are touches that portray for us more than can be put into words.

From the occurrence of the word "alms-basket" in old dictionaries, we may infer that a receptacle for the purpose of collecting items that were to be given away was an article used in some houses to facilitate this important custom. The word alms—or "almesse," as Chaucer has it—is from the Saxon *ælmer:* "whatsoever is freely given to the poor for God's sake." Going back, however, to the collection of money as alms, it is rather curious to note that alms-dishes used for this purpose in churches are frequently enriched with representations of the two spies. Adam and Eve in the garden are also sometimes engraved on these dishes. It is difficult to see the particular appropriateness of these subjects, but probably there is a link between them that is more evident to some than to others. We might have thought of presentments of Dorcas, who was full of alms-deeds, or of Cornelius, who gave much alms to the people, or of those who were laid to ask alms of those who entered into the Temple, or of those who were told to sell all that they had, and give alms and provide bags that would not wax old, as more suitable embellishments; but, as mentioned, it is otherwise. Very few examples of ancient alms-dishes are left to us, owing, of course, to the facility with which those that were old-fashioned or in any way blemished could be melted down and fashioned again anew; but we may frequently read of them in old inventories. Some of those that remain to us are silver, others plated, others brass, and some are of pewter. Some are circular, others oval, and there are square examples. Many bear inscriptions, which either record the name of the donor or of the churchwardens and vicar in whose time they were acquired; to which are sometimes added texts. An example in St. Oswald's Church, Durham, is inscribed: "The gift of John Sedgwicke Esqr., A.D. 1699. If thou hast much, give plenteously. If thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little. To do good is to comunicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Give to the Poor, and Thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven. Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him yt teaches in all good things. If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." A pewter plate in Grindon Church has the simple inscription: "Bought for ye use of Grindon church, 1724, R. C. and J. R. Chuh, W." In Eglingham Church there is an alms-dish inscribed: "Given to the church of Eglingham—Lancet Allgood Esqr. and Mrs. Sarah Ogle of Eglingham, 1751." In Sunderland Church there is a silver example with an inscription equally to the point: "The gift of Jane Gibson to Sunderland Church, Ao. 1726." In Castle Eden Church a saucer-shaped alms-dish has both text and donor's name: "To do good and to distribute forget not, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. The gift of R. Burdon Junr. to the Parochial Chappell of St. James at Castle Eden, Anno 1765." A favourite text is, "It is more blessed



ST. PETER'S-IN-THE-EAST, OXFORD.

to give than to receive." But the inscription most frequently adopted is the simple record of the donor's name, as in the example in Stockton Church, on which is engraved, "The gift of Catherine Jackson, 1744." St. George's Chapel, Windsor, has a Tudor alms-dish

HARBLEDOWN.

of the year 1566, which is thought to be the oldest that is left to us. In this right royal edifice there is a Tudor alms-box too, which is of an octagonal form, raised on four slender supports; and each face of the octagon has a crocketed heading for the royal initial H.

The first mention of the word "alms" in the sacred writings was made by our Lord, and occurs in the Sermon on the Mount: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them." The Great Teacher continued: "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." And He enforced "That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly." Mention was made of alms, again, at the dinner to which the Pharisee invited our Lord, who, it will be remembered, sat down to meat without having first ceremoniously washed. When surprise was expressed at this omission, the sacred Guest explained that the Pharisees made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but neglected to cleanse the inward parts, or their hearts and minds. "Give alms of such things as ye have." He exhorted them; "and, behold, all things are clean unto you." And again, when He addressed that innumerable multitude of people that trod one upon another in their zeal to hear Him, He urged, "Sell that ye have, and give alms." They are referred to also in the Acts of the Apostles several times, the last occasion being when St. Paul was accused by Tertullus, before Felix, of being a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition among the Jews and a ringleader of the sect of Nazarenes, when the Apostle explained in his defence that he came after many years to bring alms to his nation, and offerings.

When we are enjoying the privilege of examining any of the ecclesiastical fabrics left us by our forefathers—whether they are our venerable, mellow, ancient parish churches, or the equally pathetic and appealing early meeting-houses, built in the narrow back streets of our towns and cities by the first unflagging, unflinching Nonconformists, or the later Dissenting chapels—we may add to the interest and profit of our inspection by looking for the alms-box, noting it, and remembering to drop an offering into it in secret.

From an antiquarian point of view, perhaps it would be difficult to find more curious examples than two which somewhat resemble each other, the one being at Harbledown, near Canterbury, and the other at Neen Solars, in Shropshire. These are hollowed out of cylindrical lengths of oak, and are somewhat clumsily strengthened with iron bands, and have iron chains attached to them. They are much smaller than those generally found in churches, being only about four inches in diameter, and are likely to have been worn suspended from the girdle of the person who collected donations in them. The Harbledown example belongs to St. Nicholas' Hospital; and Dean Stanley, writing of the historical memorials of Canterbury, mentions it as having probably received a contribution from the great scholar Erasmus. The other example was formerly kept in a chest in Neen Solars Church, but has now passed into private hands

NEEN SOLARS.

through disregard. Besides the lock, it was secured by two padlocks. In both instances the slit for the money to pass through is very narrow, and cunningly contrived to prevent it from being taken out again. Dear to the hearts of archæologists are these relics, and duly figured in their pleasant and painstaking proceedings.

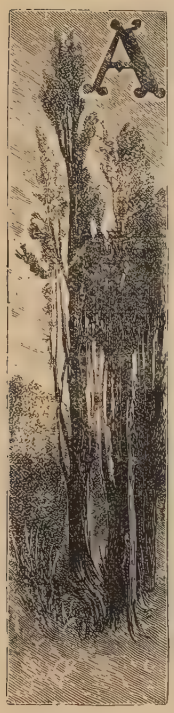
SARAH WILSON.

SUNDAYS WITH THE YOUNG.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR FINLAYSON, AUTHOR OF "THREEFOLD SALVATION," "THE ETHICS OF ATHLETICS," ETC.

LIFE'S CONSECRATION: SANCTIFICATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"—1 Cor. iii. 16.



A YOUNG doctor made a solemn resolve that whenever he was called to visit a sick case on Sunday, he would set apart the money he received for that visit for special work in God's vineyard. The young physician was sadly in need of money when, one Sunday, he was called to visit a traveller who had met with an accident. He remained with the stranger the greater part of the day, and when he left in the evening a cheque was given him for a large amount. The temptation to use a part of this sum for other purposes was great. He consulted with his wife. But they both decided that no portion of this money could be diverted to other uses, since it was consecrated or set apart to a higher service. When in later years the physician became famous and prosperous, he often considered that the secret of his success lay in this resolute setting apart of a definite portion of his substance to the honour and glory of God. Now, we may not all be able to imitate that physician, though even the youngest may breathe his spirit by setting aside a definite portion of pocket-money for God's service. But I want to speak to you of a consecration which is more interesting and more important, because it comes home to us all. We can all take part in the consecration of ourselves, our hearts, our lives, to the honour and glory of God. And it is this truth that I wish to-day to enforce.

Consecration means separation from a common to a holy use. In the Old Testament we read of the consecration or dedication of the first-born, both man and beast, to the Lord; also the dedication of the Levites, of the tabernacle and altar, of fields, houses, walls, and so forth. In the New Testament we are reminded that every single Christian life may be a temple of the living God.

As the Jewish Temple was devoted and consecrated to God, and set apart from every common to a holy use, to the worship of the Most High, so all Christians are separated from the service of sin, self, and Satan, and set apart for the service of God. Christian churches are temples of God. He is present among them by His Holy Spirit. But the truth I wish to impress upon you is this: Every child may be a temple of the living God. Christ by His Spirit dwells in all true believers. For the Apostle says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Then he adds the solemn warning, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17). And lest the people to whom he wrote should forget this important truth, the Apostle again says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). This is a sublime truth, and one of great importance.

Perhaps you ask, "Is it really possible for me to become a temple of the Infinite Spirit?" Yes, it is! If you are a child of God by faith in Jesus as your Saviour, God will consecrate your heart by the presence of his Spirit. I do not mean that your heart can take in the Spirit in the fulness of His being. "The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him," much less the soul of a child. But what the Bible means is that He shows His grace and power in your hearts, and that He will do this always. If you have your mother's care and kindness at home, you have her presence. And if you have the holy love and pity of the Spirit at work in you, you have Him at home with you in your hearts. You are under God's holy keeping. He has consecrated and set His seal upon you, making you as His own.

Now, everything has at least two sides, an outside and an inside; so every truth, though essentially one, has at least two aspects, the Divine and the human. When we forget this and mix up or confuse the point of view, we are apt to go astray. Therefore it is important to distinguish between things that differ. There is the Divine side: God consecrates our hearts by His presence. There is the human side: we yield, or surrender, or consecrate our hearts to God. God gives us grace: He expects us to use it. God supplies the power: He expects us to live in the strength of it. God works in: He expects us to work out our own salvation from the little troubles, crosses, and difficulties of daily life. He never asks us to do anything without supplying the power. All God's biddings are enablings. Under the city streets are great mains charged with gas; in our houses pipes are laid on communicating with these gas-mains. Now, at night, when you want light, what should you do? Why, turn on the gas, to be sure. So with us, when in need of power, let us use the power which God's presence in the heart affords. The secret of our failures is that we forget His power, and try to manufacture a power of our own.

If you keep in remembrance what I have written in previous papers, you will save yourself much

"A man picks it up and examines it curiously.' p. 753.

confusion of thought, and avoid a pitfall into which many older people frequently stumble. Justification is one thing; sanctification is another. The one is a completed act; the other is a continuous process. In justification we are accounted righteous; it is outside us. In sanctification we are made holy: it is within us. These truths are, like man and wife, distinct, but they must never be separated. They are found in company. Both come to us as the result of Christ's redeeming work. A justified soul is also a sanctified soul. Christ secures our justification by His life and death; He procures our sanctification by sending His Spirit. I have already shown you how Jesus secured our justification. By His perfect life and by His voluntary death Christ has made a full atonement for our sins. He covers the sin. He cleanses the soul. He clothes the sinner with the robe of His perfect righteousness. That work of Christ is perfect and complete. With it we may not intermeddle. But in the work of sanctification we co-operate with the Holy Spirit. Our sanctification is perfect so far as it is the work of the Holy Spirit, it is imperfect so far as it is our own. In justification Christ gives us a title to heaven; His righteousness is imputed or reckoned to us from without, and is appropriated to us by genuine justifying faith. In sanctification the Holy Spirit gives us a fitness for heaven, consecrating our hearts as His temple, and enabling us to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. In justification there is no difference among believers; the youngest child is justified as completely as the oldest saint, because the justification depends wholly on the finished work of Christ. In sanctification there are great varieties, because it depends on the whole-heartedness of our consecration and co-operation with the Holy Spirit. Justification is the root: sanctification is the fruit. Justification is our acceptance by God. As the fruit bears witness to the tree, so sanctification is a proof of justification. If you remember this, you will not confound justification and sanctification. Christ *for* us is the ground of our acceptance; Christ *in* us by His Spirit is the result of that acceptance. In the one case His relationship is one of *substitution* for us; in the other it is that of *association* with us. If

you wish to know whether you are justified, the one question need be, "Do I believe in the Lord Jesus?" If you want to know whether you are sanctified, ask yourself, "What is my life? Am I consecrated?"

If you visit Woolwich Arsenal, you may see huge blocks of iron or steel waiting to be moulded in the furnace and made into guns for our army and navy. Here is a block of iron; it is black, cold, and hard. But place it in the furnace, and it becomes white with heat, and soft. Take it out of the furnace, and it will gradually return to its former condition. So is it with your heart and mine. The natural condition of our hearts is hard, black, and cold. But in Christ they are in the furnace of love, and this is changed. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17). The old nature is not destroyed. But a new nature is implanted. Therefore we must abide in Christ, or the old nature will reassert itself, and our hearts will become, like the iron withdrawn from the furnace, hard, black, and cold. The Holy Spirit applies the redeeming work of Christ to our souls. He breathes upon the heart. He subdues its enmity. He humbles its pride. He removes its unbelief. He sanctifies its affections. He transforms us from the power of Satan unto God. He works our regeneration, or new birth. This is an instantaneous communication of Divine life to the soul. It is a change of nature. It is not capable of degrees; no one is more or less regenerate than another. In this sense the Divine consecration, or regeneration, or sanctification, is a complete act. But the Holy Spirit, having regenerated us, daily *renews* us. This is a process. And this work of consecration or sanctification is progressive. It admits of degrees. One may be more sanctified and more holy than another who is yet truly sanctified and truly holy.

The condition of such consecration is union with Christ. Break the connection, and the sanctification ceases. In our spiritual life the essential condition is union with Christ by faith. The new nature is not the source of holiness: the source is Christ. He is "the Life." The power by which we are enabled to overcome sin, self, and Satan is not something hidden or stored up in ourselves, but that constant renewal by the Holy Ghost of fresh streams of grace from the central source of all spiritual life, the Lord Jesus Christ. The office of the Holy Spirit is to testify of Christ; and He never bids us look *inward* to His own operations for peace, but *outward* to Christ. He glorifies Christ. The inward look will bring conviction, but never consolation. For that we must direct the eye of faith to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). Life comes by receiving the Living One, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the starting-point of all life.

In a Persian fable a piece of common clay sends forth a fragrant perfume. A man picks it up and examines it curiously, asking what it is and whence it came with that delicious scent. "I am only a piece of common clay," it replies, "*but I have been near a rose.*" If you live near the Lord Jesus, the "Rose of Sharon," your life will be fragrant with the perfume of His holy character reflected in you, as you daily become more conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

In the dedication of the Jewish Temple the consecration was once and for all. But your consecration is to be a daily, hourly act and attitude. Christ bids us be His by our own voluntary surrender. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. xii. 1, 2). Separate yourself from all that is evil and impure. Let Christ have full possession of your heart. Remember that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Beware how you degrade the body by hurling blows at another. Beware how you degrade the body by gluttony or over-indulgence. Let the eye of faith ceaselessly contemplate the Lord Jesus, and then our constant aim will be to deny our wills, to rule our tongues, to soften our tempers, to mortify our evil passions, to learn patience, humility, meekness, forgiveness, forbearance, charity, and courtesy, and steady continuance in well-doing. And the endeavour will not be in vain, for the Holy Spirit will give the needed power. "Thank God I'm a Christian," said a cabman, "*and my horse knows it, too!*" Is there here no lesson for you and me?

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AUGUST 21ST. THE APOSTLES PERSECUTED.

To read—Acts v. 25—42. Golden Text—Ver. 29.

INTRODUCTION. After the death of Ananias and Sapphira the infant Church grew mightily. Two false professors were cut off, but multitudes joined. They showed their faith in Christ by bringing the sick to be healed in His name. But the authorities, moved by envy, malice, and hatred, were provoked to opposition. All the apostles were imprisoned, by the party of the Sadducees, who believed not in angels; but an angel of the Lord delivered them and bade them again preach in the Temple, which they at once did. Here to-day's lesson begins.

I. THE APOSTLES CHARGED. (25—32.) Notice:

The arrest. Ordered by the high priest.

Carried out by the captain of the Temple.

Made quietly and without violence.

The Court. The Sanhedrim or Jewish Council.

The same that had so lately condemned Jesus.
Had jurisdiction in all ecclesiastical matters.
The charge. Disobedience to decree of the Court.
Preaching in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
Bringing upon the Court the blood of Christ.
The answer. Made by Peter, the spokesman.
God must always be obeyed before men.
It was He who exalted Christ as Prince and Saviour.
They are appointed by Him as witnesses of this.
II. THE APOSTLES DEFENDED. (33—39.) Notice:
Unable to silence, the Jews plot to kill them.
Fear of one man's blood being brought upon them disposes them to kill twelve.
An unexpected defender arises in the Court itself.
Gamaliel, a Pharisee, believer in resurrection.
A learned man and held in high regard by all.
He asks the Court for a private conference.
He suggests deliberation and caution.
Mere pretenders are sure to come to naught.
As, for example, Theudas and Judas.
Men's counsels and plans will soon perish.
But God's plans cannot be overthrown.
Notice. 1. The apostles' boldness—inspired by God's Spirit, as promised by Christ (St. Mark x. 20).
They trusted in God and were not ashamed.
2. Gamaliel's prudence averted a murder.
III. THE APOSTLES BEATEN. (40—42.) *See* Deut. xxv. 3 for the law as to scourging.
Scourged like Christ, their Master, though innocent.
Condemned to silence as to His name.
How did they bear their sentence?
With *joy*, in being counted worthy to suffer.
With *disdain*—they preached as before.
For a time their enemies left them alone.
LESSONS. 1. *Be brave* to do right *for* Christ.
2. *Be patient* to suffer wrong *with* Christ.

AUGUST 28TH. THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR.

To read—Acts vii. 54—60; *viii.* 1—4. *Golden Text—vii.* 60.

INTRODUCTION. Jerusalem now full of Christians. Amongst them many widows, to whom daily distribution was made. Some complaints being made, the apostles appointed seven men, afterwards called deacons, to attend to this matter. One of them, Stephen, proved very successful also in preaching in the Jewish synagogues. This roused the opposition of the Sanhedrim. A charge was made that he had spoken blasphemous words against Moses and God, in that Christianity would involve a change of the whole Jewish law. Being placed on his trial, he made a defence showing how Moses himself witnessed of Christ, and that the ceremonial law was only intended to last for a time. He finally accused the chief priests of having murdered Christ, the Holy One of God. At this point he was interrupted, and a rush was made upon him.

I. STEPHEN STONED. (vii. 54—60.) Notice:
The contrast between Stephen and his enemies.
They—full of anger and irritation at his words.
Gnashed their teeth with rage against him.
Stopped their ears to hear no more.
Rushed upon him with one accord. (Deut. xiii. 9.)
Hurried him outside the city. (Lev. xxiv. 14.)
The witnesses casting the first stone at him.
He—full of the Holy Ghost and faith.
Bore their insults with patient meekness.
Saw Jesus standing ready to help him.
Cried aloud to Him to receive his spirit.
Prayed for forgiveness for his murderers.
Calmly fell asleep to rest in Paradise.
Notice how he copied his Master in his death.
He suffered patiently; prayed for his enemies; committed his soul to God.
II. STEPHEN BURIED. (viii. 1—4.)
Lamented by the Church—a great loss.
Carried by devout men to burial.
Persecution bursts out with fresh vigour.
Causes Christians to be scattered far and wide.
But the word of God to be preached everywhere.
LESSONS. 1. *From his life.* Held in honour.
Chosen at once for honesty and integrity.
Given subordinate work to do for God.
Makes it the stepping-stone for higher things.
Honoured in life—advancing cause of truth.
Honoured in death—first Christian martyr.
2. *From his death.* Good brought out of evil.
The blood of the martyrs the seed of the Church.
For him, a crown of glory; for the Church, growth—the Gospel carried far and wide.
For all—an example how to suffer and how to die.

SEPTEMBER 4TH. PHILIP PREACHING AT SAMARIA.

To read—Acts viii. 5—25. *Golden Text—Ver.* 8.

INTRODUCTION. Last lesson showed how the Christians were scattered at Stephen's death, only the apostles remaining in Jerusalem; also how they carried the Gospel with them. To-day read of Philip's preaching in Samaria.

I. SAMARITANS BELIEVE. (5—13.) Notice:
The place. Samaria in middle of Palestine.
Lying between Judæa and Galilee.
People unfriendly with the Jews. (St. John iv. 9.)
Worshipped in their own separate Temple.
Visited by Christ—woman believed.
The preacher. Philip one of the seven deacons.
Therefore prominent person at Jerusalem.
Would be singled out for persecution.
This the cause of his going to Samaria.
His work. Preached Christ to the people.
Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension.
Also worked signs as proofs of his mission.
Evil spirits cast out, paralytics healed.
THE EFFECT. Great joy in the whole city.
People in large numbers believed.
Openly professed faith by baptism.
Simon Magus the sorcerer baptised also.
II. SAMARITANS RECEIVE HOLY GHOST. (4—17.)

Tidings of all this reach Jerusalem.
Apostles Peter and John sent down to visit.
What do they do?
Pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
Lay their hands on them as a sign and means of God's blessing.
As Christ had on little children. (St. Mark x. 16).
Result. The Holy Ghost given.
III. SIN OF SIMON MAGUS. (18—25.) Who was he?
An old inhabitant of Samaria.
Professed to be "the great one" expected to come.
Influenced the people by magical arts.
Sought baptism as being the popular thing.
Hoped to keep up his influence by professing to be a Christian.
Offered money for supernatural powers.
Indignantly rebuked by St. Peter.
Declared to be still in Satan's bonds.
Told to repent of his sacrilegious sin.
Professes sorrow—asks apostles' prayers.
What was his sin?
1. *An insincere profession.* His heart was not right with God.
2. *An unholy motive* for seeking holiest gifts.
Spiritual blessings not to be bought.
3. *An incomplete repentance.* Gave no evidence of a changed life.
LESSONS. 1. To believe in Christ gives joy.
2. God's Holy Spirit given in answer to prayer.
3. False profession brings no blessing.

SEPTEMBER 11TH. PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN.

To read—Acts viii. 26—40. *Golden Text—St. John iii.* 36.

INTRODUCTION. Philip the evangelist (or messenger of glad tidings) not yet finished his work. Had been very successful in Samaria. Is now to teach a proselyte on his way home from Jerusalem.

I. THE RELIGIOUS STUDENT. (26—35.) Who was he?
An official of high rank in Ethiopia, in Africa.
"First lord of the treasury" under Candace, the Queen.
A proselyte of the Jewish religion.
Had been to Jerusalem to one of the three feasts.
Was reading aloud in his carriage as he returned.
Philip directed to go on the high road at Gaza.
Obeyed at once without hesitation.
Waited, watching for what should happen.
Caravan approaches; he is bidden to join it.
Hears the eunuch read; asks if he understands; is invited to sit within.
What was the eunuch reading? Isaiah liii. 7, 8.
Had heard in Jerusalem of a new sect who believed in Jesus as the Messiah.
Could these words possibly refer to Him?
So Philip taught him the truth about Jesus.
How did Christ fulfil this particular prophecy?
He was meek and gentle as a lamb.
He had not answered again when reviled.
He had not had a fair judgment (ver. 33).
No one had come forward to speak for Him.
But He was both Prince and Saviour (ver. 31).
II. THE BAPTISED CONVERT. (36—40.)
Picture the student and teacher conversing.
The one eagerly learning the truth in Jesus.
The other gladly teaching the new convert.
Baptism has been spoken of—they reach water.
What does the eunuch ask?
May he be baptised at once?
What is the answer? Sincere faith needed.
So the eunuch makes open profession of faith, and is baptised in the presence of his retinue.
He continues his journey home full of joy.
Philip is caught away by the Spirit.
LESSONS. 1. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."
2. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
3. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved."
4. From Philip. "The Lord ordereth a good man's goings."

WANTED: A DOG.

THERE was no doubt about it, Will Tait did want a dog very badly indeed. Just then there was a fancy for dogs abroad, among the shoeblack brigade. Tom Sawyers had one, a sharp black terrier who followed his master through the day's work, and was a fruitful subject of conversation with every customer who stood to get his boots brushed. Jim Turner had another, an ugly little creature it was, and of no earthly use or pleasure to anyone; even Jim himself never referred to him without some kind of apology. Two other boys joined, and went shares in a grey mongrel, and altogether Will felt that it was a duty he owed to himself, to get a dog at once.

He had seen exactly the kind of dog he wanted, too: a white one with black ears; it belonged to the telegraph-clerk at the goods station up the road. Will had been trying to bargain with him for the last three weeks; the telegraph-clerk began by demanding six shillings, then he had come down by sixpenny stages to half a crown, but lower than that he would not go, and as Will had but eightpence, the proceedings had come to a dead lock.

He was thinking it over as he took his lunch on the

dock wall, and in truth he did not quite see where the balance was to come from. Still, he had never failed in anything he set his mind to yet; and if that clerk would not come down, it was clear that the half-crown must be made up somehow.

"It's one and tenpence, twenty-two pennies," he observed half-aloud; "if I stop a bit later, and begin a bit sooner, and don't miss a single chance, I might —I might get it in a fortnight; it's only twopence a day, after all. There's one customer now."

A stream of passengers was coming up from a ferry-boat, and one big, portly old gentleman was vigorously signalling to him. One of his boots was in the highest state of polish, but the other had evidently dipped into a pool of lime or whitewash, which had caked into a solid crust about it. Will looked down at his brushes rather doubtfully.

"Never mind your brushes, my lad; look at my boot. I'll give you threepence if you make it like the other in less than three minutes; I want to catch a train."

Will brushed with right good will. Threepence for one boot was something more than fair pay; he got through his task in the allotted time, and made the boot as presentable as its neighbour. The gentleman regarded it approvingly, his head a little on one side.

"You have done that very well, my lad; it was some horrible compound for whitewashing the cattle-sheds, and I stepped right into it. There's your threepence; good-day."

He hailed a passing hansom, and drove off at a rattling pace. Will watched him out of sight, then he looked at his fee before he put it into his pocket: one penny, twopence—— And there he stopped in utter amazement: sandwiched between the two pennies was a glittering half-crown, new and fresh from the Mint! Never in all Will's business career had such an event befallen him before.

"Why, if he hasn't gone and given me half a crown!" he cried to Tom Sawyers, who was standing close by, the black terrier at his heels.

Tom whistled. "You're in luck's way to-day, and no mistake! I wish somebody would do as much for me."

"Yes, if he'd meant it; but he didn't. I'll have to give it him back again," said Will, turning it over and over in his palm.

"Give it him back!" echoed Tom derisively; "how are you going to catch that cab with all the start it's got? You're a bigger duffer than I took you for, Will Tait."

"Who was talking about catching the cab?" retorted Will; "he's safe to be coming across the ferry another day; and it's easy enough to see him—he's not that little."

"I'd be very sorry to go hunting after any old gentleman," returned Tom scornfully. "Money's surely cheap your way. I thought you were wanting that dog, too?"

Will's face grew suddenly scarlet. He had wanted it, and here was the exact sum. Why—why, that very night he might be the proud possessor of that black-and-white dog; and there wouldn't be another like it in the whole brigade. That old gentleman ought to have been more careful; people had no business to go making mistakes of that kind; somebody ought to teach him a lesson, and it would serve him just right if he, Will, were to keep it.

Will thrust the half-crown deep into his pocket and shouldered his brushes. "I can't stop here talking all afternoon," he said shortly; "there's two boats missed already."

Something was wrong with Will all that next day. Generally he was the brightest, merriest lad in the whole company; to-day he glowered about without a civil word for anyone. He kept a keen watch upon the coming and going of the boats, too, but it was from behind a convenient hoarding, whereas his usual post was in the very front rank of the brigade, and his brethren of the brush only reaped what he could not gather up himself.

It was not the weather that was at fault: the sky was blue as summer, and the sunshine made rippling pathways of light on the water; but there was little light or blueness about it to Will. Everything was shrouded under a cloud of uneasiness and discomfort. Once that afternoon he caught a glimpse of a portly figure in the distance, a perfect stranger, but it sent him with a beating heart into hiding under an archway, till he was quite sure of that fact, for Will had lapsed into the crooked path; he was going to keep that half-crown, he was going to buy the dog and get the desire of his heart a full fortnight before he had dared to hope for it, and he ought to be feeling particularly happy and jubilant in consequence; but somehow he was not. He meant to go and see that telegraph-clerk this very evening. There wasn't any necessity now for working later; and it might be just as well to miss a boat or two, in case—— He did not care to finish that sentence even to himself.

Round to the goods station he sauntered accordingly, but at the very gate he came to a full stop. Some waggons inside were being loaded with bales of esparto grass. Will surveyed the process listlessly through the bars—his head ached, his feet ached, he ached inside too. What was the use of going in about the dog now? If he got it to-night, he didn't believe it would be a bit of pleasure. He didn't like skulking in corners out of sight as he had done to-day. If he had to go on doing that, he might as well have no dog at all. Will suddenly dragged his cap over his brows and determined to go home to bed and end the day as quickly as possible.

And if the day had been bad, the night was still worse. Will got up at daylight, resolved to stand it no longer; not for all the half-crowns or all the dogs in the city would he go through another season like this. It was the very first time he had ever tried to keep what did not belong to him, and it should be the last—the game was not worth the candle. If the old gentleman came by to-day, he should have that luckless half-crown back; if not, he should have it to-morrow, or the next day, or any day that he chose to put in an appearance. Will had done with it, and if Tom Sawyers made any more remarks about it—well, so much the worse for Tom Sawyers.

Will was himself again. He retook possession of

his front row, and promptly ousted one or two upstarts who had invaded his territory on the strength of yesterday. He whistled over his work as gaily as if he had not a care in the world. There was no hiding under arches to-day, no fears and misgivings at the sight of any portly figure.

"He was thinking it over as he took his lunch on the dock wall."—*p.* 755.

"Have you come in for a fortune?" Jim Turner asked him rather enviously as the day wore on.

"No, but I 'm going to get rid of one," laughed Will. "Never you want to be rich, Jim; I've tried it, and it's no joke, I can tell you."

A good many gentlemen were going to and fro from the ferry-boat, but not the one Will was watching for. That was Wednesday; Thursday and Friday it was the same story; but Saturday morning, as Will was taking an early lunch, perched on his favourite wall, came a welcome interruption.

"Now, young man, are you too busy to touch up my boots again?"

Will was off his perch in an instant, his face in a glow. "Oh, I've been looking out for you every day since Wednesday; you went and gave me this last time."

Will was tugging at his pocket as he spoke. He dragged forth a piece of rag, with the half-crown carefully tied up in a corner of it.

The gentleman looked down at it in some surprise. "Oh, it was you that got it, was it? I knew I 'd paid it away somewhere."

Will brushed away cheerfully. The gentleman stood thoughtfully turning over his recovered property. "You did not think of keeping it for yourself, I suppose?" he inquired curiously. "I couldn't have proved that you had it."

Will's head bent a little lower over the boot on his block. "Yes, I did think of keeping it the first day," he answered; "not after. It was the worst day I ever had."

"I 'm glad to hear it," was the comment; "and how did you propose to spend it—cakes?"

"Cakes!" echoed Will indignantly: "I was going to buy a dog with it."

"A dog!" echoed the gentleman in return. "What possible use would that be to you? Dogs are always in the road; and they want feeding too."

"Yes!" Will admitted that; but this dog was different from all others. "Why, he knows me quite well already, just from going past the doors, and he understands every word I say to him, the same as if he could talk."

"Then by all means go and buy him at once. He can't be dear at that price," laughed the gentleman, suddenly dropping the half-crown on the block. "There, that includes to-day's polish, my lad, and twenty-nine others if I like to claim them. We'll make no mistake this time."

The goods station closes at two o'clock on Saturdays. At three minutes to two Will dashed through the gates. At one minute past, he came out in triumph with his black-and-white dog beside him.

SARAH PITT.

ARE THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE IMPROVING?

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR W. GARDEN BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

"THANKFUL for small mercies" is a phrase which has usually in it more of sarcasm than of grace. The truth, however, is there is nothing we have more cause to be thankful for than small mercies. The happiness of life depends far more on a multitude of little mercies than on a small number of big ones. In fact, big mercies without some of the little ones are often but a disguise of misery. Wealth, station, distinction of every kind, without a happy home, a patient temper, and a loving heart, what are they but so many forms of mockery? But given a happy home, a genial disposition, regular work, sufficient means, with daily health and strength, and God's blessing on all—life, in such a case, will flow serenely and joyously, albeit without a trace of splendour or a particle of wealth.

It is really very wonderful to think of our common daily mercies. What a marvellous blessing is sound sleep! Every hour of it is precious, and a night's unbroken repose is golden indeed. Bear witness, ye men and women of fevered brain and restless nerve, who spend night after night and hour after hour wooing the spirit that will not come near you! And what a mercy it is to enjoy each morning and throughout the day the blessings of peace, the comforts of home, the affection of family and friends, with comfortable clothing and wholesome food, and it may be the smiles and mirth of children, the profit of books, and the pleasure of music and song! Crosses and losses will come from time to time in the most favoured lot, but few thoughtful people can look back on life and its daily mercies without thinking of the Psalmist's words: "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."

And what if our Heavenly Father is constantly adding to the amount of these daily mercies, and making the conditions of life more favourable by means of them? That this process is going on in our country on the whole we cannot for a moment doubt; nor can we doubt that it has been going on from century to century and from age to age. We know there is some apparent reason for a contrary opinion, but we do not think that it can be established. When attention is fixed on the very poorest class of our people—the slum population of our great cities, the victims of the sweating system, the men and women from whose lips comes "the bitter cry of outcast London"—we are prone to think that misery like theirs was never known in our past history, and that it is the outcome of a vicious system that always tends to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Now it is true that misery in former days was not of the same horrid type as it is sometimes now, except in times of plague and famine, but it can be shown from hard facts that in past ages life was very poor indeed to the great mass of the people, that there has been a steady rise in the condition of the labouring class, especially during the reign of Queen Victoria, and that the proportion of those who are in the direst poverty (leaving out of account the victims of strong drink) is less to-day than it was half a century ago. Let us take, for example, the great middle class of this country. Can it be doubted that the conditions of their life are enormously advanced from what was true of a similar class two hundred years ago, or that they are much superior in many ways to their condition when Queen Victoria ascended the throne? If any are uncertain of this, we ask their attention to some matters of fact which, as we believe, place our contention beyond dispute, and call for fresh tributes of thankfulness to the Author of all our mercies.

In Macaulay's History of England there is an interesting comparison of the social condition of England about the time of the restoration of Charles II., and the time at which Macaulay wrote. Many facts are brought to light which give a startling account of things at the earlier period. An agricultural labourer, we are told, on the authority of Sir William Petty, was by no means in the worst state who received for a day's work fourpence with food or

eightpence without food, and four or five shillings a week without food was about the ordinary wage. From a register kept at Greenwich Hospital of wages paid to workpeople there, it appears that in a hundred and twenty years the bricklayer's earnings had risen only from half a crown to four and tenpence, and the plumber's from three shillings to five and sixpence. Animal food was cheaper in those days than it is now, but the taste of it was hardly known to the working class. King, in his "Natural and Political Conclusions," reckoned that of the 880,000 families that then constituted the population of England, one-half ate animal food but twice a week, and the other half not at all, or at most but once a week. As to the number of persons who were in receipt of pauper relief, it is estimated by some authorities so high as to be incredible. According to King and Davenant, out of a population of 5,500,000, 1,330,000 were either paupers or beggars. One-tenth is a large proportion of the population at the present day to be in receipt of relief from poor funds, and in prosperous times the proportion is much smaller.

But let us limit our attention to the change in earnings between the accession and the jubilee of the Queen. We avail ourselves of an essay by Mr. Robert Giffen in Mr. Humphry Ward's interesting volumes, "The Reign of Queen Victoria." According to the authorities quoted there, the average increase of wages is fifty per cent. More than that, the proportion of high-class or skilled labourers to that of unskilled is much larger than formerly, and the amount earned by them is also much higher; but we see more clearly how much the conditions of life are improved when we examine the consumption of particular articles. The consumption of sugar in the fifty years has gone up from about fifteen to seventy pounds a head, while that of tea has increased from one and a quarter to four and three-quarter pounds per head. In houses, there is an extraordinary improvement. Fifty years ago the annual value of houses above £10 rental was £12,603,000; at the jubilee it was £57,000,000. No doubt it is said that the increased cost of house-room goes to neutralise the increasing wages. If men have to pay twice as much rent as formerly for their houses it simply absorbs so much of their additional earnings. But, except in the case of that miserable class who have neither cash nor credit, and who lie at the mercy of the middlemen that rack-rent the poor, increased house-rent usually implies increased accommodation, and this implies a great addition to the conditions of comfortable living. Another indication of our improved condition on the whole is the decrease of pauperism. Against this, however, we must set what seems a well-ascertained fact—the increase of insanity. There is more strain on the brain and the nerves than there was in the quieter times of our fathers, and a larger number of persons succumb, either for a time or for life. Probably this is due to preventable causes—the haste to be rich, the neglect of the wise counsel, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." A portion, too, of the increased insanity is, no doubt, due to the greater vigilance of the authorities. The half-witted creatures that used to go about the country, and were often so tormented by thoughtless boys, are seen no more on our streets or our highways.

But to come to the slums. The slums are mainly the result of the massing of the population in great centres—the growth of our large cities; and the growth of our large cities is due mainly to the new conditions of industry introduced by steam. Everything can now be done cheaper when it is done on a large scale. Little industries are swallowed up by the huge factories, and the population is drawn away from the country to the town. It is a good thing that this state of things has alarmed our Parliament and men of influence, and set them to consider what can be done to retain young people in the rural districts. We fear the idea of allotments, though good in itself, is too mild an expedient, and that the present tendency will go on till some new power is discovered for working machinery that will make production as cheap on a small scale as on a large.

But, however they have originated, the slums exist, and in the slums there is often led a life more debased, more miserable, more repulsive to every feeling of humanity than existed probably in any former period of our history. And this is really the skeleton in the house, the great blot on our civilisation, the lamentable exception to our progress, the dead fly in the pot of ointment that makes our social condition send forth a very stinking savour. However the life of the slums may have come to exist, there is no doubt it is grievously aggravated by the curse of drink. If the slum-life creates the irresistible appetite for liquor, the liquor which is so copiously supplied aggravates tenfold the miseries of the slum life. But for the drink which multiplies victims so many-fold, and makes the confusion so much worse confounded, Christian benevolence might cope with all the want and misery that are inevitable, and bring it within manageable compass. It is drink that baffles all the schemes of Christian philanthropy, education, and civilisation, and all the appliances of recreation-grounds, picture-galleries, settlements, schools and missions; until that demon be exorcised, humiliation and defeat must attend all our efforts to free our country of a festering sore to which there is hardly a parallel in any other part of the globe.

There are other points of view besides those already touched on from which we may discern the improvement that has taken place in the conditions of life. Let us glance at the department of law and justice. It was before the accession of Victoria that the great reform took place in the penal laws, especially those which dealt with the punishment of death. But so late as 1833, Lord Justice Bowen tells us, in his contribution to Mr. Humphry Ward's book, a poor little boy of nine pushed a stick through a broken window, and pulled out some painter's colour, worth twopence—an act of burglary according to the then law, for which he was sentenced to death. The first year of Her Majesty's reign introduced a series of Acts, lessening the number of capital punishments and graduating the others. The only capital crimes now are murder, treason, piracy with violence, and setting fire to Her Majesty's ships, dockyards, arsenal and

naval stores. While the population of the country has nearly doubled, the number of executions has not increased at all.

But the conditions of most men's lives are more affected by the ordinary administration of the law, which in recent years has been both simplified and accelerated. Lord Justice Bowen acknowledges that Dickens's pictures of the Procrastination Court, and of the manner in which law pleas were carried on generally in his early days, were hardly exaggerated. "His pictures of the Chancery suit of Jarndyce *v.* Jarndyce; of the familiar trial of Bardell *v.* Pickwick; of the debtors' prison, of the beadle, of the constable, of the local justice and of the local justice's clerk, contain genuine history, even if it is buried under some extravagance." The very thought of a Chancery suit used to call up nameless horrors protracted over an endless space. That, we are told, belongs to the past. There is nothing now to match the case so humorously recorded by Sir Walter Scott in his "Antiquary" of the law plea of the landlord of the Hawes Inn, handed down from father to son, that had been three times before the "fifteen," making it a great pleasure to see that they took such pains to arrive at justice!

If we turn our thoughts in a more intellectual direction, and think of our educational facilities and the easy access we now have to the best stores of literature, the contrast between to-day and fifty years ago is still more striking. Hardly a human being, however poor, but can now possess for a few pence a copy of any of the gems of literature that at the beginning of the reign could be got only for as many guineas, or at least crowns. And what variety of periodical entertainment now pours itself upon us at a price which few are too poor to grudge! And the best of all books is available to us for the earnings of an hour or two! Nay, the New Testament in good form can be got for a single penny! Would only that readers would show a little discrimination, and not addict themselves wholly to exciting or absorbing stories that give a momentary pleasure, without in any degree instructing the mind or improving the heart.

Shall we not take notice of the remarkable facilities that have been opened to women, not only for high and even professional education, but for careers of varied utility that break up the old monotony of life, and almost create the gifts for which they afford such scope? If ever there was a blessing for the sick and stricken, surely it was when the miserable old creatures that made our hospitals so dreary were replaced by nurses carefully trained, many of them from refined and educated families, who take charge of the sick as a labour of love, and find a new and delightful happiness in their work of holy ministering; who find that to relieve suffering, and to brighten cheerless lives, brings a pleasure to which the frivolous life of selfish amusement bears no comparison. The days are gone when marriage was the only cherished outlet of female aspiration; and now, many a young heart finds itself at rest with the thought that its energies are to be spent in making the crooked of other lives straight, and the rough places plain, in soothing sorrows and lightening burdens; like the fair Una in the "Faëry Queen," "making a sunshine in the shady place."

Let us glance at one other feature of the time. Travelling has been wonderfully advanced during this reign. The stage coach, the carrier's cart, the canal boat which our fathers knew so well, are traditions of a far-away past. Travelling is not only immensely quicker, but immensely cheaper. The poorest need not despair of seeing the most renowned and the most beautiful scenery of the country. Every year the excursion train carries tens of thousands of our working people to visit gigantic London, or picturesque Edinburgh, or to spend a day in the sequestered Highland glen, or by the glittering, rippling sea. The custom of spending a little holiday away from home becomes more common among the people year by year. Some more adventurous and more saving than their neighbours accumulate their savings, till, under the auspices of a Tourist Guide, they are able to undertake more distant enterprises, and have a peep at Paris or at Switzerland. A youth in the working class needs not now to become a sailor if he is absorbed with the desire to see the world—that was the only method of gratifying his ambition in days of old—a few shillings will now carry him across the Channel, and a few pounds across the Atlantic; and he has only to study the Tourist Guide to learn for what sum he may see other parts of the world—regions which his fathers, in their most extravagant moods, never dreamt of beholding.

We pass over numberless other points of view from which it may be easily seen that, on the whole, the conditions of life are improving. Indeed, the improvement is such that, in concluding this paper, we are carried into a line of thought to which Mr. Gladstone lately gave admirable expression in one of the chapters of "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." In accounting for the extensive prevalence of unbelief in these times, he remarked that probably all was not due to perverted reasoning or immoral tendencies. The present life had become so much more pleasant through its improved conditions, that men had not the same craving for a better. Travel, books, music had brought so many amenities into their life that the world could not be called a waste howling wilderness, nor was there the same inducement to flee from it in search of happiness. The seen and temporal had improved so much that the unseen and the eternal had not the old power.

No reflecting man will say that when the comforts of life increase there is not an increased danger of neglecting the treasures of heaven. It is, alas! a very serious danger. The gifts are often preferred to the Giver. The tokens of love are more thought of than the love of which they are tokens. Men should ever remember that there is serious risk in whatever chills the ardour of the feelings that find their delight in God, or that keeps them from saying with an ever deepening and glowing fervour—

> "But, O Thou glorious Giver of all good,
> Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the sum!
> Take what Thou mayst, without Thee we are poor,
> And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away."

"O Clap Your Hands"

A FAMILY were met for prayers
One cloudy winter's morn,
While in their hearts were worldly cares
That put their faith to scorn.

The servants sat apart and grave,
The children, still as mice,
Pondered what lessons they might have,
Or any stray device.

The father was an anxious man;
The mother oft was sad:
And e'en the little ones began
To see that times were bad.

All save the youngest; she alone
Faced life with brow serene,
As on her mother's lap for throne
She sat, a little queen.

"O clap your hands," the father read.
"And sing unto the Lord."
The baby raised her shining head,
And brightened at the word.

To her the inspired minstrel's psalms
Were no mere idle strain,
For quick her little rosy palms
Were clapped and clapped again.

Instinct with fresh delight to her
Rang the old-time decree;
Her tender heart was all astir
Responding to its glee.

Could we but learn, like children still,
To follow Love's commands,
We too, upborne o'er every ill,
For joy might clap our hands.

P. W. ROOSE.

W. RAINEY

LUNA GORDON'S STEWARDSHIP.

BY MARY HAMPDEN, AUTHOR OF "THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

IF the Gordons were excited by the prospect of entering upon their life at Hillborough Abbey, the inhabitants of Hilldon village were almost as excited at the unusual occurrence of the arrival of strange neighbours.

The late Mr. Godfrey Gordon had not been a particularly desirable neighbour, but rumour had already informed local gossips that the Misses Gordon were amiable, good-looking girls, and their half-brother an artist of some distinction.

Dr. Firth was the first inhabitant of Hilldon who set foot within the Abbey walls. He did not expect to enjoy the visit, and disliked making first advances, but expediency settled the question for him. In Weirleigh, another village equally situated with Hilldon as regarded nearness to the Abbey, resided another medical practitioner, for whom Douglas Firth possessed amiable but supreme contempt. It would not be fair to allow the Gordons to be deluded into patronising "that Weirleigh fellow," as the younger doctor disrespectfully called his brother-worker. Neither could Dr. Firth afford to keep in the background.

"There's no help for it," he said to himself regretfully. "Nothing is done in this world without push. Well, I've three or four good motives for one selfish one. Perhaps I can get these people to take some interest in the poor of the parish."

Douglas Firth was just thirty, and a man to be respected. He was hard-working, resolute, and stood firmly by his opinions. The rose-covered cottage where he lived was just outside Hilldon, at the beginning of the Hillborough Lane—a tiny home where his parents had lived before him, and where he had spent the happy holiday hours of his past boyhood.

Usually Dr. Firth had rather too obvious a disregard for personal appearances, but, on the afternoon when he had resolved to pay his visit to the Gordons, he donned a new grey silk tie, and took the trouble to brush his hat.

The face which was reflected in his looking-glass while he struggled with the bow of that grey tie was prepossessing in appearance, but distinctly not handsome. Big features suited his tall figure, but his chin was too square and his mouth too wide; his moustache did not hide his lips, and he wore no beard. Add to these facts two others, namely, that Douglas Firth had a habit of wrinkling his broad brow into frowns, which left lines and wrinkles behind them; also that his hair was leaving his forehead more exposed than is considered advisable in a man not yet middle-aged—and it is at once apparent why the doctor had no claim to beauty. Yet his face, when he was not frowning, was pleasing because of its open-eyed sincerity, and he could smile sweetly upon occasion, which is more than some handsome men are capable of doing.

With a sigh of dissatisfaction at the task before him, Dr. Firth took the road to Hillborough. Meeting Philip in the avenue, he introduced himself.

"You are Mr. Carroll, I think?"

"Yes."

"I am Dr. Firth."

"It is kind of you to call upon us, doctor. My sisters will be pleased to see you."

"I was afraid you would think me an unmitigated nuisance. Only I came, as the doctor of a place seems to be allowed to call on people who would rather be let alone. It must be a great infliction to have strangers turning up when you have not been forty-eight hours in the place."

His rueful, apologetic expression was so humorous that Philip could not repress a laugh, in which the doctor joined with perfect good-nature.

"It may seem amusing to you," he said, nodding towards the house, "but what will your sisters think about it? If you think they would rather not be disturbed, I—I can easily come again another day."

"I cannot let you go away directly we have met. Why, doctor, you evidently don't know what curious creatures girls are. My sisters are longing to make the acquaintance of our neighbours. They will not forgive me if I do not take you in at once to them."

"In that case I shall have great pleasure in coming," said Douglas, after pausing to consider whether the sentiment was absolutely true.

In the neighbourhood he was spoken of as a "most retiring young man." Some people had even gone the length of calling him "surly," an epithet which he certainly did not deserve. It was left for Philip to discover that mere shyness was the cause of the doctor's abrupt manners.

Yet he was a gentleman in the best sense of the word, that was evident—a frank, honourable, kind-hearted gentleman; but circumstances had kept Douglas out of society. He was used to the aged dames and hard-working labourers who made up the principal part of his patients, but not to the ways and expectations of "smart town-folk," as he considered the Gordons.

Still, he had not spent a quarter of an hour in the cool, old-fashioned drawing-room of the Abbey, before he was thoroughly at his ease. The girls were so charmingly natural and frank, Luna's gentle welcome had been so unmistakably sincere, that he found himself wondering how he could have been so averse from coming.

"You can tell us all about the village and the people, can't you, Dr. Firth?"

It was Luna who made this appeal to his rhetorical powers, and Douglas could not refuse her request. She charmed him, as indeed she charmed most people; and it was a fact that no other girl had ever seemed beautiful to him. He preferred the beauty of expression, which speaks of good and beautiful thoughts, rather than the loveliness which consists in the regularity of a profile or the colouring of a face.

Luna's beauty was both of the more ordinary and of the worthier type; it won sympathy even while it inspired admiration.

So Douglas prolonged his visit into the shady hours of late afternoon, and told the Gordons many things about Hilldon and its people. The girls only saw in him an amusing *raconteur;* but Philip read further. He noticed the care with which the doctor kept his most personal anecdotes of his neighbours free from the slightest tinge of scandal; never telling a tale which could be turned to anyone's disadvantage, making excuses for little follies even while he laughed at them. And the doctor's laugh was worth hearing; it was full of boyish enjoyment and good-nature, a jovial, hearty laugh, which made his hearers laugh with him.

"You must take a great interest in our poor-folk, or I shall be dreadfully disappointed, Miss Gordon; and all of you, indeed, ought to help us," Douglas said, when at last he rose to take his leave. "Oh, I'm not begging for money-aid, but help of other kinds. There's our dispensary. We have started it—the rector and I; but we must do something to keep it going. Concerts, now—what would you say to amateur concerts with small charges for admission? The people would come—I can answer for that."

"Delightful!" cried Luna; "we will do anything in the world we can to help you."

"Luna will sing for you, I know," put in Theo, "and so will Phil!"

"Poor people are always fond of music," said Anne.

"And recitations," Philip suggested.

"Yes," laughed the doctor; "and then there is the medical advantage to be considered. Music is often better than quarts of physic. Old Mrs. Caraway told me once that she always loses her rheumatism while she listens to the music in church on Sundays. Ah, but you don't know old Mrs. Caraway; her age is 'nigh a hoondred,' so she says."

When the doctor had made his farewells, Philip accompanied him down the carriage-drive. Douglas's face was radiant with smiles.

"It's extremely kind of you to give me such a welcome," he said suddenly, as the two men paused before the Abbey gates. "Do you know, I was actually *shy* of your sisters! Ridiculous, wasn't it? but I see only the same familiar faces day after day, year after year; and they all belong to people who have known me for ever so long. Strangers don't come to Hilldon; it's a peaceful little world, which lives its own uneventful life so quietly that it gets overlooked in this age of clamour."

"You must let *our* faces become familiar to you as soon as possible, doctor," laughed Philip; "as for a welcome, you will always find one waiting for you at the Abbey."

"Come and see me; do, Mr. Carroll," said Douglas, heartily grasping Philip's hand. "In the evenings you are nearly sure to find me in, for we haven't much sickness about at present. Come to see my birds—I hope you will. I've a regular colony of birds; they keep loneliness out of the house. I shall be regularly disappointed if you don't come; and, of course, you are artistic! Well, I have some queer old etchings and engravings which I've picked up from time to time; they might interest you. You see, I must offer some inducement to persuade you to come."

"I assure you, you do not need to offer any other than your—may I say friendship?"

"By all means! I'm most sincerely glad you're going to live in Hilldon."

It was not long before Philip accepted Dr. Firth's invitation. He found the owner of Rose Lodge as predisposed towards good-fellowship as he had been on that day of first meeting.

"I always know directly I set eyes on a man whether I am going to like him or not," Douglas explained; "in the same way I often have a shrewd suspicion when I am going to *dis*like a man; but that suspicion has to be stamped down. Friendship, now, friendship which springs into being all at once, is a sure indication of sympathetic natures."

Certainly, the friendship between young Carroll and the energetic, enthusiastic, cheerful doctor of Hilldon grew apace. Before a week was over, Philip had grown quite accustomed to walking after dinner across the fields for a chat with Douglas Firth; and the more he saw of the man, the more he liked him. The "scholar, simple in his tastes," the "artist, with an eye for ever seeking light," found that their views of life and all their more serious beliefs agreed. Argument upon minor subjects gave a zest to their frequent conversations, and taught them to respect each other's opinions.

So three weeks passed; and, by the last few days of golden July, Sir Lucian Fane and his daughter came down to Fanleigh Hall.

CHAPTER VIII.

August found the Gordons settled in their new home.

"I wonder now how we can have borne the miserable old life!" Luna said. "Do you remember how stifling the heat used to seem in that dingy studio? Theo, we must enjoy ourselves now as much as we possibly can, so as to get the recollection of the past days out of our heads."

"Yes, Lu. Well, we couldn't wish for a better home than this dear old Abbey."

Luna and Theo were nearly always together now, and Philip was growing not a little anxious about them. It seemed as though that which he had feared was in danger of coming true: that Luna would be spoiled by her suddenly gained prosperity.

Beside the regular income which Mr. Gordon had left behind him, there was also a large sum invested in Consols. This Luna divided and settled upon her two sisters. She was generous; she would have made

half her fortune over to the half-brother, of whom she was so fond; but Philip refused to benefit by her wealth, more than by staying as her guest for a time as yet undefined.

Since the Fanes had come to Hilldon, Luna and Theo had led a veritable butterfly existence. Gwendolen was benefited by their constant companionship, and roused out of her loneliness; but the others seemed to have forgotten the wise old saying which declares "all play" to be worse than "all work." And this was not for want of hearing it. Mrs. Wooley, now rejoicing in the position of housekeeper at the Abbey, had not given up her habit of uttering words of wisdom for the advantage of her "young ladies."

"They was my charge when they was babies, an' pretty nearly ever since," she would say, "an' I don't love 'em any the less now they're grown up an' come in for money."

So Luna often heard a caution that "a bit of honest work's better than pounds of sweetmeats," but the warning produced no effect.

Coming into the girls' own sitting-room one afternoon, and finding them bending over the writing-table with their heads pressed close to each other, Philip guessed that there was some project in the air.

They both looked up with a smile as Philip entered the room.

"Where is Anne?" he asked.

"Oh, Anne's grubbing in the conservatory as usual," Luna answered merrily; "she has got some special favourites there—sensitive-plants I think they are—and she goes to their society as a rest from our frivolous conversation. Now, Phil dear, you have come just in time to give us your valuable advice! We are going to give a little dinner."

"Won't it be fun!" asked Theo, counting upon the brother's sympathy. "Only there's some difficulty about settling it quite right. I've drawn up the *menu* out of the cookery-book, and Anne will manage something remarkable in the way of floral decoration, but we are puzzled how to arrange about the guests."

"A dinner!" Philip looked from one to the other in amazement. "I must own that you alarm me, Luna. Don't you know that young girls are not in the habit of giving dinners? I have been thinking that you need an elderly companion to keep you all in order, but I had no idea that you contemplated entertaining on a large scale."

"Oh, we don't want any elderly companion while we have you, Phil!"

The girls had a hearty laugh at his sober expression.

"We only want to ask real friends," Theo further explained.

"Well, tell me about it."

Luna raised her head, and put on the 'dignified' air which she had adopted with her changed fortunes.

"There is no use in being one's own mistress if one is to be always shackled by conventionality," she said, calmly meeting Philip's amused glance. "We cannot accept invitations without giving some, you know; and I am confident of making the dinner a success."

Philip pondered the matter gravely. He did not approve of the plan, but he saw no way to thwart it. Since Luna's position had changed so materially, she had not shown herself as willing as in the old days to be ruled by his wishes. He might argue—and he determined to do so upon another occasion—but he had no authority over her.

"Tell me whom you were thinking of inviting, Luna."

"Sir Lucian and Gwen, and Mr. Dauncey, the cousin who is staying with them; and then we want one more gentleman. But we could not make up our minds whether we ought not to ask Mrs. Rose. She was very kind to us when we were there the other day."

"If we do ask her, there will have to be *two* more men," said Theo; "and I don't see how we can do that unless—oh, I know, Lu!—the rector and Dr. Firth!"

"Ten in all," said Philip. "I think you might have selected a smaller number for your experiment in dinner-giving."

"Phil! you are counting ourselves! There will only be six guests."

"If you had asked Miss Fane and Firth only, I could have found no fault with the proposal."

"It would look rude to leave out the others," was Luna's decisive reply.

Philip, ill-pleased though he was, made no answer. Luna had resolved to have her own way, that was evident, and all he could do would be to make the whole affair as reasonable as possible by his utmost aid. Only such entertainments should not become the rule at the Abbey if he could prevent it. He determined to speak plainly to his sister, showing her the foolishness of the pretentious style of her hospitality.

It all seemed ridiculous to him—the pompous nature of the invitation cards, the elaborate *menu*, the importance which the girls attached to their preparations.

All Luna's invitations were accepted, and the important event took place.

When Philip saw the elaborate costume which his sister donned out of respect to her guests, he was amazed. That dressmakers had been going backwards and forwards between London and Hillborough, he knew, but he had not been prepared for the metamorphosis in Luna's appearance.

She was beautiful—he recognised her beauty still, though he admired it less for the care with which she had tried to form a setting for it.

The prevailing tone of her dress was grey—a sombre tint, it is true—because it was not more than a month since her uncle's death; but Luna's own bright colouring of hair and skin helped to produce a generally radiant effect. Theo had done her best to equal the "attractiveness" (?) of her sister's costume, and appeared in white and mauve.

"Fashion-plates!" thought Philip with a sigh. He was a man, so could not perceive the exact points of difference between these dresses and those which the girls had worn at home in the dingy old house at the far north end of the Marylebone Road, but he had liked the latter. The former had no grace in his eyes.

Sir Lucian charmed the girls by his courtly manner.

He regarded them kindly because they were his daughter's friends, and were the cause of her gayer spirits. The rector, the benevolent, white-haired gentleman who was the hero of the parish, was easily pleased by any effort made for his entertainment. Dr. Firth was of opinion that Luna Gordon was the type of perfect beauty, and grew heartily, almost boisterously happy, in the light of her smiles. Mrs. Rose was one of those amiable elderly ladies who make a point of petting young ones. And Gwendolen —what of Gwendolen?

Directly Philip saw the tall fair girl, clad in simplest white, he felt a thrill of sweetest satisfaction. *She* was not spoiled by riches and worldly honours—she showed none of the artificial manner which Luna and Theo were learning to adopt. The friendly pressure with which she returned his greeting handshake was an impulsive but absolutely innocent proof of her liking for him.

"This dear old Abbey!" she said, as he led her up the wide oaken staircase to the drawing-room. "I had not been in it for years until you all came to live here, but I always admired it. The charm of it begins directly the porch is entered; that wonderful sculptured angel over the door seems to express a welcome. I wish Fanleigh were old."

"Perhaps it would interest you some day to explore the closed wings of the Abbey. There are two, I believe, which are furnished, but which have not been inhabited for many years."

"I should greatly enjoy it," Gwendolen answered readily. "We might make up an exploring party."

At the top of the staircase Philip saw the only other guest, who had arrived a few seconds late, and was making profuse apologies to his youthful hostess.

"I was fearfully sorry, you know—upon my word, I really was, Miss Gordon, but——"

Philip paid no more attention to Jack Dauncey's excuses, but passed on to the drawing-room with Gwendolen's hand resting on his arm. Jack himself devoted all his attention to Theodora. Her vivacity kept him amused.

"I'm awfully glad you've come to the Abbey," he said confidentially, before the evening was a quarter over, "because I'm often at Fanleigh, and we are sure to meet continually."

Young Dauncey was only tolerated by Sir Lucian because he was the baronet's nephew. Otherwise, had it not been for the claims of relationship, Jack would not have received those frequent invitations to Fanleigh of which he boasted.

"I went in for the army to please my uncle, Sir Lucian," Jack would explain if questioned; but, as a matter of fact, the uncle had long ago regretted having advised this young fellow to follow a military profession. Jack was not likely to prove a creditable officer unless he gained more wisdom in the years to come than he had done in the twenty-three he had already seen. At present he was idle, impertinent, and pleasure-loving.

When Philip saw young Dauncey's excitable behaviour, and observed how immoderately Theo was laughing at his "anecdotes," he felt that the dinner had been productive of some harm, if only by throwing these two young people together.

But even an entertainment must come to an end at some time, and Luna's guests all took their departure tolerably early, Jack being the last to go.

Philip showed Mr. Dauncey to the door, and returned to his sisters.

"It has been a *perfect* evening!" cried Theo, enthusiastically.

"You must own, Phil, that my experiment has succeeded."

Philip look at Luna's proud eyes and flushed cheeks, and had not the heart to undeceive her. He only said, gravely—

"No one had any reason to feel neglected; you entertain well, as far as that goes, Lu dear; but I think you will own now that it would have been better to have reduced the number of your guests."

Luna shrugged her shoulders, and Theo answered rebelliously—

"Oh, you have such old-fashioned notions, Phil!"

Philip Carroll realised then that it is a serious duty to be responsible for the care of motherless sisters.

CHAPTER IX.

As time passed, Philip's cares increased.

Luna and Theo were constantly at Fanleigh, or making pleasure parties with the object of "seeing the country," and he could not well object to this openly, no matter what his secret thoughts were. Jack Dauncey, by right of cousinship, was the ruling spirit of many of these expeditions, and Theo seemed to regard him in the light of an oracle, so persistently did she repeat his opinions upon all subjects.

However, girls are changeable, and Luna suddenly seemed to grow tired of incessant pleasure-seeking. This alteration in her dated from one September evening when Dr. Firth was at the Abbey.

It was late; Douglas had walked up to Hillborough to consult Philip about some astronomical studies which they were making together, and it had been proposed that they should all go out into the moonlit garden in order to observe a new star which was the subject of discussion.

"You will come, won't you, Miss Gordon?" Douglas asked almost tenderly.

Luna had complained of a headache, and was looking pale and tired. Philip thought she was more like his gentle, winning Luna to-night. She was quiet, too; neuralgia had banished flightiness for the present.

"You will have trouble if you try to explain the stars to me, Dr. Firth; I am sadly ignorant of astronomy."

"That doesn't matter," said Douglas cheerily; "you can't know the name of the new star, because it hasn't got one. There, now—put a light shawl over your head and come out into the fresh night-air."

Luna accepted the arm he offered her, and smiled gratefully into his face as he looked anxiously down at her. It was good to be taken such care of.

"What a pity Dr. Firth is such a fright, when he

has such nice manners." Theo whispered to Philip, as they followed the others across the lawn.

"He has the most genuinely expressive face I have ever seen, because of his large mouth, I suppose; and as his expression is one of the most sincere good-will, what more would you have, foolish girl?"

"It is such a truthful, kind face," said Anne.

"Good? Oh, I've no doubt he is good! He stoops so dreadfully when he is riding on that ungainly old horse of his! You should see him! We met him the other day when we went to see Rexdale old church, and Mr. Dauncey said he looked like a mad bushman. His hat was on one side, and his coat flying off, and he was splashed with mud from head to foot."

Philip frowned. "Mr. Dauncey may be a better horseman, but that is about the only way in which he is Firth's superior."

When Philip, Theo, and Anne came up with Luna and the doctor, the latter had already mounted the great telescope, whose shadow, cast far over the lawn, made a black streak in the silvery path of the moonlight.

It was a glorious night; the sky, between the countless stars, was of a deep azure, and the fir-trees at the back of the old Abbey showed black against it. Moths were abroad, feathery-winged creatures which hovered over the flower-beds, and bats were circling round the towers where the ivy was thickest.

"There, Miss Gordon, you must have the first look at the new star."

Douglas drew back, and Luna bent her eye to the telescope.

When she raised her face again, it was smiling.

"Let me see," cried Theo; "Dr. Firth you ought to compose a sonnet to it!"

"No," said the doctor, shaking his head with a look of whimsical sadness; "I'm not a poet. If I tried to write a sonnet to that star, I should make only a poor imitation of Russell Lowell's verses to 'Midnight.' Do you know them, Miss Gordon?"

"No," said Luna; "I should like to hear them."

"Quote—oh, do quote!" cried Theo.

The doctor quoted—

"'A vague and starry magic
Makes all things mysteries,
And lures the earth's dumb spirit
Up to the longing skies;
I seem to hear dim whispers
And tremulous replies.'"

"Why should the skies be 'longing?' There is peace up there—so we are told."

A thoughtful softness had stolen over Luna's face.

"Perhaps because the Ruler of the Heavens is calling to earth to throw off that 'dumb spirit' once and for ever," answered Douglas. "Or you may find your question answered by this last stanza of the poem, Miss Gordon—

"'O, wild and wondrous midnight,
There is a might in thee,
To make the charmèd body
Almost like spirit be,
And give it some faint glimpses
Of immortality!'"

When the doctor ceased speaking a silence fell upon the little party.

Philip and Anne had both listened intently, and were forming their own judgments of the quotation and the sense it expressed; Theo, uninfluenced by grave thoughts, was experimenting upon the use of the telescope; Luna and the doctor moved away together, both feeling that a serious, perhaps a confidential, conversation would end the discussion which had been general.

Strolling up and down the wide stretch of lawn by the side of the fair girl, Douglas began to speak to her of the beauty of life—work which is worthy; that work which gives purpose and fitness to every action, every unlooked-for occurrence, without which the best existence is but a trivial record of meaningless toil and frittered hours.

Luna listened, and her heart was touched by his earnestness.

Then Douglas told her of his own immediate plans and projects; spoke tenderly of the poor who needed succouring, and ended, to Luna's surprise, by asking her to help him.

"No, not by money," he explained; "I am not begging for that kind of aid, though you will find opportunities for that form of charity if you look about you. I want you to take personal interest in your neighbours, be a friend to them, visit those who are sick, comfort those who are distressed. I am too rough and clumsy to be good in such cases, though they are constantly before me as a doctor."

"But I should not know how to comfort people; I am only a girl!"

"Only a girl! What could you be better than a girl? In this present age, no girl can complain of enforced idleness. She has rare opportunities in any case; whereas you, Miss Gordon—you have a great stewardship to account for."

"That is what Philip says. I will help you, if you will tell me how, Dr. Firth. I thought that poor people would hate being visited."

"Try," said Douglas laconically.

It was from this conversation that the change in Luna's behaviour dated.

"If Lu's going to turn so dreadfully good, we shall not have half such pleasant times!" Theo declared dolefully. "You might give away blankets and beef at Christmas, Luna, as other people do, without giving up your time to paying calls in the back streets where nobody wants you."

Hilldon owned a poor quarter, where lived the poorest classes; labourers from the market-gardens, and mill-hands from the cotton-mills by the river.

But Theo's objections were overruled; Luna, assisted sometimes by Anne, sometimes by her brother, threw herself heart and soul into her accepted scheme of usefulness. The same energy and impulsiveness which had led her to spend every hour of every day in the pursuit of pleasure, now made her an enthusiastic philanthropist.

"If you begin working at highest pressure, you will either make yourself ill or tire of your good-intentions, Lu dear," warned Philip; but in vain. Luna's self-will made her persist in keeping on in her own way

There was one manner in which Theo was willing to aid, and this was in arranging for a series of cheap concerts in the village, the proceeds to be devoted to Dr. Firth's dispensary.

Gwendolen had promised to help; and Sir Lucian had generously undertaken to meet all expenses.

One day, in Miss Fane's pretty sitting-room at Fanleigh, the final preparations were made.

Sir Lucian was present, Philip and his sisters, Gwendolen herself, and Jack Dauncey, who had offered his services as secretary. Jack did not materially assist proceedings even in this way, as his remarks were mostly humorous, or consisted of anecdotes of former amateur concerts at which he had been present, and where, to judge by his own description, the credit of success had been entirely owing to his exertions.

"You really must have a few comic songs if you want the thing to be a success," he counselled, in a patronising tone. "As a rule amateurs don't know how to amuse the mob!"

"How many respectable working people make a 'mob'?" asked Philip, amused by the young officer's airs and graces. "We have arranged for several well-known ballads."

"Oh, I know; those will go down with the old folks, but the others want something more—aw—more *spirited*. I tell you what—I don't mind singing a song or two myself."

This being the first time that Dauncey's suggestions had been in any way practicable, his offer was accepted, though Sir Lucian advised him to select a "*suitable* song."

"Three weeks to prepare," said Jack. "Good gracious, what a delay! I could have done it in half the time!"

And foolish Theo thought it a great pity that the lieutenant had not been allowed to manage the whole affair.

CHAPTER X.

IT was about this time that Philip began to paint the portrait which Sir Lucian had commissioned.

"I had no idea that Carroll was only one of those innumerable artist-fellows," said Jack Dauncey contemptuously; "and his half-sisters are such awfully nice girls, too; what a pity for them!"

Gwendolen, to whom his observation had been made, looked up with a flushed face.

"Mr. Carroll is a gentleman."

"Oh, very likely. I've no fault to find with his manners; only, you see, Gwendolen, that a man is reckoned according to his position, not by his manners. I wonder—really I do—that Sir Lucian likes to have him about so much."

It was half-past ten in the morning, and breakfast had not long been over at Fanleigh. Gwendolen was waiting for Philip's arrival; she was to give the artist a sitting for that portrait which was only just commenced, but whose progress her father was watching with great interest. Sir Lucian, though a busy man, made a point of presiding over the work, at least while it went on under his own roof; and would give suggestions to the painter which, if not strictly valuable in an artistic sense, yet helped Philip to understand the nature of the work which was required of him. The portrait was to be of small size, but most delicate in tone, a grey velvet curtain passing behind the head throwing up by contrast the girlish bloom of Gwendolen's face. Luckily, Sir Lucian's daughter had no vanity in her nature, or all this care over her portrait, Philip's devotion to the painting, and her father's devotion to watching it, might easily have had ill effect. As it was, the whole reason for this care was very simple to her; she was an only child, and Sir Lucian often told her she was like the mother whom she could not remember, the wife to whose memory he remained true.

And Philip? Why, Philip was kindly anxious to please her father.

Gwendolen had taken up a piece of art-embroidery to occupy her fingers, and Jack was leaning against the mantelshelf doing nothing—an occupation to which he devoted himself frequently. They had been so often together, these two young people, from very childhood, that the relationship between them seemed to them both rather that of brother and sister than of mere cousinship. Gwendolen, being by nature affectionate and charitable in her estimation of others, credited Jack with more virtues than he possessed. He often displeased her, but she forgave easily.

His criticism of Philip Carroll had really vexed her to-day, however; she could have found it in her heart to speak some bitter home-truths to him, besides defending Luna's brother; but something in his tone as he had spoken those last words restrained her. "I wonder Sir Lucian likes to have him so much about," he had said, with a meaning glance which had called the blushes to her cheeks.

He added to the effect of his speech by saying languidly, after a pause of reflection—

"No, it really isn't prudent either for you, Gwen, or for him."

"I wish you would not speak so, Jack."

"Oh, very well. All the same——"

Gwendolen rose with a gesture of displeasure which checked his remarks; but he laughed impertinently to make up for being silenced.

"Don't go off in a huff. I won't find fault with your artist-*protégé*, if it offends you. The girls are delightful, positively delightful! Especially the little one."

"Do you mean Anne?" asked Gwendolen.

"No, my dear cousin, I haven't any fancy for 'carrots.' I mean Theo—Theodora, if you prefer it; but I must own to caring more for the dear little pet name."

"You have no right to use it. Jack, if you think seriously, I am sure you will realise that——"

"Seriously? I'm not capable of such an effort in the early morning. Wait till the afternoon, then I'll try, to please you, Gwen. Look, this is a bunch of violets she gave me yesterday—dear little girl!"

Gwendolen glanced at the faded blossoms in his hand, and looked distressed.

"You are very wrong, Jack. She is young and foolish, and you are taking advantage of her ignorance of society. They led quite a quiet life before they came here, and all the silly compliments you pay her

seem to her real and kind. Do promise me not to flirt with her any more!"

"Gwen, dear, you are really too amusing. Fancy growing so deadly serious about such a trifle as a bunch of violets! There, uncle is bringing in the interesting artist. Go and greet him with your usual *empressement.*"

Gwendolen's absolute frankness, and her wish not to seem too reserved did indeed give to her habitual manner that impulsive friendliness which young Dauncey had instanced. To-day her reception of Philip was hesitating and almost cold. He wondered if he had unconsciously offended her, until he saw that the restraint between them speedily lessened, and finally wore away altogether after Jack had taken his departure on a visit to the stables, where a great part of his time was spent.

The pain of that quickly relieved doubt told Philip a truth of which he had been absolutely ignorant till now: the truth of his awakened love—a manly, whole-hearted, undeniable love for the gentle girl whose face he had studied with such care.

It was not for her fair presence that Philip loved her, but for the fair heart whose tenderness spoke constantly through her eyes and lips, for the fair soul whose beauty he had learned to acknowledge. Gwendolen was sweet and noble, worthy of even a hopeless, and therefore sorrowful, love. Philip could see no

"Philip held the basket for her."—*p.* 769.

prospect of winning her for his wife. She, Sir Lucian Fane's only child and heiress—he, a poor artist, with no future but that which his brush might earn for him.

That morning he did his work with rare excellence. Every touch gave life and reality to the portrait, until he saw himself that never had he been so successful.

After receiving Sir Lucian's heartiest thanks and congratulations, Philip went home to finish the second painting at his leisure. Only once more would he have to go to Fanleigh—only one more opportunity would he have of closely studying Gwendolen's face. There was a large amount of work yet to be done, but this he could do just as well at the Abbey.

Philip's thoughts were bewilderingly contradictory as he walked across the fields and through the woods which divided the Fanleigh land from the Hillborough estate. He was happy because love was a guest in his heart; he was unhappy because Gwendolen's wealth held him away from her; he was thankful because he knew that his enduring love was claimed by one whose worth was beyond his reckoning—whose sweet, pure nature deserved the love of angel rather than of man.

Theo was flitting about the garden as Philip crossed the lawn. She was gathering roses from the many flower-beds, and singing gaily as she heaped the blossoms in her basket.

"Oh, Phil!" she called out to him, as soon as she noticed his approach, "what *do* you think? Something has happened."

Philip held the basket for her as she went on snipping off the most dainty buds and the tender foliage.

"Have you begun your masterpiece for the hundredth time?"

"If you make fun of me I shall refuse to tell you my news. Masterpiece, indeed! I haven't got to try to earn my living any longer. I am too magnanimous to flood the market with my work, and damage the chances of poor creatures who want money as badly as we used to do. No, Phil, something really exciting has happened. We have a neighbour."

"At the White House over the road?"

"Yes, and she *is* so pretty!"

"And you immediately conclude that she will call upon you?"

"Of course she will. She sent in a most charming little scented note on pink paper only this morning, to ask if we will let her drive through the park, as it is a short cut by our road to Weirleigh, where she has friends. Luna answered her at once, and just now I saw her for the first time. She is the prettiest woman I ever saw—not handsome, you know, but little and fair; and I hear that she is very gay, has a great many friends, and entertains continually."

Theo's eyes sparkled with interest.

"But we must find out whether she——"

"Oh, you are always ready to find fault with people!" cried the girl pettishly. "A person must be just of your way of thinking or you don't approve of her. The country will be dreadfully dull when the Fanes have gone back to London, so it is a delightful prospect to have a nice lively neighbour who can make things pleasant. She is a widow, and lives with her invalid father. She sings *perfectly*, and is extremely popular."

"You seem to have found out a good deal about her, Theo. How did you manage it?"

Theodora coloured, and looked not a little annoyed by the question, but she answered it frankly, though not without a toss of her pretty head, which showed that she was prepared to resent any interference with her ways of acting.

"Mr. Dauncey told me. We have just been having a chat over the fence. He knows her very well, because her husband before he died was with Jack's regiment, and he says she is a charming soul."

Theo had unconsciously caught the young officer's tone, and repeated his words exactly as he had spoken them. Poor Philip was not reassured by hearing that their new neighbour was recommended to the girl's friendship by young Dauncey. The stranger might be all that was said of her, and yet, by her education, principles, or manner, not be a suitable friend for girls already frivolous.

"Where is Luna?" he asked, without remarking further upon Theo's news.

"Lu? She is in the library. She came home just now from one of her parish rounds, after finding out that I was quite right, and poor people are best left alone. They have behaved horridly, and I know she has been getting more discouraged day by day. Now old Mrs. Caraway has capped the climax of general ingratitude by pawning—just fancy, Phil, actually *pawning*—the nice wool shawl Lu made for her."

Philip went at once to his eldest sister, and found her as Theo had described, discouraged and tired out. Luna was indignant also, and poured the story of her wrongs into his patient ears.

"I shall have nothing more to do with the parish!" she cried, sinking wearily back into her chair, after an energetic exposition of her views. "I have given up my time for the people, and this is how they repay me. The concert is arranged for, and I have no objection to helping in it, but that is all I shall do. And Dr. Firth is almost as rude as his friends. I met him on the way home, and when I told him my troubles he —laughed at me."

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER that day Luna and Theo resumed their former round of amusements, bringing to pleasure-seeking an exactingness which stole the satisfaction out of each small gaiety, and made them feel the hours of enforced quietude unusually dull and hard to bear.

"I wish we had a really gay life," Theo grumbled. "I wish we were in town, where something exciting would be happening every minute!"

But before a week had gone by, the new neighbour had called and Theo was satisfied.

She called one afternoon when Philip had gone to town for the day upon business, and so established herself firmly in the girls' friendship before he could form any opinion as to her desirability as an intimate at the Abbey.

Luna praised Mrs. Grantley in the languid way in

which she habitually spoke now—Luna was not strong, and constant amusement seemed to take all the spirit out of her; at home she was listless and desponding. Theo threw all her powers of oratory into the attempt to make Philip understand the peculiar charm of Mrs. Grantley's personality—her grace, her cleverness, her great kindness to them both.

"She is going to fill her house with guests, Phil—the best people, she says they are, so you can't mind our knowing them; and she has promised to make existence more interesting to us!"

When next day Carroll made Mrs. Grantley's acquaintance, he did not admire her so much as Theo did—she seemed to him too worldly-wise to be a safe companion for his young sisters; and her small airs and affectations, though innocent enough in themselves, were not the tricks which he would like to see copied by Luna, who was imitative.

Anne gave Philip no anxiety; she was not much impressed in Mrs. Grantley's favour, and was not fond of society.

With the new tenant of the White House, which fronted the Abbey gates, we shall have little to do; but her coming made a vast difference in the occupations and opinions of the two elder Miss Gordons.

Three weeks later, just one day before that fixed for the village concert, Philip persuaded Luna to take an afternoon ride with him.

She was disinclined for the exertion, but yielded to his remonstrances, and they set out. It was seldom that they were alone together, so the brother welcomed the opportunity to talk confidentially to her of many things.

"Luna dear," said Philip, as the horses slowly mounted one of the many hills round the village, "Miss Fane was telling me yesterday of a lady she knows well who is in reduced circumstances, and is seeking a position as companion-chaperon to girls. I wanted to speak to you about this, because you must know that some arrangement must be made for you before I leave the Abbey."

Luna turned her face towards him, and smiled—one of her frank, loving smiles, which had become rare.

"Phil dear, the idea of an elderly companion is appalling; and you know that we don't want you to leave the Abbey!"

"But you don't want to be ashamed of me, Lu? Am I to live in idleness all my days because my half-sister has come into some money?"

Luna pouted, and her eyes grew wistful. Though her words were light, they concealed real feeling.

"I begin to think that we were happier in the shabby days, or I shall have to begin to think so if you make money part us. Phil, you were always more to me, and more mine, than either of the others—what shall I do without you?"

"You don't dislike me, then, because I try to play the wise guardian, Lu! I was half-afraid that you were beginning to look upon me as a fault-finding, malicious, inconsiderate——"

"Be quiet at once, Philip; I won't listen to such nonsense! Ah!" cried the girl, with a sudden laugh, and putting her horse into quicker motion, "why should I blame you? It is with Dr. Firth that I feel more inclined to quarrel. That man has vexed me more by half a dozen sentences, two or three smiles, and two seconds of laughter, than anyone ever vexed me before. And I'm easily vexed now—more easily than I used to be. What is the reason, Phil?"

"I fancy you are not happy!"

"But it is very silly of me not to be. Have I not everything a girl can want? Yet you are right—I feel it every day—something isn't right, something is missing! I shall go back to my old superstition—that misfortune will come to us within the Abbey walls!"

Luna did not speak again for some time, and Philip thought it best not to disturb her thoughts.

They were riding swiftly, now, over level ground, where the high road encircles the village of Hilldon. The afternoon was waning; the sun, having lost its early brilliancy, was setting rapidly behind a bank of cloud, where purple and indigo tints predominated.

Nor was this the only cloud to be seen in the September sky—towering masses of black, fringed with silver, had blown up upon a freshening wind from eastwards, and a few drops of hot rain fell on the parched earth.

There had been scarcely any air all day; and now that wind had come, it was bringing a storm with it.

"We must be quick, Phil, if we want to get home before that breaks," said Luna, raising her face to the warning skies. "Sheila doesn't like lightning!—Poor old girl! it frightens you, doesn't it?"

She patted the neck of the little brown mare reassuringly, for a flicker of lightning had come while she was speaking, and the animal showed its fear by nervous starts and the back-springing of its ears.

A dull mutter of thunder began, coming, as it sounded, from the innermost heart of the storm-cloud; then the mutter increased, till its hollow voice roused the echoes of the hills, and what had been one peal became many.

Luna could feel a shiver of fright go through nervous Sheila. Philip's horse was of less delicate breed, and was indifferent to the lightning, which now began to play across the sky.

Sheila bore with her fright for a while, but presently began to fret against the control of bit and rein. She wanted to be free that she might race away before the storm in a mad gallop, urged by fear.

It was all Luna could do to keep her seat, so violent were the mare's starts—now to the right, now to the left—backwards, forwards—anywhere!

Philip and his sister had reached Dr. Firth's cottage by the time the full strength of the tempest showed itself, and here shelter awaited them.

The doctor himself stood at the gateway, and called to them, "Well met! Why, you were not going to pass my door, surely? Such a storm might bring you to accept a foe's shelter, so why not a friend's? Carroll, I'm ashamed of you! What do you mean by letting Miss Gordon get drenched? Come in, both of you! and here's my boy to take your horses to the stable."

Luna would rather have been out in the worst possible storm than have accepted Dr. Firth's hospitality. However, she did accept it, more for Sheila's sake than for her own.

But there was an easy confidence in the doctor's manner, which was disconcerting to anyone who wished to quarrel with him. He was delighted at being able to make Luna welcome in his simple home, and had no sooner seen her seated in the large arm-chair than he began preparations for brewing tea.

There was an odd, indefinable charm about this plain, hard-working, poor country doctor.

"I wish he did not despise me," thought Luna.

Douglas's thoughts about her were far from being uncomplimentary, had she been able to divine the truth.

An aged housekeeper laid a cloth for tea, bringing cake and bread-and-butter to complete the meal. Luna thought that everything tasted nice out of the quaint Derby-china cups and plates, which had belonged, probably, to the doctor's mother.

Douglas was shown at his best to those who had the privilege of seeing him at home. He was in high spirits to-day, effectually banishing Luna's sense of gloom, and winning laughter from her by his conversation. He had an anecdote for every turn of the talk, a joke for every pause.

"Come and see my birds; I shall not be happy if you go away without seeing them," he said, rising directly tea was done. "You've been introduced to them, I know, Carroll, but Miss Gordon has never condescended to pay me a visit till the storm drove her here."

Luna coloured. It occurred to her now that she might have spared time to call with her brother upon his friend; but Douglas, seeing her embarrassment, hastened to put her at her ease.

"Ah, you will make up for the disappointments you've given me, by not waiting to come here until there is another storm? I throw myself upon your charity as a poor lonely old bachelor."

The birds were worth seeing, and so was the doctor in their midst; he was like a boy among his pets.

Standing in the bare room set apart for his favourites, he called to them by name, and they answered him: canaries, siskins, bullfinches, linnets, and doves, all knew his voice, growing excited as they heard it. He opened the door of one cage, and half a dozen finches flew out, circling round his head, alighting on his shoulders and outstretched fingers, singing to him out of gratitude for the seeds with which he fed them. If his hearty laugh made them flutter away a moment from their perches, they were soon relieved of all fear and became as tame as before. Then, at the word of command, they went back to the cage, going into quarters in orderly fashion, like well-drilled soldiers.

Luna was delighted with the birds, particularly with one dove which submitted to her caresses; by the time the horses were brought round to the door, she had forgotten that the doctor had ever vexed her.

As he was saying good-bye to her, a merry twinkle came into Douglas's eye. He endangered the good impression he had made, by asking humorously—

"How has poor old Mrs. Caraway been behaving of late?"

Luna looked away over her horse's head, and answered quickly—

"I don't know. I have not been to see her, and I do not mean to go again."

"Ah, I begin to understand! You like polished society better than the fancies and failings of an old woman 'nigh a hoondred;' and you have gained a very fashionable neighbour. We village folk are beneath your notice."

Luna saw that he was grave for once. He was holding the bridle of her mare and stroking the creature's glossy neck absent-mindedly, unconscious of the fact that he was keeping them from starting. She was just framing a reply—no easy matter—when Douglas recovered his self-possession, and, stepping back, let Sheila go free.

"Good-bye!" he cried, waving his hand to them as they rode away, "and thank you again for coming."

Luna was not sure that she deserved the thanks.

CHAPTER XII.

"LU, what do you mean to wear for the concert?"

"White, I think; something quite simple."

"Why, Mrs. Grantley has promised to bring her friends down 'to astonish the natives,' as she says, and you know that she is sure to introduce them to us afterwards!"

Theo thought this to be an occasion deserving of elaborate toilettes, but her elder sister was resolute.

Luna made herself look like the Luna of poorer days; not that there was evidence of poverty about her, but because she showed once again as a simple girl appropriately clad. The beautiful white flowers she wore could only have come from costly conservatories such as those at the Abbey.

For some reason which she could not explain even to herself, Luna was happy this evening. Dr. Firth had passed a long afternoon at Hillborough, and his manner had been gentle, almost tender. He had not laughed at her difficulties; he had even sympathised with her for the rebuffs she had received, counselling her to begin again, to make another try to win the confidence of the poor about her home.

It was amusing to witness the interest which Hilldon folk took in this first concert of a number which were promised to take place during the autumn and winter months. They congregated about the doors of the little hall and applied for admittance as soon as possible, feeling excitement in this novel dissipation which was provided for them.

"The doctor will be there; he's goin' to play the fiddle," said one youth to another in awe-stricken tones. "He do play it beautiful, too. I wish I could."

"*Fiddle!*" cried the second youth contemptuously; "*violin* you mean, Jem! As though the doctor 'ud play a fiddle!"

Douglas had greatly wished to provide old Mrs. Caraway with a ticket, but he had not done so, feeling that her late behaviour had not entitled her to a treat; but some friend of her own class had befriended the old woman in this matter, and there she was, in the first row of the cheapest seats, her mouth

open with astonishment and interest, her hands firmly grasping the handle of her cotton umbrella.

The first seats, the select part of the house, showed many vacancies.

Mrs. Grantley and her party would not put in an appearance until well on in the evening; Mrs. Wooley, resplendent in a grey silk robe of antique design, occupied one of these chairs.

"I don't suppose music is like to do much harm," the good woman had said dubiously, "as they say it 's good for savage folk; though I do believe myself in folks spending their after-work hours in their homes an' not galivantin'. But you says rightly, Miss Luna, as how there 's many as 'ud go to the public-house if they didn't come here. An' I must say I likes a good ballad myself, particularly if it 's a bit touchin'."

Mrs. Wooley was preparing her mind for two hours of enjoyment.

As Philip followed his sisters into the room set apart for the performers, he saw that the party from Fanleigh had already arrived.

Sir Lucian was conversing apart with the rector. Gwendolen and Jack Dauncey were sorting some music at a side-table.

"Ah, how d'you do, all of you?" cried that irrepressible young gentleman. "We've followed the example of the yokels and got here hours too early. I've brought you down some flowers, Miss Theo. Ah, you have some! Well, wear mine as well; they suit you better than the others."

"Oh yes," cried foolish Theo, blushing with pleasure at his thought for her. "How beautiful they are! and how kind of you to bring them for me!"

Douglas came in at that moment, and bestowed hearty handshakes upon everyone, giving Luna in addition a more than ordinarily radiant smile. He saw that she was happy to-night, and her bright looks pleased him. She had never seemed as beautiful in his eyes; though impertinent Jack was at that identical moment whispering in a corner--

"I say, Theo, why did your sister make herself quite a frump for this great occasion? Of course, she 's an awfully pretty girl, but simplicity doesn't suit her, to my taste."

The doctor began the concert, he and his violin receiving a cordial welcome. Gwendolen followed with a song, unpretentious and sweet as the singer.

Douglas gave a veritable sigh of satisfaction when Luna's turn came. He expected intense satisfaction; nor was he disappointed. Her beautiful soprano had been well trained in her youth, and as it rose, trilling like the bird of whom it sang, "Hark, hark, the lark at heaven's gate sings," there was not one person present, unless it was Jack Dauncey, who did not listen with keen delight. Uncultivated ears wondered while they enjoyed; Douglas watched her as she sang, and said to himself reverently, "A creature so fair and pure-hearted will surely sing herself some day within the Eternal Gates."

"I hope I pleased them," the girl said gently, as the doctor handed her down the steps from the platform; "I was very anxious to give them something they could understand and like."

"You made a perfect choice," Douglas answered, retaining her hand an instant, but *only* an instant; "you have pleased us all, I can assure you."

Luna blushed with pleasure. She had not been trying to make a display. Her heart had been in the thought of singing worthily and giving restful satisfaction to those who had gathered together to find recreation after a toilsome day.

"Poor souls!" she murmured, as she peeped at the many faces, "some of them look very tired and ill. I wish I could understand them as you do, Dr. Firth."

"You will, some day—not only as I do, but infinitely better. Do you know that the power of sympathy has to be gained like any other power—by hard work?"

"And perfected under rebuffs?" she asked, smiling back at him. "I can forgive even Mrs. Caraway to-night."

"We all have to pass through the crucible of disappointment before we know how strong we can be. Pure gold stands the test, Miss Gordon, and shows its beauty when it has parted with all alloy."

"I am not pure gold," said Luna wistfully, "and my trials have only been little ones so far. Sometimes a fancy comes to me that the future may hold great ones."

"It may be so. You will stand the test—you will come triumphantly through the crucible of real sorrow, I feel sure of it, if you keep true to your own heart and its impulses. Don't let yourself be spoilt, Miss Gordon, for you are—ah!" cried the doctor suddenly, as a burst of cheering which followed Theo's efforts recalled him to himself, "who am I that I should speak to you like this? Do forgive me. Try and fancy that I presumed to do it because--because your brother is my friend."

"I do not want to make excuses for you," Luna answered softly, "because I—I like you to speak to me just as you think."

"That would not do at all," said the doctor grimly; and he turned away to pay Theodora some of the compliments for which she was waiting.

The evening was a remarkable success; there was only one blot upon a fair record, and this blot consisted of Jack Dauncey's comic song.

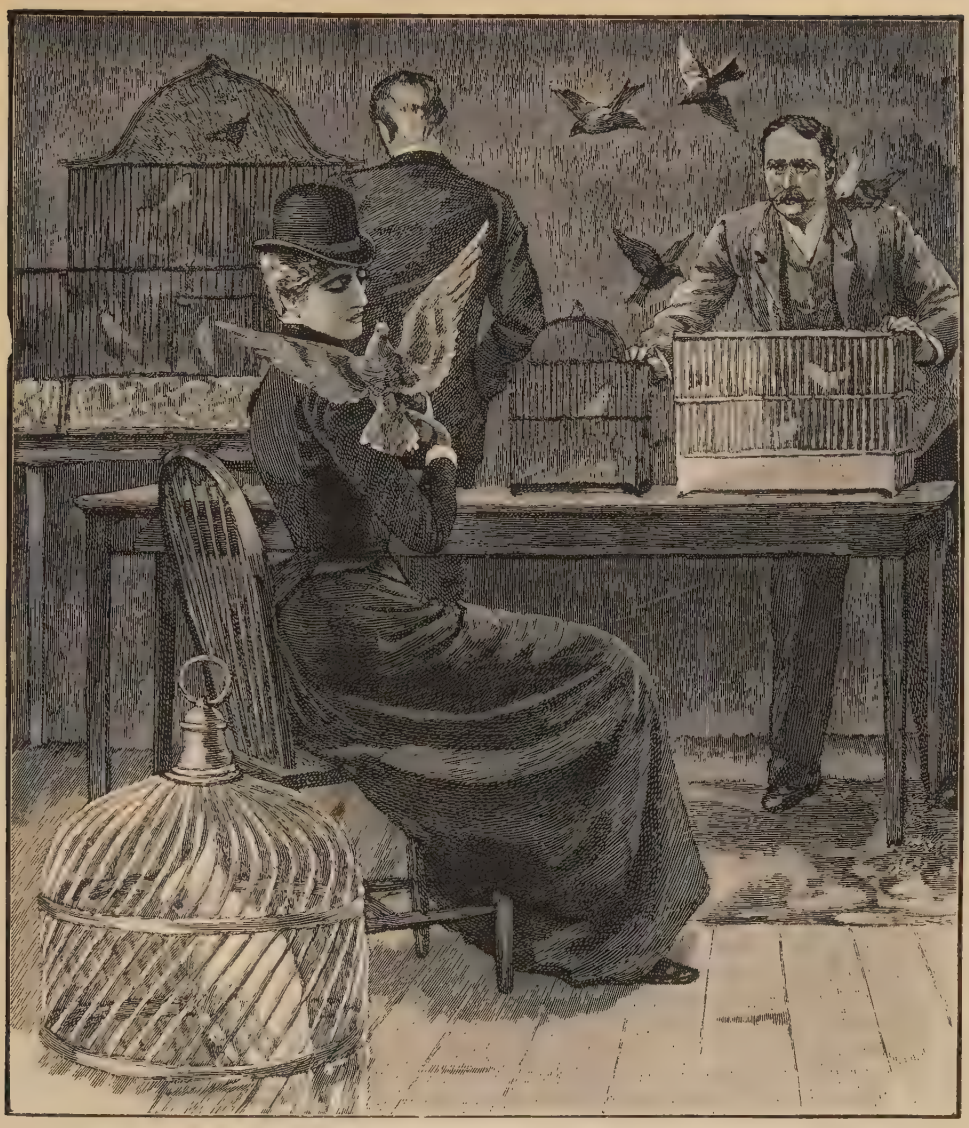
The young man accompanied himself at the piano, and, looking towards his audience with the self-satisfied smile of a man who predicts a triumph for himself, began to sing a medley of words which were neither remarkable for interest nor for good taste.

The first verse had a refrain, repeated many times; and Jack cordially invited the audience to aid him with their voices.

The doctor frowned, stamped his foot with vexation, and neared the platform.

Only a few voices accepted Jack's invitation. He went on to the second verse, Theo listening with ears too partial to the voice of the singer to be discriminating.

"He's never going to sing that—that detestable rubbish—to the end!" muttered the doctor, who had heard the ditty once before. But young Dauncey had no intention of leaving out any of the verses. He



"Luna was delighted with the birds."—*p.* 771.

was proceeding to play the chords which ushered in the third stanza when he felt a hand on his shoulder, and looked up into Firth's face.

"If you don't leave off at once I shall have to adopt strong measures," was the doctor's threat; "sing the first verse over again, and no more. You call that thing comic, do you? I call it disreputable!"

"I don't see any particular harm about it; it's only meant for a bit of fun," was the lieutenant's defence when, after a sorry conclusion, he had left the platform.

"It might be considered admirable in a music-hall," was the severe reply, "but, thank heaven, Hilldon young people have not sunk to that level of appreciation!"

"What airs that doctor fellow does give himself!" Dauncey complained to Theodora; "a regular prig, I call him!"

But it is not probable that Douglas would have been much chagrined had he heard the lieutenant's unfavourable comment.

(To be continued.)

"OUR DAUGHTERS AS CORNER-STONES."

BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A., PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S.

"Our daughters as corner-stones, hewn after the fashion of a palace."—PSALM cxliv. 12 (R.V.).

I HAVE been asked to bring before you the subject of the "Young Women's Christian Association," not so much with the view of obtaining money, but rather for the purpose of interesting you in a great enterprise carried on in London and elsewhere on behalf of a very important class of the community. Before I have finished my remarks I may venture to give you a few particulars; but for the moment I shall content myself with saying that amongst the many and multifarious societies of the day (all of them, with perhaps a few exceptions, imperatively called for by the circumstances in which we are placed), there is scarcely one which makes a stronger appeal to our sympathy; and there are few that are doing a greater work than the Society about which I have to speak here. How women, at least women of a certain class, are handicapped in the race for life, we all of us know. What perils some of them are exposed to, we can most of us imagine. And surely, to stretch out so far as we may a helping hand to those ladies who are engaged in helping their own sex is what might be expected from our Christian manliness—if we have any such manliness to boast of.

Well, that is enough by way of introduction. Now let us pass on to the text. If you will glance at the Psalm from which it has been taken, you will see that the writer is describing a somewhat disastrous present, but looking forward to a very much brighter future. The Psalm was probably composed soon after the return from the Babylonian exile, when the unsettled state of the country and the bitter opposition of its powerful foes, who made it their business to slander and malign the Jews at the Persian court, almost broke the hearts of the little handful of men and women who had come back to the city of their fathers.

Under these circumstances, an inspired man amongst them took up, so to speak, his harp, and, striking the chords, sang to it a song of lofty encouragement. He directs the attention of his compatriots to the fact that throughout their long history prosperity has ever been the invariable sequel of obedience. He draws the inference that, as it has been in the past, so it will be in the future. Let them only follow the commandments of Jehovah: let them only be true to their covenant position, and they may expect a state of things, a real golden age, totally different from that in which they find themselves now. Instead of the present scarcity, there will be full abundance of all things Their valleys will be thick with corn; their orchards will be laden with fruit; their garners full and plenteous with all manner of store—thus placing at a distance all apprehension of want. Their hills will be whitened over with innumerable flocks of sheep, and the lowing of cattle will be heard everywhere in their pastures. Besides this, they shall be relieved from the fear of their implacable enemies. Now they suffer from the constant dread of invasion. At very frequent intervals, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, an outcry is heard in the streets; and men, hastily snatching up their weapons and gathering together in the broad places of the town, sally forth to encounter some marauding force. Now there is constant disquiet and anxiety. But then, when this happy time, which he prognosticates, has arrived, everyone shall sit under his vine and fig-tree, no one making him afraid, and the voice of peace and health shall be heard in the dwellings of a righteous people.

But there is still one feature in the glowing picture to which we have not yet adverted, and which is of very great importance. External prosperity is of little value without domestic comfort. Many a wealthy man's happiness is poisoned by the behaviour of his children. What, then, is the condition of the homes of Israel at this time? What is the character of the young men and young women who fill these homes? Well, all is satisfactory here also—not because the people are rich, but because the blessing of the Lord is resting upon their households. The sons are as plants grown up in their youth. "The daughters are as corner-stones, hewn after the fashion of a palace." Such is the picture drawn by the sacred writer.

But I am really concerned, as you know, in this paper with only part of it. I am not addressing the sons—the young men; and yet perhaps I may be allowed to put the two features of the picture together, in order to bring out more clearly—by force of contrast—what is said about the young women.

When you look at the imagery (if you do so intelligently), I think you will discover in it peculiar force and beauty. These are only a few strokes of the pencil, but every one of them is effective. The young man is compared to a tree which is, of course, not inside the house, but out in the open; not sheltered within the walls, but exposed to all the vicissitudes of the atmosphere, and to changes of climate. He has gone forth to battle with the forces of the world, and to do his work in it. Firmly rooted in the ground, he grows up (as the Psalm says) "in his youth." He throws out his faculties and powers freely in every direction. The rough winds of life blow around him, but he wrestles with them, and heeds them not: indeed, the blast of difficulty only serves to fix him more deeply in the soil, and contributes to his courage and his strength. He grows upward: there is nothing interposing itself between him and heaven itself. There is no overhanging vice, no deadening sin or stifling worldliness, to stunt and dwarf his development. He expands, because he reaches out towards the sky. What a graphic picture it is—this tree of the Psalmist—of the ideal

Christian gentleman in the prime vigour of his youth! with nothing squalid, or mean, or miserable, or petty, or unclean, or false about him; but with all his thoughts pure, and all his aims noble, and all his tendencies in the right direction: his life an example and a blessing, a help and a strength to those who come in contact with him.

Now turn to the other side, and observe the contrast. Here we have something in the house, and not outside of it. It is not a tree: it is a graceful column. It is not intended for rough contact with the crowd. It is rather the ornament and the blessing of the house itself. And it is sculptured into forms of exquisite beauty. You will observe that no clumsy workman has been engaged in producing it, but that, although it may be intended for an ordinary household, it is hewn and fashioned in such a way as to be fit for a palace.

Let us expend a little time upon a closer examination of the thought that is suggested to us.

The daughter—that is, the young woman here depicted—is spoken of as a column. Not characterised, as some columns are, by sturdy, massive strength, but rather marked by gracefulness; rather a slender-shafted column than anything else, she is yet no mere piece of ornamentation, but does her part in the sustaining and upholding of the household.

If a girl cannot go out into the world and labour, so as to be able to contribute by her earnings to the maintenance of the family (and few can do that), at least there are many conceivable ways in which she may contrive to lighten the burden laid upon the shoulders of her parents. She may of course, if she chooses, allow herself a life of selfish gratification, leaving all the drudgery and anxiety to others, and spending her time in pleasure. Or she may, if she chooses, play a useful and self-denying part, looking not only on her own things, but also on the things of others. Parents grow old; and what in their younger days was easily borne becomes (occasionally, at least) irksome, and sometimes almost intolerable, to their failing strength and their clouded faculties. Or sickness comes into the household, and calls for patient nursing. Or little brothers and sisters require management, and perhaps teaching. Or it may be a blight falls upon the family prosperity; and then there must be a curtailing of accustomed comforts, and a necessary taking up of somewhat uncongenial occupations.

But I will not weary you with multiplied suppositions; for all of you can easily understand in how many respects one of the best props of a household may be found in a good, loving, unselfish daughter. But the imagery points not only, I think, to the work done, but also to the manner in which it is done. A pillar may support a rock, or help to support it, and yet be a coarse and clumsy sort of affair after all. It may be rough, instead of being polished. But this pillar spoken of by the Psalmist is polished; and not only polished, but adorned with lovely sculptures. And there it stands before us, in its quiet gracefulness and beauty, a most engaging and most attractive object.

Now, what is meant by this? External accomplishment? Well, yes, perhaps—nay, probably yes—the grace of a self-possessed and ladylike manner, the charm of a cultivated taste, of a musical voice, of a pure style—all the advantages, in fact, of a well-used education. These are things by no means to be despised. And, indeed, it were much to be wished that the girls of our ordinary English families, when their course of instruction is over, would take up, if only for their own sakes, some definite study—some branch of science, or some field of literature, or some period of history, or some foreign language, or some department of music, or of painting—something which shall find them occupation, and furnish a sphere for the faculties which God has bestowed upon them, and which at the same time shall not interfere with their duties, but rather make them more fit for any higher work for God and their fellow-creatures in which they may be called upon to engage. An aimless life is a very perilous life. We cannot all of us, perhaps, find a directly religious occupation (though more can find it, I believe, than choose to look for it), but we can all of us cultivate our faculties and use our opportunities under a sense of responsibility—for the glory of God.

However, the polish and the gracefulness of which I speak is rather that of inward life and character, than that of outward accomplishments. It is the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price. It is the tender consideration, the loving sympathy, the unselfish regard, the purity, and the gentleness, and the compassion which, if they are to be found anywhere in their highest perfection, are surely to be found in the women who are true followers and disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you to advance with me one step further. The power of the woman resides chiefly in her influence, that quality which it is so easy to understand, and so hard to define. I am not one of those who undervalue the intellectual capacity of women, or would jealously deny them access to any field of human knowledge on which they might be disposed to enter. Far from it. But I should be deeply unwilling to see them undervalue that great talent of influence which the Creator has placed in their hands. I should be more unwilling still to find them persuaded by any temptation to fling it away as an antiquated or useless thing. Now, in the province of religion, it is influence, after all, that tells most—that produces the most important and most marked effects. There can be no question, of course, that Christianity is capable of being defended by argument; and as time passes on, it is interesting to notice how the serried ranks of its foes gradually give way, and how error is driven first from one and then from another of the strongholds in which it seemed to have entrenched itself so strongly as to be utterly incapable of dislodgement. We need not be apprehensive, I am sure, about the final result. Opposition there will be, no doubt, so long as the Gospel crosses the path of man's selfish ambition, and so long as the subtle evil spirit is at hand to foster our natural unwillingness to credit what it is contrary to our interest or our pride to give credence to. But the building is on a sure foundation. Its architect is God Himself, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

At the same time, it may be doubted whether human souls, to any great extent, are won to Christ by the power of argument or the stress of controversy. If you enter into debate with a person on the subject of religion, he instinctively girds himself for intellectual effort, his contentious spirit is evoked, the desire for victory takes possession of him; and, although you may vanquish him, and perhaps reduce him to silence by your reasonings, you have not advanced one single inch towards the persuading him that you are in the right and he is in the wrong. It is not that which brings him over to the side of the Lord; it is rather the fact that you are yourself profoundly interested in the things that you announce to be true: the fact that you are living by faith in an unseen world, and in an unseen Saviour, and that your conduct, your tone, your manner, your habits bear witness to the sincerity of your profession: the fact that you are in possession of a secret that he would fain possess himself—a secret which gives you power to resist temptation, and imparts peace amidst the disquieting turmoil of cares and anxieties, and which keeps you, in the main, above the meannesses, and pettinesses, and the poor little miserable aims which beset us all in our ordinary every-day worldly life. He can easily resist your arguments; he does not find it so easy to resist your example.

Now, it is owing to this circumstance that so large a share of spiritual power is lodged in the hands of women. I am not speaking about women as mothers or as wives—then they have a peculiar position, and a peculiar advantage—I am speaking of them in an earlier stage of their career. And I venture to say that few of them really know how much they might do, if they chose to do it, for Christ and His Kingdom by the simple force of example, and *that* an example unsupported by learning, or by wit, or by power of speech, or by the gift of arguing. In many and many a modern English household the young men—the brothers—think it fine to be sceptical. To have a fling now and then at the Christian faith is a cheap way of getting a reputation for intellectual acumen and independence of thought. Besides, the doubts about Christianity are a sort of release to the conscience, and seem to set the man at liberty to act as he pleases. And then the father not unfrequently comes in. He is too busy a man, he says, to attend to religion. He sends his wife and his children to church, but seldom or never comes himself; and he, of course, is not unwilling that ideas should be started which seem to justify him in his devotion to the world, or, at least, which seem to give him reason to believe that it may be as well with him as with others in the end. And what is the girl to do? What is she to say when a clatter of shallow but pretentious argument goes on round her, when this great man and that great man is quoted to show that there is no real basis for the Christian faith and the Christian hope? I am not sure that she is called upon to say anything. Probably her own innate common sense may convince her that the objections are not unanswerable, although she may not be able to put her hand readily upon the answer. Her business—well, her chief business—is to live a life which shall be itself a contradiction to the objections. Let her be obviously a real and genuine disciple of Christ; let her be gentle and true and patient, in the midst of opposition, and yet hold firmly to her belief, and fearlessly do her duty; let her be unselfish and self-denying: and we may depend upon it that she will produce an effect (though it may not be acknowledged at the time) of which she herself has very little conception. The best argument for the supernatural, as has been well said, is the supernatural life. And Jesus Christ will at last be believed in as a reality by those who have the embodiment of His teaching in a human character continually before their eyes.

It is only an expansion of the idea just suggested to say that we look to the young women for the formation of a public opinion which shall influence the men of their own standing and age. They can do much, very much, in this direction. And if they would let it be known (and they might) that they would not tolerate profligacy, although accompanied by polished manners, lofty station, or abundance of money; that they frowned down dissipation and dishonesty; and that they demanded from those whom they permitted to associate with them propriety of behaviour and purity of life—if this were done, we might anticipate the very happiest results to the community at large.

In this way, as well as in others which I have already indicated, our daughters might be indeed pillars in the social fabric—"corner-stones hewn after the fashion of a palace." To a great extent I believe there are such now; but I imagine it possible that they might use even more largely and more effectively still the great gift of influence with which the Creator has endowed them.

MY EXPERIENCES AS A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

BY A VETERAN.

II.—MY FIRST DAY AS A TEACHER.

THE NEW TEACHER.

"Consistently inattentive and indifferent."

HAPPY is the Sunday-school which always has its staff of teachers complete. In too many there is a chronic deficiency, which has to be supplied by a variety of expedients, not always profitable to the school. In very few cases do we find a body of young people who are regarded as "coming on" for the work, and are ready to prepare themselves accordingly.

My first experiences as a teacher were due to one of those deficiencies which occur occasionally even in the best-managed schools. In a certain corner of the boys' room there met a class which had been formed in a very curious, although perhaps not unexampled, fashion. Most of the male teachers amongst the older classes had found themselves in charge of a young person or two with whom they could not get on. In one instance the boy was a humorist—made highly original comments on subjects under discussion, and was much mourned over by an excellent teacher of a profoundly grave and perhaps rather dull nature. In another instance teacher and pupil had a chronic difficulty in agreeing, and separation was on every ground an urgent necessity. In a third case the boy was mischievous, and needed a firmer hand than his original teacher had commanded.

Somebody suggested that these distressful elements should be combined to form one class, and that a teacher should be sought especially for its management. The plan, from the average teacher's point of view, possessed some obvious advantages, and the experiment was accordingly made. The class was constituted, the teacher found, and the work begun. But when it had gone on for a few weeks, the teacher fell ill; no promising substitute could be enlisted from outside the school, and, as a last resort, I was invited to take the work.

The task had previously been looked upon as one of admitted difficulty; but it is amazing how people's views are coloured by inclination. There were teachers of some experience who, when invited to take this class for a few Sundays, magnified its difficulties in the most alarming fashion. The same persons, when urging me to cast myself into the breach, made light of all such objections. Their views did not, however, weigh very much with me. What made it impossible to refuse the offer was the clear intimation that if I did not try my hand upon the class it would have to be disbanded. Now, it was very doubtful whether its members would care to range themselves under their original teachers, and it was very certain that their original teachers did not want them. So to the task I dutifully went.

My flock seemed to await with some eagerness the coming of a new teacher. Their own head had brought them into something like order, but it did not follow that they would yield equal submission to another. One thing, however, was quite certain: any sign of weakness would have landed them in open rebellion.

When, accompanied by the superintendent, I drew near to the class that first Sunday afternoon, I saw an expression of mingled pity and scorn, caused no doubt by the novice's youth, flit over one or two faces. The humorous personage to whom I have alluded was obviously ready with a jest, which a large, red-faced, and rather dull boy seemed to appreciate very highly. The superintendent explained, in his own decisive manner, that I had come to take Mr. ——'s place for a few Sundays, exhorted all attention to my teaching, and then went his way. I took my seat at once, did not venture upon any preliminary address, but, with as authoritative a tone as I could command, bade them open their Bibles at the chapter.

"The humorous personage was ready with a jest."

There is nothing like an adventure of this kind to make a young teacher feel his real helplessness. And this he will be more and more likely to realise if he is conscious—as every teacher should be—of the great responsibility which attaches to his office. He may be the means of influencing for life some of those who come under his care. He may also give them so great a distaste for religious instruction as shall drive them from school, and lead them into a lifelong indifference to the ordinance of public worship.

All this—and a prayer for guidance—passed through my mind. But it did not prevent me from looking as truculent as my own inward quakings would permit. The oldest boy in the class, a nice-looking lad of agreeable manner and a character for mischievous ways, seemed to take me under his protecting wing, and informed me touching the habits and customs of my predecessor as each point of procedure arose. It is true that he was a little officious; but if I had quelled his efforts to keep me straight I might have encouraged him to think me a very self-sufficient person, whose humiliation it would be a pleasure to compass. Finding me to receive his suggestions in perfect politeness, and to act upon a fair proportion of them, he settled down in a very comfortable frame of mind, and gave me no trouble of any other kind. Indeed, he exhibited early in the afternoon a piece of very remarkable self-restraint.

It came about in this way: there seems to be a tradition in some schools that the eating of sweets is a "grateful and comforting" operation. One of my pupils had brought to school a packet of a certain preparation of peppermint. A well-known humourist says they used to be called "Four-a-penny Smell-'em-a-mile-offs." Certainly the odour was very pungent. Indeed, it was from a strong aroma of peppermint being wafted in my direction that I first learned what was going on. The owner of the peppermint-cushions was at that moment offering them to my genial adviser, Jones.

The temptation was strong; but happily for us both just then he caught my eye, put aside the secretly proffered bag, and frowned upon its hospitable owner. It was obviously time for me to interfere.

"Are those peppermint-cushions, Jones?" I asked, with great suavity.

"Yes, sir," said he, producing them with the utmost readiness.

"I think, upon the whole, you had better let me keep them until after school."

Jones yielded them up without a murmur, and a boy in the adjoining class, who was signalling for a share of the good things, saw with amazement that they were transferred to my pocket.

We were getting along swimmingly, when my facetious friend thought fit to answer a question in what he doubtless deemed a highly humorous fashion.

I received his sally with a look of complete amazement—the amazement of one who did not in the least understand his meaning, and thought the speaker a very stupid person.

Jenkins was a little surprised; he chose to regard

himself as a very smart and clever young fellow; to waste his wit on a person who could not grasp his meaning was a new, and to him a very painful, experience. Later on in the afternoon I found occasion to say a word upon the peril of making a mock at things, and Jenkins may or may not have taken the rebuke to himself.

The experiences of that first afternoon showed me that the most serious difficulty of the Sunday-school teacher is oftentimes not the impertinent boy or the mischievous boy, but the boy who is consistently inattentive and indifferent. Several of them honoured me with their presence that afternoon. They were not openly or ostentatiously troublesome; they were not half so talkative as some of their fellows; they commonly did what they were asked to do without question or delay. But having done it, they seemed to withdraw their attention. They stared about, they played with their Bibles, they rustled uneasily in their seats. When asked questions, they made (in perfect good faith) the most appalling replies. Reproof they seemed to take seriously enough, but in a very few minutes their attention was gone again. An anecdote had, I noticed, a stimulating effect upon them; but somehow they rarely seemed to get hold of its application.

One other thing of much value in after-years I learned that afternoon. In dealing with a class of this kind, the teacher must know his lesson thoroughly well. There must be no awkward breaks whilst he is thinking what to say next, nor must he exhaust his material so soon as to leave an awkward blank of five or six minutes before the bell rings for class-teaching to cease. It is the momentary breaks during the lesson, and the dangerous unemployed space at its end, which so often bring disorder into a class.

On considering the events of the afternoon later on, I think what struck me most was the general ignorance of the boys. Many of them had for years been under some form of religious instruction, and yet scarcely any of their knowledge was *accurate*. It was vague and misty as to Biblical facts: it was painfully nebulous as to doctrine. Moreover, it seemed clear that some young people do not take Sunday-school quite seriously: do not go to learn: do not try to learn: do not expect to get any advantage from learning. We cannot put old heads on to young shoulders; but it was made abundantly clear to me that day that if the difficulties which the scholars' memories place in the way of success are to be overcome, their teachers must be full both of love to God and love for their pupils, must abound in patience, and must have that "infinite capacity for taking pains" which is said to be equivalent to genius. Looking around me that day, I saw a class in disorder because the teacher came late; a class listless and inattentive because the teacher had nothing to say, and a class torn by some differences between instructor and pupil which a little tact or patience would have averted.

Well, it is easy to be critical; and there are few, even amongst the youngest of us, with whom some improvement is not possible. With all due allowance for this, what a noble army of self-denying men and women our Sunday-school teachers are!

"THE GIRL IN BLUE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"BLESS the child! what's to be done now? You can't go home without a bonnet: that's clear, any way."

Professor Ingram stood on the steps of the Public Library; a couple of learned and ponderous tomes were under his arm, and in his hand was a child's bonnet. There was an expression of puzzled dismay on his countenance as he looked at the little girl to whom the bonnet belonged, for one of the ribbons had in the most unexpected manner given way, and Elsie, on her first encounter with the boisterous March wind, had declared herself quite unable to "keep it on."

What was to be done? The difficulty was a serious one to Ingram. He was a man who lived—as much as it is possible for any man to live—amongst idealities. That he was a bachelor no one who looked at him could doubt. The carelessness of his dress, no less than the general air of abstraction that pervaded him, was sufficient evidence that no womanly influences were at work to bridge the gulf between the visionary world of the thinker and the scholar, and the mundane territory inhabited by plain practical people. The problems of social and domestic life were admittedly below his consideration and beyond his comprehension; yet there were times when these problems intruded themselves somewhat rudely, reminding him that though his head was in the clouds, his feet were on the earth. Such was the case now, as he stood helplessly turning the quaint little bonnet over and over, as if seeking amongst its bows and frills an answer to his question.

Little Elsie was only four years old, but her wits were considerably quicker in such matters than those of her companion. Pushing away the sunny tangled curls that the wind was tossing all about her face, she looked up with a placid smile.

"Wants a pin," she lisped. "Hasn't 'oo dot a pin?"

A *pin!* Professor Ingram with a *pin?* what an idea! Of course he hadn't; but the suggestion, nevertheless, was a useful one. It was just possible that such a thing might be procurable. At any rate, he would try; for, as he had before remarked, Elsie could not go home without her bonnet.

He pushed open the heavy doors, and drew the child inside. It was just closing time; a few late comers were hurrying off, for the desks were closed and the books were being put away. The young ladies were preparing to leave: they were tired with their day's work; and as the Professor advanced to the desk, and laid down the heavy volumes on the counter, they turned and eyed him sharply, but none of them moved forward.

"Here's 'the fossil' again," said one, in an undertone, and with a side-glance towards him.

"Whatever does he want? Some mistake about his books, I suppose?" said another.

"Somebody had better tell him the rules," remarked a third.

Meanwhile, "the fossil" stood glaring at the group. How he detested these giggling young women! Why didn't somebody teach them their manners? He wished they would employ men at these places instead of women—but stay: men, as a rule, didn't carry pin-cushions, and what he wanted just then was a pin.

"Can anyone oblige me with a pin?"

The Professor's voice was gruff in the extreme—unnecessarily so—but he felt that the girls were laughing at him, and it irritated him. He was beginning to repent having proffered the request, when another girl, who had been busy at a distance, came quietly towards him, saying, with a pleasant smile—

"Can I do anything for you?"

There was something so frank and winning in her manner that Ingram's impatient wrath was instantly appeased. Ashamed of his previous incivility, he replied, with all the hesitation of a distinctly nervous man:

"Oh, thank you—yes. I—I wanted a pin, if you could kindly oblige me. The—the string has come off." And he held up the bonnet to view.

"Oh, you had better let me sew it on. I have a needle and cotton at hand, and could do it in a minute, if you don't mind waiting;" and she smiled again over the counter at the little childish face uplifted to her. "Pins are so apt to prick, are they not?"

This was a new idea. Again the Professor looked from the bonnet to the child, and from the child to the bonnet.

"You are very kind. I don't like to trouble you," he said hesitatingly.

"No trouble, I assure you. Please allow me."

She held out her hand, and Ingram was too glad of her help to make further demur. In a few minutes the string was secured. Then the young lady tied it on the curly head, kissing the child as she did so, while Ingram stammered his thanks.

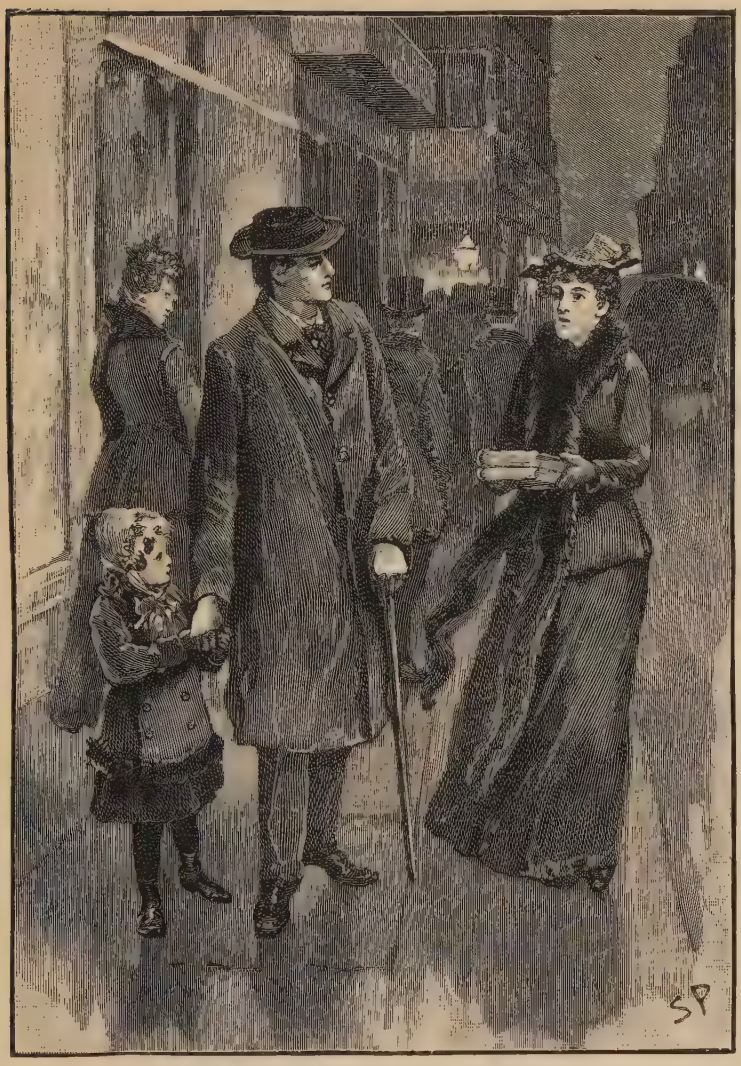
"Well I never, Miss Saville!" remarked one of the others, as the door closed on the quaintly matched pair. "After that we'll rechristen the 'fossil' and call him 'Miss Saville's admirer.' I'm sure I wonder you had the courage to speak to him. All the rest of us were trembling in our shoes. He looked fit to eat our heads off."

"What rubbish you talk, Delia!" retorted another. "I am sure he saw you laughing. He seemed quite grateful to Miss Saville for taking pity on him. I daresay he isn't such a bad sort."

"In fact, my dear, you rather admire him."

"No indeed! I don't care about fusty fossils. Give me something a little more human. I wonder who he really is? He seems to be always here. Do you know anything of him, Miss Saville?"

The girl who had spoken to Ingram turned round on being thus directly addressed. There was a look of



"Excuse me: you forgot your books."

quiet contempt on her face, and just a trace of annoyance visible in her manner as she replied—

"The gentleman is Professor Ingram. He is, I believe, well known in literary and scientific circles. There are some books of his on the shelves that have been through two or three editions."

"Indeed?" said the first speaker, dropping the tone of banter. "I should never have thought it. He looks so shabby, somehow; but I suppose that's the result of being a genius. Was that his little girl?"

"No," replied Miss Saville rather shortly; "he is unmarried. I don't know who the little girl is." And then, wishing them all good-night, she moved towards the dressing-room, and the subject was dropped.

Meanwhile, Ingram, holding little Elsie's hand, pursued his homeward way in a brown study. This was by no means unusual, and Elsie was neither cross nor surprised at having to provide the answers to her own questions. She prattled on quite cheerfully, heedless of her companion's silence, while the Professor, listening attentively, but hearing nothing, followed the leading of his own thoughts.

The subject of his reflections was a curious one for a man who for more than twenty years had borne the reputation of being a misogynist. He was thinking of the pleasant-faced girl who had rendered him such timely assistance, and wondering how it was he had never noticed her before. Not that her external appearance had made a great impression upon him. He did not know whether she was plain or pretty, tall or short, dark or fair. All he remembered was that she wore a dress of a rich deep blue suggestive of the Madonnas of the old Italian painters, that she had looked at him with eyes that seemed to read his thoughts, and had spoken in a voice that brought back a remembrance of the only woman who had ever approached his ideal of what a woman should be—the sister of his youth.

And as he walked through the crowded streets that night, guiding with loving care (despite his pre-occupation) the footsteps of the little orphan girl, his ward, and the one treasure and joy of his lonely life, many tender recollections came pressing in upon his mind. Once more in imagination he was living over again those far-off days, filled with memories of the sister who had been so dear to him—and yet, by some strange freak of fancy, there mingled perpetually with these memories the echo of a voice that belonged to the present, and not to that well-remembered past.

"Excuse me: you forgot your books."

The Professor started and turned quickly. The voice was not an echo, but a reality.

"My books?"

"Yes—you—you left—them on the desk."

The girl was panting and breathless. She had evidently been running. The wind had caught her cheeks and fanned them into a deeper red. her soft hair blew in curling tendrils about her forehead. If he had not noticed her appearance before, he did so now, as she stood in the full light of the lamp, her slight figure swaying with every gust of wind.

For a moment he simply stood and looked at her, so astonished was he on finding himself thus suddenly addressed by the subject of his thoughts. He had not discovered his loss, and even now scarcely realised it sufficiently to take the books she held towards him: but as she still stood panting for breath, it dawned upon him that the colour was dying slowly out of her cheeks, and that there was a strained, over-tired look in her eyes. He grasped the heavy volumes hastily, exclaiming—

"Oh, you *shouldn't* have done that! It's *very* kind of you—but—good gracious! I hope you're not going to faint?"

"Oh, no," with a quick smile, "it's—all—right. The wind is—rather strong."

"You've been running, I believe. I'm so sorry! it's all my stupid carelessness—but you shouldn't have troubled to come after me."

"I was coming this way, and I thought you might want them particularly. One does not read books of this kind merely for amusement."

"No," replied Ingram, surprised into an unwonted confidence. "I want to make some notes, and should have been quite lost to-night without them. I am very grateful to you. Do you feel better?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Quite sure?"

"Quite, thank you. Good-evening." And before Ingram had time to reply, she was gone.

From that time Professor Ingram began to take an interest in "the girl in blue." Being at that time engaged in collecting materials for an important work, he was obliged to spend much time daily in the city library, and as he was frequently in the lending department, where Miss Saville was one of the clerks, opportunities of seeing her constantly recurred. He soon got quite accustomed to look out for the quaint gown of "Madonna" blue, and unconsciously began to watch and to study its wearer, until he had even learned by heart the turn of her head and the movements of her small, shapely hands. Engrossed in this unusual occupation, he quite lost the habit of becoming buried in his books the moment he received them, and would sometimes carry them away without so much as looking at them.

Yet he would have scorned the idea that any woman absorbed his attention; nor would he have acknowledged that he was ever guilty of lingering a moment for the opportunity of exchanging a few words with the young lady-clerk. He only knew that when he did do so, such converse resulted in an interchange of thought and sympathy that brought refreshment and relief from the monotony of his work. If he was interested in her, she also was as much so in him, and soon the few moments spent in his society became the happiest and best remembered of the day.

CHAPTER II.

ONE evening, several months later, the Professor, on returning home, found his household in a state of great agitation. Little Elsie had very narrowly escaped an accident which might have caused her death. She had been playing in the square where Ingram lived, having been left for a few moments by her nurse, when a runaway horse in a trap came dashing round the corner. The driver, who had quite lost control of the animal, saw the little girl in the road, and shouted loudly. The child was petrified with fright, and must have been instantly knocked down, had not a lady who was passing seen the danger, and dashing across the road right in front of the horse, pushed the child aside just in time to save her.

Ingram, on hearing the details of the story, was almost beside himself with horror at the danger to which his darling had been exposed, but having assured himself that, beyond a slight graze and a terrible fright, Elsie had sustained no injury, he proceeded to make inquiries concerning the lady. Was she hurt? Yes, it was feared very much so. What had become of her? No one could tell him. A crowd had gathered round, but had been quickly dispersed. A man told them the lady had been taken to the hospital; but of this they were not sure. Elsie had engrossed all their attention.

Ingram was furious. No one had ever seen him so much moved. He used every means at his disposal to find out Elsie's preserver, but could ascertain nothing beyond the fact that she had not been admitted to either of the hospitals.

For some days work was entirely suspended. The thought that his darling's life had been saved at the cost, perhaps, of another, and that the sacrifice should go unrecognised, weighed upon his mind. But after a while, the quest proving fruitless, old habits were resumed, and once more Ingram found himself at the library. To his surprise, the figure which had now become so familiar was absent. The circumstance—unusual, though not remarkable—cast an additional gloom over the Professor's spirits. He missed her—more than that: after a very few days he had to make the humiliating confession that her absence was a matter of very real concern.

A fortnight passed, and she did not return. Another young lady filled her post. It was evident she was not expected back. Ingram grew first depressed, then restless. He must find out what had become of her; but how could he do so? Conversation between them had never taken a personal turn, and he reflected with dismay that he did not even know her name.

At last he determined to ask one of her former colleagues. The girls, whose wits were quick—as girls' wits generally are—had often made jokes amongst themselves concerning Ingram and Miss Saville, and now the opportunity of teasing "the fossil" was too good to be thrown away. They all pretended not to know whom he meant.

"Oh, yes; there are two or three away," they said blandly. "There's Miss Davis, who is ill with influenza; and Miss Giles, who went to Manchester last week."

"I—I don't know her name," stammered the Professor, colouring up to the roots of his hair; "but it's—it's the young lady in blue."

"Oh, of course you mean Miss Saville," said the one called Delia, while the others hid their smiles. "I am afraid she won't be back for a long time: she met with a serious accident trying to save a child from

being run over. She was knocked down, and the horse trampled on her."

Ingram felt a cold shiver go through him. It was *she*, then, who had saved Elsie—*she* who had risked her life for his little one—and he had not known it. In that moment Ingram learned a secret which otherwise it might have taken him a lifetime to discover. Eagerly he questioned the girls, and having got all the information they could give him, he hurried away, never stopping till he stood on the doorstep of Miss Saville's home.

* * * * * *

One soft sweet morning in early August, Freda Saville sat in the shabby but pleasant little parlour into which Ingram had been ushered on his first visit. She was not alone, for the Professor himself sat near her on the sofa, making a pretence of reading to her, while she worked with spasmodic assiduity at an elegant five-o'clock-tea cloth that was surely too painfully out of keeping with the rest of its surroundings to be destined to keep them company.

Ingram seemed to be quite at home—as, indeed, by this time he was. Freda's heroism had been the means of ripening a warm friendship between them. In his society she could forget for a time the pressing poverty her illness had done so much to augment, and in the interest of the present she could lay aside the anxieties of the future.

Yet the anxieties were very real. Since the day when, by a brave, unselfish deed, Freda had been laid aside a helpless invalid, the torturing thought that she was, and must be for many months, a burden on the widowed mother whose slender income barely sufficed for her own needs, was ever present. Perhaps no trouble was so hard to bear as the knowledge that already Mrs. Saville had been obliged to undertake private teaching in order to make up for the pecuniary loss her daughter's accident had entailed. Weak and feeble as she was, Freda felt she must do what little she could, but as she took up the work her mother had laid aside, her heart sank within her as she realised how utterly unfit she was to return to the active duties of former days.

"I don't think you ought to work," said Ingram that morning, after watching her in silence for a few moments. "You are not strong enough yet."

Freda drew the silk through with a suppressed sigh and a deprecating smile, that said as plainly as words could have done, "I *must*."

"Do put it down now. I can see it worries you," he continued, trying to draw it gently away.

"Don't, please. I must finish this little bit. The bazaar is next week, you know."

"Bazaar! Fiddlesticks!" said Ingram scornfully. "Never mind that. I fancy it would look rather well on my study table; don't you?"

"No, I don't," she answered, laughing. "I think it would look very much out of place."

"Nonsense! The colours are pretty."

"Very unsuitable," said Freda decidedly.

"You are very obstinate—the only point of similarity that I know of between you and the rest of your sex. Of course, if you have made up your mind to finish it for the bazaar, you will. I suppose you will be going back to the library next week, won't you?"

To Ingram's surprise, the tears rushed into her eyes.

"I—I am not going back."

"Why not?" he demanded.

"They have filled my post. They could not wait for me."

"What a shame!"

"Oh no," she replied gently; "I could not expect it. It has been a long time; and they have been very kind in other ways."

Ingram was silent. A thousand feelings and impulses were struggling within him.

"What are you going to do?" he asked at length.

"I don't know. I—I suppose I must look out for something else soon."

He looked at her earnestly. Words were trembling on his lips, but just then Mrs. Saville's step was heard on the stairs.

"Freda," he said, rising—for the first time calling her by her Christian name—"I must be going now; but promise me one thing—let me help you. I owe you a debt I can never repay—but let me do what I can. Think it over—I won't ask more now. Goodbye." And turning abruptly away, he hurried from the room.

Freda *did* think it over. Indeed, she could scarcely do otherwise. That earnest look, those hurried words, lingered in her mind. To what extent was his generosity prepared to go? What thoughts and plans for her welfare had been revolving in his brain?

The explanation came by the evening's post. A letter for Freda—a letter in an unknown hand, but which nevertheless sent a warm thrill of emotion through her heart. She carried it away to her own room, and with trembling fingers opened it.

At the first hurried glance over its contents the tingling colour rushed into her face, but as she read slowly and carefully she felt herself grow strangely cold. The smile vanished, and in her eyes hot passionate tears gathered quickly.

This, then, was the end of it all. Ingram had asked her to marry him—but plainly, out of mingled pity and gratitude. She had saved his little Elsie's life, and he was grateful: much as she had tried to hide it, he had witnessed their poverty, and had been moved with compassion. He had chosen this as the only way of at once repaying the debt and lifting her out of her difficulties and anxieties.

True, he had not put it quite in this way; but Freda (being a woman) understood it so. He dwelt chiefly on his sense of indebtedness to her, of his desire to make her happy, and of the position and means which he was able to offer her. Of love—the one thing her heart yearned for—there was absolutely no mention. His suit was proffered diffidently and humbly; its acceptance urged only "for her mother's sake."

Poor Freda! Could she, even for her mother's sake, accept him on such terms as these? At first an angry spirit within her said "No!" But then came another thought. She loved him; and he—well, perhaps he had not much love to offer, but he was very lonely, and there was much she might do to make his life brighter and happier. In time he would grow to

need her—even, it might be, to lean upon her; and if the warm and ardent love her heart so craved for was never to be hers, could she not rest satisfied with the quiet, steadfast affection which in due time she must surely win?

The letter was not answered that night. The question was too momentous to be summarily disposed of, and Freda was too much accustomed to seek higher guidance, even in the smallest matters, to decide this for herself. In the quiet of her own room that night she knelt in earnest supplication to God that He would show her the right course; and though, when at last she fell asleep, the traces of burning tears were on her cheeks, her heart was calm and at peace.

The next day the Professor had his answer. There was a tone of quiet restraint about Freda's letter, but his offer of marriage was unmistakably declined.

"He read in the changing expression of eyes and lips the meaning that words were so slow to convey."—*p.* 785.

The two days that followed were the longest and dreariest Freda had ever known. The brightness had suddenly vanished out of her life: the romance had ended abruptly in harsh commonplace.

On the third day, her mother being out, as usual, she was sitting in the little parlour, listlessly trying to work, when there came a knock at the door that made her heart beat thick and fast. The next moment the Professor entered. He carried a bunch of lovely red and white roses, which he laid down on the table beside her. Then he quietly took his accustomed place, while she, trembling with emotion, resumed her seat.

"I had your letter," he said, speaking in a quiet, self-contained voice.

"Yes?" she answered, feeling herself get very red.

"I trust you will forgive me for coming to-day. I will not ask you to alter your decision. No doubt you are right. It is no more than I ought to have expected."

Freda was silent.

"I hope you will think no more about it. We may be friends as before; may we not?"

"Yes—I—hope so," she faltered.

There was a long pause. Then Ingram spoke, quietly, but in tones of intense feeling.

"Freda, forgive me. I have been very foolish. I made a great mistake. I thought perhaps my—my means and position might be an inducement to you to overlook my shortcomings. I thought it was in my power to do everything, and to give you everything to make you happy. You have shown me my folly."

"Mr. Ingram," Freda broke in, startled, "don't misunderstand me. I—I fully appreciate your—your——"

"I don't misunderstand you," he replied sadly. "Of course you could not love me. How should you?"

Freda gasped for breath.

"Let us say no more about it. I will try and be content with your friendship—but oh, Freda! if you

knew how the thought of you has filled my life—how deeply and dearly I love you—why, Freda—darling——"

He broke off abruptly, for there was an expression on her face as she stretched out her hands to him that made his heart leap.

"Do you *mean* that?" she asked, in a voice that shook with emotion.

"*Mean* it?" He caught her hands in his, holding them in a firm grasp. "Is it possible you could have misunderstood me? Can you doubt I love you?"

She did not answer: she only looked at him, but that look was enough for Ingram. He read in the changing expression of eyes and lips the meaning that words were so slow to convey. The next moment Freda was folded unresistingly to that strong true heart that beat for her and for her alone.

* * * * * *

"You really *do* love me, then?" she whispered, as she clung tremblingly to him.

"God grant I may prove it to you some day, darling! In the meantime, let me tell my little one a secret. From the day you sewed on Elsie's bonnet-string the vision of 'a girl in blue' has haunted me continually. I have seen her flitting about my rooms, following me in my walks, even sitting down with me at my study table. Yet, had it not been for your brave act, dear, which has cost you so much, I might never have known how much I loved you. Ah, my darling! we little know the means by which our best joys will come to us; but, to alter slightly our poet's words—

"'The riddles of this life are understood
Only by those who feel that God is good.'"

FAY AXTENS.

DEATH—GAIN.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR ROBERTS, D.D., ST. ANDREWS.

"To die is gain."—PHILIP. i. 21.

IT has been deemed strange by some commentators on Scripture that St. Paul did not make use of stronger language than this with respect to the Christian's exchange of time for eternity and of earth for heaven. The word "gain" seems to them only a cold expression to denote that unspeakable blessedness which is the immediate result of the believer's departure from this world. But, for my own part, I have no such feelings. St. Paul, we must remember, was no fanatical enthusiast. Although naturally of a fervid temperament, and retaining all his ardour of spirit when brought under the influence of the Gospel, he never indulged in the use of extravagant language. We never find him affecting to despise this present life. Nor do we find that he courted death, although he had a settled conviction that it would prove to him a most blessed event, and cherished an earnest "desire to depart and to be with Christ, which," said he, "is far better."

I think, therefore, that the word "gain" which he here employs in reference to death, is exactly such an expression as might have been expected from one who was not insensible to the warm feelings which lead us all to cling to this present life, while at the same time he was sure that an infinitely more glorious existence awaited him beyond the grave. And it seems to me *much* which he asserts when he here declares that death would prove to him "gain." For what, let us consider, *is* death, when looked at by the mere eye of sense? It is the extinction of all those hopes which have been cherished: it is the destruction of the body, through which alone the mind could display its powers: it is the separation of heart and soul from all to which they have most fondly clung: it is the consigning of an active, intelligent, and ever-aspiring being to what seems only an abode of dreariest silence and darkest repose.

Is it not much, then, to be able to say, as does the Apostle, "To die is *gain?*" Only a faith which rests upon the sure word of promise could give rise to such a declaration: only a firm conviction of the existence of that better world which has been revealed to mankind by the Gospel, and an unhesitating confidence in Christ as "the resurrection and the life," could enable anyone, in view of the apparent effects produced by death, to make use of such language. To see the body become insensible and the mind cease, so far as we can perceive, to give any further proof of its existence: to see longings after higher excellence quenched, labours begun left unfinished, a career of usefulness suddenly cut short, and the noblest, the most learned, or the most useful of men reduced to inactivity and seemingly utter destruction—to see all this, and yet to say—to say without a feeling of doubt or hesitation—"To die is *gain*," is to reach the very acme of that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen."

This, then, I repeat, appears to me one of the most triumphant sentences which man has ever been permitted to utter. It is glorious in the very sobriety which distinguishes it. Far removed from the wild utterances of such as might have been supposed to speak under the impulse of a headlong excitement, it is the calm assertion of one who had looked at death as it really is, and who, like ourselves, naturally shrank from its approach, yet who could confidently declare that it would prove to him unquestionable "gain."

In what this gain consists we are, of course, unable fully to conceive. It is its negative aspect only of which we can at all correctly judge. We know the things from which the believer escapes: we cannot

imagine the actual blessedness which he secures. But even looking only at the deliverance obtained at death from the evils of this life, it may well be said that in the case of every true Christian "to die is gain." To illustrate this, suppose there were some happy clime upon this earth of which it might be said—"There no sorrow is felt, and no sickness can ever come: there pain is utterly unknown, and privation of any kind has never been experienced: there no anxiety ever frets the heart, and no sin pollutes the soul: there no calamity has ever occurred, and no death need be dreaded throughout those endless ages which constitute eternity." If such a picture as this might be set before us, would it not be felt that that was a truly favoured spot? and would there not be the greatest eagerness displayed in seeking to reach it? Well, look at the dying believer, and you see one who will soon be in a land where all the ills which have been enumerated are utterly unknown. Sin, that poisoned garment which has been wrapped so closely round the soul that no effort can tear it off while the believer remains on earth, will fall from the emancipated spirit the moment that death takes place, and will not be able to inflict its agonies any more. And sorrow, in the many forms in which all are subject to it in this world, can never enter into the world of pure and glorified spirits. We read in Scripture, in an account which it gives of the heavenly state—"God shall wipe away all tears" from the eyes of His people; and "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Here, no doubt, the description is entirely of a negative character, but it is nevertheless felt by every heart to be most attractive. To be free from the struggle against indwelling depravity, and safe beyond the reach of temptation for ever: to be elevated above all grief of mind, all pain of body, and all anxiety of heart: to have passed from this world of constant turmoil and trouble into that world of deep unbroken tranquillity—is not the prospect most alluring? and may not everyone who can look forward to it justly say, with the Apostle—"To die is gain?"

But then, there is infinitely more than a mere deliverance from sin, or a mere escape from sorrow, to be enjoyed in the immediate presence of the Almighty. There is positive happiness of the most exquisite and exalted kind. There is all that can satisfy the soul and delight the heart of man. There is a beauty fairer than was ever seen in this world, even in primeval Paradise itself. There is an intuitive knowledge which in a moment surpasses all that the most studious, after a lifetime of research, could acquire on earth. There are joys of friendship and society, of affection and employment, infinitely higher than have ever been possessed by man; for, says the Psalmist, in God's presence "is fulness of joy," and at God's right hand "there are pleasures for evermore."

May it not, then, well be said in reference to the believer that for him "to die is gain"? But in order to know fully to what that "gain" amounts, we would require to be able to measure the capacities of the immortal soul which is to be satisfied in God's presence: to estimate the worth of the Saviour's sacrifice by which heaven was purchased for His people: to comprehend the infinite love of the Godhead which will pour itself forth in a bounteous stream upon all holy beings for ever: to grasp in our thoughts that limitless eternity, throughout which the happiness of the redeemed will be ever increasing, according as their powers are more and more strengthened and developed.

"What is the heaven our God bestows?
No prophet yet, no angel knows;
Was never yet created eye
Could see across eternity;
Not seraph's wing for ever soaring
Can pass the flight of souls adoring,
That nearer still and nearer grow
To th' unapproached Lord, once made for them so low."

In vain, then, is the attempt to conceive of the full value of these words in the mouth of a believer—"To die is gain." But, surely, enough is known to induce every reflecting and rational being to seek a place among those who can express themselves in such a manner. Here, however, a caution must be given. There is no doubt that all would desire at last to be able to die in peace. All would like the angels of God to be hovering round their death-bed, to receive their parting spirit, and to escort it joyfully to the presence of Jehovah in the heavens. All would choose to possess hope in the last trying hour: to have fear banished and doubt dispelled: to feel Jesus with them, and His glory dawning upon their sight; and would therefore readily exclaim, with the unfaithful prophet of old—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Blessed aspiration! May it be fulfilled in every reader of these lines! But in order to its being so, let us see that, like St. Paul, we devote our life, while it lasts, to the service and glory of the Saviour. "To me to live is Christ." Oh! let that be the determination of every heart. To Christ let us turn in quest of that spiritual life which He alone can bestow. To Him let our faith cling, as alone able to sustain us amid the trials and pollutions of the world. With Him let us walk, and for Him let us work—His will our will, His cause our cause, His glory our glory; and acting thus, we shall practically adopt as our own these noble words of the Apostle—"To me to live is Christ." Following this course, we shall, like him too, when death stands by our side, when eternity opens to our view, when we bid farewell to family and friends, and all that we hold dearest upon earth, having the peace of God in our hearts, and seeing the glory of God awaiting us in heaven—we shall, I say, be able also to adopt as our own the triumphant language of St. Paul: "To die is gain."

The Lord of Glory Reigns.

Words by Isaac Watts, 1709.

Music by Gerard F. Cobb, M.A.
(Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.)

1. The Lord of glo - ry reigns, He reigns on high; His robes of state are
2. God is th'e - ter - nal King; Thy foes in vain Raise their re - bel - lions

strength and ma - jes - ty; This wide cre - a - tion rose at His com - mand,
to con-found Thy reign; In vain the storms, in vain the floods a - rise

Built by His word, and 'stab-lish'd by His hand; Long stood His throne ere
And roar, and toss their waves a-gainst the skies; Foam - ing at heav'n, they

He be - gan cre - a - tion, And His own God-head is the firm foun - da - tion.
rage with wild com - mo - tion, But heav'ns high arch-es scorn the swell-ing o - - cean.

3. Ye tempests, rage no more; ye floods, be still,
And the mad world submissive to His will;
Built on His truth, His Church must ever stand;
Firm are His promises and strong His hand;
With awe, great God, we now appear before Thee,
Bow at Thy footstool, and with fear adore Thee.

THE SMOKE KEY.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," "THE VANISHING OPAL," ETC. ETC.

PART I.

IT has been well said that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. We are living amid the unseen, and yet we think only of the seen. Mighty forces and subtle forces are round about us everywhere, working for this and against that, impelling, restraining, overturning, upholding, counterpoising, overweighing, hiding, revealing, and we know them not—our eyes are holden that we cannot see.

The unsubstantial is often the most real, and powers which we can neither see nor grasp are often mightier than all that are at our command. The door of the prison opened to Peter of its own accord. The bolts of the lock were shot, though they were touched by no iron key.

Many curious keys may be seen in collections; but the most curious keys are invisible—the keys which open the heart's affections; the keys which unlock the corridors of memory; the keys which part the lips' two-leaved door, so that secrets come forth from their hiding-places, and stalk abroad from their vault like apparitions amongst living men.

The old days, the old ways of feeling, the old relationships in Ireland are fading fast away. All things there are becoming new—and what their newness will end in, who can tell?

In those old days there might have been much that was bad, but assuredly there was also much that was good; and many were the outgushings of the warm Irish heart, many the lifelong heartbindings, many the faithful clingings, even unto death, which will probably be known no more.

It was in those old times that Mr. Valentine Moran lived at Moran's Cross—his rambling old house being so called because outside the park gate four roads met, the north one skirting the park and ending about a mile off at the entrance of a large bog, from whence a good bit of the country round about was supplied with peat. Coal was scarce in those parts by reason of expensive carriage, and at Moran's Cross turf was burned, as well as in lowlier dwellings. There was, indeed, a little coal used for culinary purposes, and there was some used by Pat Mahoney, the blacksmith, for his forge; but with this exception coal might be said to be unknown in all the neighbourhood round. Indeed, it was not looked upon as altogether canny by many of the simple folk in the neighbourhood. It came up, they knew, from the bowels of the earth; but those were dark places where anything might be going on. Who knew what wicked spirits were down there? and hadn't Father Sullivan, some fifty years before, threatened to turn one Tim Doolahan into a coal, if he didn't amend his ways, and attend to his duties, and pay his dues? And what had happened? Didn't Tim Doolahan, about fifteen years after that, shrivel up quite small and become quite brown? and didn't Father Sullivan preach about it, and say he'd been waiting a long time upon Tim, but he'd given him up at last, and now the curse was working, and he was becoming a cinder, and the colour he was was the cinder state coming on, and he'd be dust and ashes before long? The doctor said it was jaundice which Tim had got from taking a violent chill and not looking after it, and didn't believe a word about Father Sullivan's curse; but said Father Sullivan—"Look at him, boys, every one of you, with your own two eyes; and Larry Crahore, you that squint, look at him sideways. Here, Biddy Collins, you who have the best business in Moranstown, what colour do you call Timothy?—he's the colour of copper—the colour of what people give when 't is silver they ought to be giving—that's something, Biddy, to think over; and indeed, Mrs. Collins, 't would be a pity if anything happened to those cherry cheeks of yours—'t is white and red they are, like the cherry in its blossom and its fruit. Next time, Mrs. Collins, that Doolahan comes to your shop, you weigh him, and measure him, and you'll see that he's going off—I can't tell when exactly, but some day—mind you, some day—aye, if it were a hundred years hence, there'll be none left of him. Whenever any of you meet him, boys, walk round him, and look at him from top to toe, and then from toe to top, and say, 'May all the blessed saints keep me from the curse of Tim Doolahan, the man who had Father Sullivan's curse upon him, and who had it all come true, for he went to dust and ashes!'"

And, in truth, poor Tim Doolahan did turn to dust and ashes; for, recovering from that attack of jaundice, he got another, about five-and-twenty years after, under which he succumbed at the age of eighty-one. Tim died, but the memory of the curse lived; and so, what with the memory of the curse, as connected with coal, and the high price of coal itself, and the ignorance of the people as to whence it came, and the nearness and cheapness of turf, coal was "nowhere" in the neighbourhood of Moran's Cross, and turf reigned supreme.

Turf, as some, no doubt, of our readers know, gives forth a powerful and peculiar aroma; it fills the whole room where it is being burnt with its smell—it clings a good deal even to the clothes—and that scent is, indeed, quite a characteristic of the house where the fuel is composed of what many would call the "savoury sod."

The house of Moran's Cross lay upon the edge of the bog, as it was called in Ireland—of the moor, as we should no doubt call it in England. It was a long, low, rambling edifice, one Moran and another having

added a bit to it, for his own benefit and that of many rats, which had taken a lease of the old place for 999 years—the longest time the law would allow—and where they and theirs intended to stay, each the term of its natural life, until the whole building (as rats don't take on a repairing lease) should tumble down about their ears.

Besides the rats, the inhabitants of the house were Valentine Moran, the owner; Kathleen Moran, the said Valentine's wife; Richard Moran, commonly called Dick, Valentine's only son; and Aileen Moran, his only daughter.

There lived also in the house a certain Pierce Moran, Valentine's brother; but he could scarce be called one of the family, though he dwelt under the same roof.

Mr. Valentine Moran, though possessed of a comfortable estate round about Moran's Cross—including nearly all the bog-land which I have mentioned—though easy in his circumstances, and blessed with a good wife, and two good and loving children, was not a happy man. There was a chip in his porridge—a dead fly in his apothecary's ointment. He had not unlimited right as to the disposal of the property. And this weighed on Mr. Valentine Moran day and night. True, he had a son to inherit—and, indeed, this son, if he lived, must inherit; but he had a daughter too, and what was to happen if her brother Dick died? She must turn out from Moran's Cross—she—the one who ought to have it—and the property must go to his brother Pierce.

One chance there was for Aileen, supposing Dick were to die: if Pierce died before her, then she would inherit—that is, supposing Pierce did not marry and have a son. Old Miles Moran, when he willed his property, provided, as far as he could, that it should go in the male line; but he by no means wished it, that failing, that it should go out of the family altogether.

"He believed that they were real sparks which shot forth from his eyes."—*p.* 790.

One can easily understand how, under these circumstances, Pierce Moran was not an element of joy in Moran's Cross. He was a dark man in himself, and he was made still darker by the circumstances in which he was placed. He had been left very little by his father, old Miles Moran—in fact, he was made little more than a dependent upon his brother. By old Miles Moran's will, his son Pierce was to be entitled to live rent and food free in Moran's Cross, as long as he pleased. His elder brother, Valentine, was bound also to provide him with a horse to ride; for the rest, all that he got was a small farm worth about £70 a year, which his father calculated would be sufficient for him for pocket-money and clothes.

For old Miles Moran loved not this son Pierce. He

was swarthy in face and swarthy in soul. He was as unlike his mother as ever he could be; and Miles Moran believed that in that woman resided the sun, moon, and stars, the songs of the birds, the colours and the perfumes of the flowers, the music which the winds made as they whispered amongst the leaves, and the streams as they murmured towards the sea.

Old Miles Moran always said he did not know where this man came from. He said it of him as he lay in the cradle, and as he grew to be a lad, and as he developed into a man; his son Pierce was a dark puzzle to him during his life, and so he remained to him until he died. And all his life long Miles Moran feared his son; and for this reason perhaps the youth often went unchastened when he deserved the birch. Once, indeed, the father began to switch him with a hazel rod for cruelty to a cock; but he gave him only one stroke, for he declared that Pierce's lips rolled back and discovered teeth more like a wolf's fangs than anything else; and he believed that they were real sparks which shot forth from his eyes.

But why did old Miles, seeing that his son Pierce was so undesirable a lodger, leave it in his will that he should be provided for at Moran's Cross as long as he chose to live there? and why did he so leave the property itself that it might come to him?

The answer is, pride. Miles Moran was proud of his family, proud of his name. The Morans of Moran's Cross were the "ould stock;" the first Moran was lost in antiquity; if strangers came to the place, the very rats would leave it in disgust. Moran's Cross must, if possible, go in the male line. True, his son Valentine had a little boy, but that boy might die; then there was a girl; and though, if her brother died and she married and her husband took the name of Moran there would be Morans at Moran's Cross still, yet this would not be the same; and so Pierce, though old Miles loved him not, was put in before any female issue of his son Valentine; and failing Valentine's male offspring, and failing Pierce, and Pierce's children—if, indeed, he could ever get any woman to marry him—then came Valentine's daughter, Aileen: the best must be made of a bad business, and her husband must take the name of Moran. It would be unsatisfactory—very; but though bad was the best, it was the best that, under the circumstances, could be done—at least, so old Miles thought; but pride gives us strange thoughts, and thoughts which do not always turn out well in the end.

"Valentine's boy is but a delicate child," thought Miles Moran; "and if when I die I leave Pierce independent, he'll most likely go, nobody knows where; and if he goes out into the world, he'll never care for the old place. Moran's Cross has never been without a true Moran living in it, and so I'll bind him to it as fast as I can. If I were certain that Valentine's boy would live, I'd settle Kilduriheen upon him; but sometimes I fear he won't, so Pierce shall have as little inducement to leave the place as possible, and every inducement to stay." And to that end the right of shooting over the whole of the property, including the great turf bog, was given to Pierce, board and lodging free, and £70 a year.

Many a strange thing comes out of human pride, and Miles Moran's testamentary arrangements were just one of such; but such as they were, there they were, and they had to be carried out.

When old Miles Moran departed this life and the will was read, Valentine Moran offered his brother a handsome sum if he would forego the right to live at Moran's Cross, and travel, or settle somewhere else. Valentine's wife could not bear the sight of him; Valentine himself was afraid of him; to have him always about the place was a dreadful thought. Pierce was not actually *compelled* by the will to stay there; he had only certain inducements to do so. These were far more than counterbalanced by his brother's liberal offers; but Pierce would not stir. He had certain rights, and he meant to enforce them. Oughtn't he to carry out his dear father's wish? Would it not be very ungrateful if he made light of all his thoughtful provision for his comfort? It was not necessary that he should breakfast, and dine, and sup with his brother and his family; he would look in upon them now and again when he was invited, but his meals could all be served to him in his own rooms, and Valentine was welcome to give him those which were farthest off from himself, if he liked; but from Moran's Cross he did not mean to go. He was fond of the bog, where he found plenty of shooting; he was fond of the very turf; he loved even the smell of it. Pierce Moran meant to stay where he was—and he did.

Miles Moran's pride was destined to bring forth woeful fruit; and the fruit to ripen and be plucked was Valentine Moran's wife. Kathleen Moran seemed to shrink within herself as soon as her old father-in-law had passed away, and she found herself doomed to live perhaps a lifetime with her dreaded brother-in-law.

She could somehow never come near to him without a shudder. True, he did nothing to her, he said nothing to offend her; he only looked—but there was something about his look that made her shrink into herself. There seemed to distil some upas-like poison from his very person. The old man was gone, and there was now, as it were, no one between Pierce and herself; her life was a burden to her under these conditions, and she did not care how soon it went.

It was strange—it was very strange—how old Mrs. Moran, now dead, had had pretty nearly the same feelings as to this Pierce. Could she have only changed Pierce for the neighbouring blacksmith's little Phil, how happy would she have been! Wasn't Phil more like herself than Pierce? Didn't little Phil, though he was only a blacksmith's son, seem to cling more to her, when he got near her by any chance, than Pierce, who was with her always? To her, Pierce was like one full of pishthrogues (charms of an evil nature). She could make out no good in him at all. But of little Phil!—many a time, as he looked up in her face when she went to see him at the forge—for he had a strange kind of fascination for her—she said, had he only been her very own, bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh, he would have been *acushla agus asthore machree* (the very pulse and delight of my heart). And Pierce and Phil were

the same age, too. But it was ungrateful to think all this. Hadn't Bridget Mahoney, the blacksmith's mother, nursed her when Pierce was born? Hadn't she left her own daughter-in-law, with little more than Pat Mahoney, her husband, to look after her, when her child came into the world, while she herself went to Mrs. Moran? Hadn't the blacksmith's wife wet-nursed her son Pierce, and left her own little boy Phil to take his chance? Mrs. Moran was angry with herself, and chastised herself in many ways for not having a proper mother's feelings towards Pierce; and amongst other self-disciplinings, and mortifications, and acts of penitence, she would on the same day load Pierce with cake, and take only a crust to Phil; but somehow or other Phil made more of the crust than Pierce did of the cake; and when the small child looked up at her with that light which belongs to what is so peculiarly the Irish eye, she used to hear murmuring within her heart sounds like the wind whispering amid the dry reeds which were so plentiful hard by the forge-side in the bog, and they seemed to embody themselves into words—Irish words for an Irish heart—and the reeds bent to and fro—dry reeds, with some green leaves hanging fresh upon them here and there—and what the wind seemed to sing in them was this: "*A-suilish mahuil agus machree—machree—machree—a-suilish mahuil agus machree.*" (Light of my eyes, and of my heart—my heart—my heart—light of my eyes and of my heart.)

The reeds were too many, or Mrs. Moran would have cut them down, and so stopped their singing for ever; and Mrs. Moran's heart was not comeatable, to be pulled out of her bosom and to have little Phil extracted and Pierce put in his place; so Mrs. Moran, after a fearful struggle with herself, determined to go to the forge no more—at any rate, not until she had come to a proper frame of mind, and her own flesh and blood had taken its proper place in her heart. Crust and cake she found but poor weapons to fight the invisible enemy within; and, in truth, they were soon taken out of her hands, for little Phil passed beyond the reach of all crusts, I believe, to that land of which it is said that the people that dwell there hunger no more. For many of us there might be in this realm nothing but crusts—more or less hard, more or less dry, and sometimes mouldy too—but there is a land, the mystery of whose food we cannot understand while we are here, but we know that of the people there it is said that "the Lamb that was in the midst of the throne shall feed them." It may be that Mrs. Moran, who took to her room immediately after little Phil's death, and left it only for her grave, read in her retirement, out of that same Book and place, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me"; and that other place where it is said, "And I will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more; the first things are passed away."

There never had been in all the country such a wake as that of the blacksmith's child. Wasn't it the talk of the whole congregation after chapel that, if Pat Mahoney and his wife had been of the ould stock itself, the mourning couldn't have been grander?

"Av St. Pether hisself had lost a son, dickens a bit more crape could he put on his hat, unless he kivered the crown as well as all round," said one.

"'T is riding to market in a hearse they'll be doing next," said another.

"Fader Moriarty will be as bald as me hand," said a third, "afore he gets through all the masses he has to say for that spalpeen's soul."

"By the powdhers of war," said a fourth, "'t is a'most worth dying for, to have a wake like that, and to have the priest thinking of ye for the rest of his natural life—to get up wid ye in the morning, and to go to bed wid ye at night, and to feel he can never overtake all he has to do for ye! And 't is all Mrs. Moran's doin'. Small blame to Pat Mahoney and to his wife if they turn out like the gintry, when the gintry does it all for them."

"Shure, 't is no wonder," said another, "whin ye think how the gossoon [small boy] came to die. But here's his riverince; sure and we'll ask him what he thinks about it all."

"What's all this about?" said Father Moriarty, as he approached the little crowd; for the priest observed that his flock, who were generally on these occasions talking about the crops and their prices—the younger ones doing a bit of sweethearting the while—were now more excited than usual.

"'T is Phil Mahoney's wake and berrin' we're discussin'," said Mick Flynn, "and the mournin' of the family" (who had gone home); "and my wife here—Mrs. Flynn, yer riverince, as sinsible a woman as is in the barony—says, 'Av little Phil Mahoney were the son of St. Peter himself, he wouldn't have had a finer wake or a grander burying; and St. Peter himself wouldn't have 'ad more crape on his hat, av they wore hats in those ould times.' 'T is ashamed of itself my caubeen [an old hat] will be for the rest of its days, yer riverince, afther the sight of the crape that's on Pat Mahoney's hat; an', wid submission, we'd like to hear your riverince's opinion upon it all. We hear your riverince is to say a power of masses for poor Phil's soul. In troth, he's a small gossoon to want so many, but——"

"Silence!" said the priest, who, for reasons of his own, did not wish this subject gone further into. "Mistress Flynn, are ye there?"

"Shure and she is here, close by her ould man, yer riverince; she's stickin' to me like cobbler's wax, as good old Fader Ryan tould her to do, and——"

"Silence!" shouted Father Moriarty. "Mickey Flynn, stand out here; and bring Mrs. Flynn with you."

"Thrue enough, you must go," said the little crowd, "by rason of the cobbler's wax."

When the two had come forth, and were standing there by themselves as a kind of text for Father Moriarty to enlarge on, the latter soon delivered a very short and telling discourse upon them, and in parts of it a very sensible one too.

"There are some things, good people, that aren't for everyone to understand, but only those who are concerned in them; and they're to be talked of in Latin—a language with which, in such things as you are now talking about, you have nothing to do. Mickey

"'What's all this about?'"—*p.* 791.

Flynn, and you, Mistress Flynn, yer tongues will be yer ruin some fine day; and yours, Mistress Flynn, the worse of the two. 'T is shaving himself with it your husband will be some fine morning, and he never came to mass with so clean a pair of cheeks, to say nothing of his chin, as the day when he does that. There 's penances for the tongue, Mistress Flynn, just as there 's muzzles for dogs' mouths that bite. Who are you, Mistress Flynn, that ye should be talking in common conversation of St. Peter? Did you ever see a picture of him in the parish, or the barony, or the county, with a hat on his head? I 'll hope for your sake, Mistress Flynn, that he didn't hear you discoursing about him. Maybe you 'll want to be preaching next. Of course, if you have anything to say next Sunday, I 'll give place," at which touch of irony the crowd tittered, but Mrs. Flynn shook. "And now let me give you a bit of advice: go home and muzzle yourself before I muzzle you, and don't you be meddlin' in family matters, as you 're too fond of doing. 'T was all along of you that Larry Toole and his wife fell out, and they 've never made it up properly since. One would think that the circumstances of Phil Mahoney's death would have shut up yer mouths. He didn't die upon his bed, and that 's enough to make it indecent to be measuring the mourning-clothes of those belonging to him. *Pax vobiscum*," said the priest; and with this scathing flagellation for Mickey Flynn and his wife, and this blessing for the people generally, the crowd separated; and—according to the priest's advice, folk turned their thoughts more to poor little Phil's end—many a one, as he sucked his dhudeen (smoked his short pipe), thought that it was a deep mystery why and how so fair a child could come by his death in so black a hole; for Phil's body was found in a hole in the bog, so narrow that there would have been no difficulty for him to have kept himself up by just putting out his arms and resting them on the turf at either side.

It was little comfort to Pat Mahoney that he had what to him was very grand mourning indeed. It was little pride to his old mother—Bridget—that she had appeared, not in a hood, but in a bonnet covered thick with crape. The trouble was upon her—the "sore-foot"—she had it now in the fulness of its meaning, both "calamity" and "old age." The old age was no trouble to Bridget; she was, so to speak, used to it, and she was used to trouble too—to trouble ever since Patrick brought home that wife of his, of whom from almost the day of her arrival she stood in mortal dread.

And now, how was this woman behaving herself? She was full enough of her clothes: she had settled the price per yard of her gown and cloak. "Och hone, och hone!" murmured poor Bridget. "To think that Patrick—and he called after the blessed saint himself, who banished all the vipers and sarpints from the land—should have brought the like of you home to me here; and since you came, he that was a brimogue [a young fellow full of frolic] is like a moulleen [a cow without horns]. The only fire about him is what he knocks out of the iron with his sledge, and those sparks soon get could and black enough. Many 's the colleen baun [fair girl] that would have put the 'come hether' on me boy if she could. He was not like your spalpeens that aren't worth more than the rushes in the bog—and the life 's gone out of *him* too—and little Phil—he was all we had—and he 's gone,

the heavens be his bed. And never a bit would Patrick ever open up his heart to his ould mother to tell her who this bodagh is; and to think that ever I did her bidding, and that when she fixes those eyes of hers on me, I have to do it now. 'Tis pishthrogues [charms of an evil nature] of some kind she has about her. She bewitched me Pat, and she's bewitched me. 'T is Father Moriarty I'll put upon her some day. He knows the seven languages, and can deal with the enemy in his own tongue or in whatever language he chooses to speak. 'T is some kind of an evil spirit is in her, or maybe two or three, or as many hundreds," said the old woman, as she got excited; "but his riverince won't be afeared. Och hone!" said the old woman, rocking herself to and fro, "and to think that the crowner and all the twelve of them couldn't make out the blue mark upon the weeny one's shoulder! Did ye hurt yerself, darlin', and never tell yer ould granny of it? And now poor Pat's a skinadhre [a thin man]. You couldn't fry a flea in all the fat that there's on his bones. Och hone, och hone! and to think that I was ever 'said' by *her!* If only I wasn't afeared that Father Moriarty would be questioning me too close, I'd have him on you, Mistress Mahoney, while a cat would be jumpin' on a mouse; and," continued she, after a moment's thought, "I'd have him thrate ye as a cat would do a mouse.

"And I was good to the boy," said Mrs. Mahoney, crooning to and fro on her seat. "I *was* good to you, weeny, that I was; and so was Pat; we loved ye betther than——" And here Mrs. Mahoney pulled herself up. "Anyhow, ye got no sour looks from us, and since ye're gone 't is laning on the top of his hammer Pat is doin' half his time, instead of makin' the sparks fly as he used to do galore [in abundance]. I don't know what they'll make of ye above, aroon; maybe you'll be singing wid the holy innocents; but ye were never made, asthore, for being a blacksmith, an' ye had no big arms like Pat; ye were the gintleman all over, and I don't know how 't would have been with you if you had stayed down here; for what could Pat make of you but a blacksmith like himself? and *she!*—aye, what would *she* have done for you?—'t is best as it is. 'T is serious thought, my darlin', you've cost Pat from a'most the day you were born—and 't is good cause, too—and 't is serious thought you've cost *me*, too; but I was good to you, Phil, and I'd give the whole of my ould body to have your little finger back again; and I'd give the cow that feeds us all to know how that blue mark came upon yer shoulder. Didn't I sthrip and wash you myself from head to foot only the night before? and there wasn't a speck on ye, and ye were as white as a gintleman's son; and now the crowner questions me about that blue mark. But what could I tell him, but that the night before ye were as white as a snowball? Whatever I may have to answer for, Phil aroon, I had nothing to do with that; and there's *she* not crying over it, or wondering about it. Did ye turn back for anything, me darlin', when you went down the boreen [lane], or did ye meet a hare [omens of ill-luck]? or did anything come over ye, to bring you down into that black hole, and to put upon yer shouldher that black mark? Phil, tell the holy angels that ould Granny thrated ye well. Did she ever go to a fair widout bringing you home a fairing [present from a fair]? did she ever see ye pickin' at yer food as if you were a gintleman, and wanted more than the praties, and not give you the freshest egg she had? Didn't she kill a'most every chicken she had when ye had the faver, to make broth for ye: and at last the old hen herself went into the pot? Where did ye sleep at night for warmth, when another ought to have had you in her arms, but in me ould bosom, that seemed to grow warm agin for your sake? And I had me intentions towards you, aroon, I had—there was a fear on me that kept me back, but they'd have come out some day. My heart was steady towards you, Phil, though you'll never know it now, worse luck! If the post would go up above, I'd get Daft Crunaghane to write it all to you, and then ye could do as ye liked, darlin'—write me what to do, or lave all just where it stands this day. But one thing, Phil, if you can spake in dhrames or secret ways unknown to us, I'd like ye well to do—aise the mind of Pat, and make a man of him agin. Take him from off the top of his hammer, and let him dhrive the sparks about him again, as he used to do when they called him 'the strong man of the parish." To Fader Moriarty I'd like to be askin' in private about all that I want to know—aye, and about all that I *do* know; but Fader Moriarty, with all submission to him, is an iron man when he's displased, and displased he'd be wid me, and he'd be laying on me, maybe, more than I could bear; for I'm an ould woman now. But I must be talking to somebody, or I'll bust me heart.

"Yes," said the unhappy woman, "they call Dan Crunaghane daft, but I'd rather have Dan's opinion than that of many a one that's thought a wiser man. I'll feel my way wid him; and if nothing else, perhaps one of his charms or medicines will do me good."

(*To be continued.*)

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

A CLOUD PICTURE.

DURING a summer storm among the Catskill mountains, the guests in the Mountain House Hotel were in the parlour, when it was announced that "the house was going past on the outside!" An eyewitness wrote: "All rushed to the piazza; and there, sure enough, upon a moving cloud more dense than the fog that enveloped the mountains, was a perfect picture of the great building in colossal proportions. The mass of vapour was passing slowly from north to south, directly in front, at a distance apparently of two hundred feet from the house, and reflected the noble Corinthian columns which ornament the front of the building, every window and all the spectators. The cloud moved on, and ere long we saw one pillar disappear, and then another. We ourselves, who were expanded into giants in size, saw the gulf into which we were to enter and be lost. I almost shuddered when my turn came; but there was no escaping my fate; one side of my face was veiled, and in a moment the whole had passed like a dream." What a picture of human life! We are in the world but a few short years, and then we disappear. How are we using the quickly fleeting moments? That is the question!

GO, WHATEVER THOU ART.

Whatever may be your malady, you may bring it to the Great Physician, or, as an old writer well expresses it, "If passion rises in thee, go to Him as a demoniac. If deadness creeps upon thee, go as a paralytic. If dissipation comes, go as a lunatic. If darkness clouds thy face, go as a Bartimæus. And when thou prayest, go always as a leper, crying, as Isaiah did, 'Unclean! unclean!'"

"O GIVE THANKS."

Several of the noblest of the Psalms of David begin with these words; and certainly to give Him thanks forms no inconsiderable part of our duty to God. When the publisher had received the last bit of copy of Johnson's Dictionary, he was so weary of the delays and procrastination of the author that he exclaimed, "Thank God! I have done with that fellow!" Hearing of this, the Doctor remarked, "I'm glad the fellow thanks God for anything!" There are grumbling people, who, it is to be feared, never do thank God for anything. They take each blessing that they receive as a matter of course, and are always thinking how much better off they might be instead of how much worse off. For what they have received they are thankless, for what they have not received they are indignant.

DECISION NECESSARY.

Not long ago, as the present writer was taking a walk near Hyères in the Riviera, he saw a balloon, near the clouds, which was being impelled very fast by a breeze that had sprung up. A narrow arm of the sea was situated about two miles away, and the balloon was approaching it very quickly. What would the occupants of the balloon do? Would they try to bring it down before it reached the sea, or would they leave it alone and trust that it would get over the sea and that they would be able to descend on the other side? To come down or not to come down?—this was a question of the greatest importance when the balloon was seen by us, with its three balloonists who had left Toulon full of hope and courage only half an hour before. Here, if anywhere, was a case where rapid decision was necessary. As it turned out, the decision the poor people came to was a wrong one. They allowed the gas to escape, and came down—not on the land, which they hoped to reach, but in the sea. Of the three persons who were in the balloon, happily two were saved by

the boats of a ship that was near, but one was drowned. People talk of suspending judgment and not coming to any conclusion, but in cases like the above they must come to a decision. Not to decide is to decide. And if it is necessary to come to a decision in our ordinary practical life on earth, which is so short, how much more is it necessary to decide for Christ in reference to eternity! He Himself has told us that the man who is not with Him is against Him.

"THE OLD, OLD STORY."

Two books which have just been published should prove of daily and hourly assistance to the student of the Gospel story. The first is a new edition of Dr. Weymouth's "Resultant Greek Testament" (Elliot Stock), the purpose of which is admirably set forth in a preface by the Bishop of Worcester: "Dr. Weymouth does not profess to give us a text based on an independent collation of MSS. versions and patristic citations. His aim has been far less ambitious and more modest. It has been simply to produce a text which shall represent as far as possible the consensus of the principal editors—'that in which (roughly speaking) the majority of them agree.' But at the same time he is careful to inform us that he has not merely counted names, but has weighed the reasons which may have influenced an editor in adopting a particular reading." It only remains for us to add that the Greek text used is very clear and well-printed, and that the arrangement of the references is all that the most fastidious scholar could desire.—The second book before us is Sir Rawson W. Rawson's "The Gospel Narrative, or Life of Jesus Christ" (Griffith, Farran, and Co.), which consists in the main of a carefully compiled "Epitome and Harmony of the four Gospels," collated from the Authorised text, but with notes of all material changes in the Revised Version. The only regret in connection with this otherwise eminently useful work is that the index is not fuller; but the book is one which ought to prove serviceable to many hard-worked preachers and leaders of Bible-classes.

AN EDUCATIONAL DIFFICULTY.

Where are we to draw the line between spoiling a child and treating him contrary to nature, and therefore cruelly? You may pamper his appetite in reference to food, or force him to eat what is bad for him, as is shown by the distaste instinct causes in him. If he is slow in his movements and cannot remember what he learns, this is nearly always due to physical weakness. Then when the poor boy has been driven to death by an anxious, energetic father, who cannot feel for weakness, the stupid man learns too late that he has been trying to oppose the laws of God in nature. A recent case of painful interest shows that it is not enough for fathers and mothers to mean well. They must restrain their irritability and self-will, keep clear of educational "fads," imitate the patience that God has shown to them, and learn that a child wants a great deal of letting alone.

ENFORCED INACTIVITY.

"I am no longer eager, bold and strong:
All that is past;
I am ready not to do,
At last, at last!
My half-day's work is done,
And this is all my part:
I give a patient God
My patient heart."

These lines, it is related in the diary of Louisa M. Alcott, were found under the pillow of a wounded soldier who died in hospital. We commend them to those who are in danger of becoming soured because they have not realised their dreams of worldly ambition. They are also applicable to the slow decline of life, when the grasshopper becomes a burden, and desire fails because the hour for going to the last home draws near.

TRUE REPENTANCE

Is more than mere sorrow for sin, and certainly much more than a regret that disagreeable consequences should have followed sin. If we are truly penitent we shall endeavour to forsake the sin and steadfastly purpose to lead a new life. People too often think of repentance as if it should only look back, but it should look forward as well. Having this double aspect, it looks upon things past with a weeping eye, and upon the future with a watchful eye.

CONCENTRATION.

We knock ourselves altogether too much about. What we are objecting, and that very reasonably, to other people's doing to us, we are too often, and too much, doing to ourselves. If anyone came up to us and said, "Allow me kindly to knock you about a little bit," we should immediately think of Bedlam, or of inquiring who the gentleman's friends might be, so that the unfortunate man might be taken care of before he got into the hands of the police. And yet, as we have just said, "we are knocking ourselves about altogether too much"—too much, indeed, seeing we ought not to knock ourselves about at all. On the other hand, we ought to keep ourselves together as much as possible; the more compact a man is, the better. The fact is, we are, as a rule, scattering our thoughts and wishes in all directions, and our efforts too; the consequence of which is, these wishes and efforts are not gathered like water into a mill-race, having power to do good solid and productive work, but are like water spilt a little here and a little there, with no power—to be absorbed by the atmosphere and disappear, leaving no good behind. Lavater, in his "Aphorisms on Man," tells us not to be men of wishes, but of will. Jack the willer will be to the fore when Tom the wisher is nowhere. "Distinguish," says Lavater, "with exactness in thyself and others, between *wishes* and *will*

in the strictest sense. Who has many wishes has generally but little will. Who has energy of will has few divergent wishes. Whose will is bent with energy on *one*, must renounce the wishes for many things. Who cannot do this, is not stamped with the majesty of human nature. The energy of choice, the unison of various powers for one, is alone *will*, born under the agonies of self-denial and renounced desires." Therefore, we would say, gather yourself together, my friend, for in all probability, without your knowing it, you are here, and there, and everywhere. Put two or three bits of yourself together for some one good purpose, and withdraw them from where they are now producing no result; and for "wishes," which come to nothing, substitute "will," which will do much. Be as much as possible a concentrated essence; then your steam will not be blown out useless into the air, but will turn some wheel. St. Paul said, "This one thing I do"; he fought not like a man that buffeted the air. So, then, don't go about the world in bits. When you really want yourself, or other people want you, don't have to look for yourself here, and there, and no one knows where; and when you are got, don't puff off into steamy wishes, so that you are lost as soon as got, and not worth much even if you can be kept.

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE MOTTO.

It has often been remarked that what is most familiar to us we do not observe, that that which is always before our eyes escapes our notice. Of the hundreds of people who daily pass the Royal Exchange, of the scores of merchants who frequent it, how many see, or seeing bear in mind, the inscription with which the building is so appropriately crowned: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof"? Here is a sermon in stone worth remembering, and its consideration should make us scrupulously honest, truthful, and mindful of our neighbour's interest as well as our own. Its disregard leads to false weights and measures, fictitious descriptions, and the many other greedy artifices by which the seller does his best to overreach the buyer, and get an extra profit at his expense. We may plant and water, but God alone gives the increase. From Him all our blessings flow; for "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

A WASTE OF HAPPINESS.

It is wonderful how little some parents, even mothers, appreciate their children. One hour after dinner in the twenty-four is all they care to see of them. The little things are most interesting and attractive to strangers, and they try to win the attention of their parents in the prettiest ways, but the parents remain stupidly indifferent. Only when children have grown up and gone away from home, or when death has taken them to the Great Fatherland—only then do some fathers and mothers know the happiness of which they deprived themselves when they undervalued the society of their children. People run after the excitement of so-called pleasures at a distance because they do not know that one of the purest and truest kinds of happiness is present to their hands if they would only grasp it. We mean the happiness that comes from the right use and cultivation of the domestic affections. "Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand!" We only know the value of love when we have lost the opportunity of enjoying it.

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

(From a Photograph by F. G. O. Stuart, Southampton.)

"THE QUIVER" HEROES FUND.

On the 10th of May last, as four members of the London Rifle Brigade were on their way to the Rifle Range at Rainham, they found a crowd, consisting largely of children, by the side of the Ingrebank, which is a tidal creek of very filthy water, about ten feet deep in the centre when the tide is up, as was then the case. The volunteers were told that a child had fallen into the creek, and his cap was pointed out to them. Private Frederick Lakeman Banks promptly threw off his coat and jumped into the horrible sewage-water, where, after about three minutes' search, he found the unfortunate boy some ten feet from the shore. Unhappily the child was past help, but the gallantry displayed by Private Banks was so conspicuous that we have had no hesitation in sending him, on behalf of our readers, the bronze medal of THE QUIVER Heroes Fund. The commanding officer of the regiment writes to us as follows:—"Having been away for some days, I have been delayed in informing you with what great pleasure I received, on behalf of Private Banks, the exceedingly honourable distinction you have conferred on him in THE QUIVER Heroes Fund bronze medal. It will be a further and greater pleasure to present to him, on our first general parade, this mark of your appreciation of what was in truth a gallant act, and to read to him your letter. I dare say it will interest you to hear that after Banks' repeated efforts to bring to the surface the drowned boy, his nerves were so little upset, that he returned to the ranges, and only just missed winning an important rifle match—a good test of steadiness."

"'They are for you to walk on.'"

"THE CIVIL FAMILY.'

We have heard of a family of poor illiterate Welsh colliers so celebrated for good manners that they were called "the civil family." Their only chance of education was a Sunday-school provided for adults and juveniles by a kind lady of the neighbourhood. This was the explanation of their civility—they followed the teaching of the kindly lady and her daughters, and learnt their politeness from the Sacred Word. One little anecdote, recorded of one of the boys of this "civil family," will serve to illustrate this. The lady aforesaid was on her way to visit the sick father. She met the lad as he was wading ankle-deep in mud through a lane. He turned with her, anxiously watching her steps. They came at last to a puddle that she could not cross. The little fellow advanced before her, took two steps in the mud, and leaped over the plash, leaving behind him his wooden shoes. The lady, glancing at his bare feet, said, "Little boy, you have left your shoes behind you."—"Yes, ma'am; they are for you to walk on," was the prompt reply. We have here a rural Sir Walter Raleigh. It might not be amiss if some of our public men would bear in mind that the truest Christian, in whatever rank, is ever the best citizen and the most polished gentleman.

ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHILDREN.

From one point of view the death of children is more sad than that of adults. Why, we ask, should a young life with great opportunities and possibilities be cut short, while those of us who have made little or nothing of these are allowed to linger on? Then the drill and discipline—hard school-life, and preparation, perhaps, for examinations—that crossed with clouds and rain what should only have been a beam of sunshine, seem all wasted. From another point of view, however, it is selfish to wish a child to stay here instead of going to a better world. What thoughtful person would dare ask God to keep alive a dying child without adding, "if it be for the child's good"? Nor should parents reproach themselves too bitterly for the tears they may have caused their lost darling to shed. Irritability, or an attempt to gratify an educational hobby, may have had too

much to do with inflicting sorrow on the short life; but most of it at least was intended for the child's good. We are all fallible, and wise only after the event, and when mourning the loss of a loved one we may be too hard and unjust upon ourselves.

SOME NEW BOOKS.

We spoke last month of the first part of Dr. Maclaren's "Bible Class Expositions" on the Gospel of St. Matthew. Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton have now sent us the second volume, completing the study of this Gospel. All that we said of its predecessor in our last issue applies equally to this continuation of it.—From the same publishers we have received "The Life and Faith of the Early Church," an introduction to Church history, by the Rev. W. F. Slater, M.A. The work is perhaps more of a study than a detailed history of the first century of the Church. It is very suggestive and thoughtful, though perhaps some of our readers would dissent from one or two of the author's conclusions.—From Messrs. Isbister we have received a revised and enlarged edition of Mr. Gladstone's papers on "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture" in a handy volume.—Another work from Messrs. Isbister is a new volume of sermons by Archdeacon Farrar, entitled "The Voice from Sinai: the Eternal Basis of Moral Law." These stirring sermons, or all but three of them, were preached during his term of residence at Westminster in November, 1891, and January of this present year.—Messrs. Cassell have just issued a tiny handbook by two barristers on "Lawful Wedlock," in which are summarised and explained the laws affecting matrimony, so that everyone may be sure whether any proposed marriage is legal or not. This little handbook is one which would be very useful to any minister. —Mr. Elliot Stock sends us a somewhat lengthy book entitled "The Lone Star of Liberia," by an African law-student, Mr. F. A. Durham, which is interesting as an explanation of some African questions, and the people most directly concerned.—The Baptist Missionary Society have published a centenary volume in honour of the hundredth anniversary of the founding of their body. To its pages have contributed some of the most notable of present-day Baptist ministers, and it is edited carefully and well by the Rev. J. B. Myers. It forms a good record of a noble work.—Messrs. Longmans send us a healthy single-volume story, by the author of "The Atelier du Lys," entitled "A Younger Sister." The development of the principal character is one of the best and freshest studies we have seen for a long time, though it is slight. The tone of the book is good, and the work is free from any trace of sensationalism. In the main the scene is laid in the Lake District, but the heroine is removed to London before the story closes.

TWO KINDS OF PARENTS.

There are two kinds of parents, and it is difficult to say which kind is the worst for a child to have—the careless, and the over-anxious parent. The former lets a child alone and does not attempt to alter its nature. Thorns and thistles spring up and nearly destroy that field, but the parent cares not. The over-anxious parent goes to the other extreme. He tries to regulate every action of his child. He turns it almost into a machine, and does his best to annihilate its will. He worries it about lessons, small harmless habits, and everything else, until the poor little one hardly knows what it is doing. Children require a great deal of letting alone; but this sort of parent never does let them alone. Great is the remorse of both kinds of parents when death takes a child, perhaps an only one, away.

A NEW DEPARTURE IN SHANGHAI.

A forward movement of much interest to us labourers in China (writes a missionary correspondent) has just been made in the opening of a boarding-school for native girls of the upper classes, to be conducted by an American missionary lady of much experience. One day the Tao-tai (chief magistrate) of Shanghai, with several Chinese and English gentlemen, presided at the opening ceremony; and the next, ladies were invited for a similar function. A great pleasure it was to inspect the establishment—the arrangements of the school-rooms, parlours, dormitories, Chinese in character, but most sensibly and tastefully modified by "foreign" improvements. There is accommodation for twenty pupils, and about half this number have already arrived. A liberal education is to be given in Chinese, and in English and music if desired, and instruction in Christian truth will be a main element in the training of the students. The Women's Missionary Association of America have raised, chiefly in small sums, about four thousand pounds for the institution of this important scheme, and it is hoped that the school fees, moderate as they are (ten shillings a month), will cover current expenses. It is gratifying and encouraging to know that the original suggestion of such a school was made by Chinese parents, moved thereto by advantages of the same kind provided for their sons by missionary friends.

SILENT SYMPATHY.

That is a touching story which Dickens tells of two London 'bus-men who passed each other every day for years on the same road. They never spoke, and their only recognition was a slight elevation of their whips when they met by way of a salute. At length one of the coachmen disappeared, and the other, upon making inquiries, heard that he was dead. The survivor began to fret, and at last became so miserable that he actually pined to death. He could not live without the silent sympathy of his friend. Is not this an illustration of the enormous power which silent sympathy has in helping fellow-

travellers over the dry, dusty, and commonplace stretches of life's journey. Comforting, encouraging words in times of sorrow, need, sickness, and other kinds of distress, have perhaps a greater influence than those who speak them know; but sometimes greatest of all is the influence for good of little acts of sympathy of the silent sort—the hand-pressure, the look that shows you understand, the encouraging smile. This is to give the cup of cold water of which our Lord speaks—this is the little service that shall be rewarded.

HE WOULD NOT HAVE THE COURAGE.

When people lose a dear relative, parent, husband, wife, or only child, they at first often think rebellious thoughts. "Why did God so act? how can I reconcile myself to the loss?" And yet this mourner, if he could restore his lost friend merely by throwing up a coin, would not have the courage to do so did he reflect on all the possibilities of evil that might come to that dead friend were he to live once more. Can we not then believe that a loving Father who is omniscient has done for our friend what is best?

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from May 24th, 1892, up to and including June 25th, 1892. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver" Waifs Fund:* M. G., Manchester, 2s. 6d.; A Friend of Little Children, 4s.; A Glasgow Mother (26th donation), 1s.; J. J. E., Govan (56th donation), 5s.; J. S., Crieff, 2s.

For *The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children:* A Friend of Little Children, 5s.

For the Hospital Sunday Fund: B. E. Yendon, Elgin, 4s.; C. A. M., Londonderry, 5s.; Greta, Great Malvern, £1; Once a Patient, Guernsey, 1s. 6d.; L. B., Oswestry, 5s.; Mrs. Parsons, Clifton, 5s.; Anon., Turriff, 10s.; Anon., East Dulwich, 1s. 9d.; E. L. C., Wallington, 2s.; G. P., Kirkcudbright, 5s.; H. Y., Sutton, Hull, 2s. 6d.; E. J., Wisbech, 1s.; L. E. W., 10s.; A Servant, Horsham, 2s. 6d.

Dr. Barnardo asks us to acknowledge the receipt of 10s. from P. S. T., towards the funds of his Homes.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

109. When the Apostles were taken prisoners while preaching in the Temple, who prevented them from being killed?

110. What general principle of obedience was taught by the Apostles?

111. Who was Gamaliel?

112. What number of stripes did the Jews give when inflicting corporal punishment?

113. Why were seven Deacons appointed by the Apostles?

114. Of what great act of injustice was the High Priest guilty towards St. Stephen?

115. Who first preached the Gospel in Samaria?

116. What noted magician lived at Samaria?

117. What caused St. Peter and St. John to visit Samaria?

118. Who was Candace?

119. Who was the first known Christian convert in Africa?

120. Where was the city of Azotus situated.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 720.

97. The conversion of three thousand people. (Acts ii. 41.)

98. Their daily assembling of themselves together for public worship. (Acts ii. 46.)

99. The healing of the lame man by St. Peter and St. John at the Beautiful gate of the Temple. (Acts iii. 2, 6.)

100. It is generally considered to be the large gate on the eastern side of the Court of the Gentiles, built by King Herod, of great height and most richly ornamented. (Acts iii. 2; Josephus, "Antiq." xv., xi., 3, 5.)

101. The third hour (9 A.M.), sixth hour (noon), and the ninth hour (3 P.M.). (Acts iii. 1, x. 9, Ps. lv. 17.)

102. The preaching by the Apostles of the Resurrection of Jesus. (Acts iv. 2, 18.)

103. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.)

104. The boldness and freedom of speech of the Apostles, so that thereby they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. (Acts iv. 13.)

105. When the Apostles were gathered together after the release of St. Peter and St. John from prison. (Acts iv. 31.)

106. St. Barnabas, a Levite of the island of Cyprus. (Acts iv. 36, 37.)

107. Ananias and his wife Sapphira. (Acts v. 5, 10.)

108. That the burial took place very quickly after death—in the case of Ananias within the space of three hours. (Acts v. 6, 7.)

"THE SMILES OF GOD'S GOODNESS."

A PAGE FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.

DEEP called unto deep, and the heavens seemed dark overhead; hearts were sick with hope deferred, and only silence seemed to answer earnest, pleading prayer. Such was the experience of a household into which came suddenly a smiling store of wealth—a bright guerdon of wild flowers, culled from glen and field, and hedge and wall—messengers that were mighty to impart new faith and courage, witnessing of Him who crowns the earth with His goodness, whose mercy endureth for ever. Trouble and adversity had almost failed of their sweet uses, for the spirits long tried were well-nigh frozen and embittered by unfaith; but God sent them His love, His comfort, in the flowers of the field, and the fetters of doubt were broken: His children looked up once more into their Father's face.

"Lovely flowers," says Wilberforce, "are the smiles of God's goodness." Over the sunlit hills and down in the mossy glade they are shining—the poor man's treasure, the joy of the weary-hearted, precious alike to the hoary-haired and to the child with cloudless spirit: "living preachers," that witness far and wide of the Lord's loving-kindness. They garland the year with cheer and consolation: above the drifts of winter smiles the snowdrop, and the daisy lingers here and there right on into the months of storm. Do we not love them all, as they look into our anxious faces with happy, innocent eyes, stirring within us ofttimes the "thoughts that lie too deep for tears"? Waving honeysuckle, filling the winds with sweetness; bluebells, that mirror the sky; calm, fair primroses, "faint oxlips," kingcups, periwinkle, hawthorn like a bridal veil, trembling anemones, wild roses that blush like dawn, the blossom of wild cherry and strawberry and blackberry—all in their turn rejoice the heart, and proclaim how great is the beauty, how vast the goodness of our God.

Is it a joy to our Father's heart to wreathe His world with loveliness, and scatter yet across green pastures some traces of the Eden that is lost—some tokens of the Paradise to be? Surely it is to set us thinking of Himself—our greatest, nearest need—that He bids the wild flowers grow amid the waving grass, and sends them often by loving hands within our homes, when we are too weak, too sad, to tread moorland and meadow ourselves. Let our hearts be open to hear our Father's messages, whispered by the flowers He has made, the feeble, wondrous lives He bids us to *consider*.

"*He careth for you.*" This is the text of the wild flowers by the quiet meadow-brook, or shining triumphantly on the crest of the rugged mountain. Who can understand to-day your utmost need, the extent of your perplexities, the dreariness that seems to settle across your life like a cloud? There is a Hand that supplies every want of the frail flower-life; there is a Heart that thinketh upon you, plans for you, comes closer to you than the difficulties that oppress you, the cloud that in God's love shall dissolve like morning mist. Air, sunlight, dew, and rain—every lack of the field-flowers—the Creator's bounty gave. Is His child less to Him than the blossoms that shine and smile and fade? Shall He care for *these*, and leave the circumstances of your life to chance? Let not your heart be troubled."

A poor old woman was visited in her attic by a Christian friend, who admired the plant that she cherished, growing in its beauty within a broken teapot. "It is such a comfort to me," said the aged saint. "When I look at my plant I remember it can only live and grow by the power of God, and as I watch it from day to day, it tells me God is near." Yes, He is near in His unfathomed strength, His love that passeth knowledge. He whose goodness is the sunlight of every trembling flower is not far from any one of us—He is so near that we can lean in quietness and confidence upon His power.

Have the flowers of the field their uses, of sweet worth in the realm of Nature, of deathless influence to the listening heart, the seeing eye? and has God no use for *me*, feeble almost as *they* are, yet a memorial of His preserving care, His pity, and His love? Since in quiet He keeps me, apart from the tumult of the strong and busy, here can I smile and shine for Him by the every-day life of unmurmuring patience—yea, of triumphant faith and thanksgiving. I shall not live in vain if only my heart can comfort some other, if my message all around me be the wild-flower text, "*He careth for you.*" Thanks be to Him Who, when all things seemed against me, and human consolations almost a mockery, sent me His message from the meadows, and told me in the breathing of the flowers that in His keeping, His remembrance, I may rest.

M. S. HAYCRAFT.

[*From a Drawing by* MARGARET I. DICKSEE.]

IN MOTHER'S PLACE.

(*See p.* 838.)

REJOICING TOGETHER.

A HARVEST THANKSGIVING SERMON.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," ETC. ETC.

"That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."—St. John iv. 36.

THE GOLDEN SHEAVES.

THIS earth has much more to do with heaven than most men suppose. The shadow of heavenly things is certainly cast upon it.

As those things which Moses had to make were to be according to the pattern shown him on the mount, so the relationships, workings of laws, and many such things amongst ourselves, belong to heaven as well as earth; only, here they have to do with people and things of low estate, and they move only in contracted spheres. Who can tell how much of eternity will be only the full unfolding of what, in its partial action, is already here—here—warped and maimed, but for all that, here?

When our Lord looked upon earthly things, I doubt not that He often saw them thus. It was to the simple law of "fatherhood" acting in poor fallen man that He appealed, showing that as it forbade a man to give a serpent to his child asking a fish, or a stone when he asked for bread, so also would it cause the Father in heaven to give good things to them that asked Him.

And here, if you will look into the context, you shall find Jesus taking the common harvest, and showing that its law and heaven's law are the same—in each case the labourers, in the interest of a common master, are brought together in a common and joyful realisation of success—even though they had been engaged in different parts of the work—that "both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

Every line of this immediate context contains more than a sermon. For examples, "Say not *ye?*" "Behold, I say." There you are shown that the Divine aspect of things is taught by *Christ*. The earthly aspect is the one presented to man, perceived by man, interesting to man; the heavenly is the one that is prominent before the mind of Christ. The "ye" are men universally, men looking at things with no wider range of vision than their common eyes; the "I" is the aloneness of Christ in spiritual perception and observation.

Observe again: the thoughts are here lifted from harvest to harvest. A harvest is actually recognised—for Christ never ignores the real—but another and a higher one also is pointed out. Jesus passes at once into the living agencies; He recognises their work, their place, how they were individuals—one a sower, one a reaper—wherein they are separate, how they come together; and He shows that their reward, their wages, are guaranteed. He teaches what here below, amid many discouragements, we need to have continually presented to us—that work must be looked upon as having a harvest-time, as having wages. He uses the terms "gathering fruit" and "receiving wages"—the commonest earthly terms—to teach us, by substantial analogies, that we are to expect a substantial reward.

And so we might go on from one teaching to another, but we must not allow ourselves to be led away. This portion of a verse contains three distinct subjects:—

I. The harmony of opposites.

II. The existence of continuity.

III. The certainty of results.

I summarise them thus: they will become abundantly plain as we proceed.

I. The first point which meets us is the harmony of opposites.

The reaper is the opposite of the sower. Sowing is scattering, reaping is ingathering. The one is giving to the ground, the other is taking from it. They are essentially opposites. If we saw only a sower, and then at a long distance only a reaper, we should say (without the harvest to explain the two) that they were essentially opposed to each other.

But Christ shows us how to harmonise the opposites—in harvest time they shall rejoice *together*.

There are opposites of character, as you can see in your children and friends—opposites of circumstances; some are rich and some are poor; some ill and some well. There are opposites in gifts: some are strong to work, some tender to sympathise; one excels in hard argument, and one in the tenderness of poetry and song. The world is full of these opposites—fire and water; sweet and bitter; alkali and acid; day and night; pleasure and pain; laughter and tears; such opposites as these are meeting us every day of our lives. None but a fool will try to ignore these opposites, or do away with them. God made them, therefore they have their uses. They are to be *placed*, not destroyed; it is only because of our ignorance that we call many things bad.

Place the opposites fire and water in due relation to each other, and you get the harmonious work of the steam-engine. Place the alkali and the acid in proper proportions, and you get the refreshing effervescing draught; and if you could know the whole of the matter, and could see how God has placed pleasure and pain in the world, you would see that they harmonise—that not unison, but harmony, is what God ordains. The very world is kept in its course around the sun by the balance of two distinctly opposite forces, one of which, if it had no counterbalance, would drive us, like a comet, into space—the other of which would drag us into the sun, where we should be burned up.

And if those few silly, short-sighted women who are trying to be men did but understand this, and how God has made woman—I might almost say the opposite of man, and therein, with all her weakness, given her a sphere of power peculiarly her own, they would be slow to enter on man's ruder path, and jostle him on the dusty highways on which he must walk.

And if those foolish men who, led by designing demagogues, are ruining themselves and others in trade, only knew that capital and labour, the opposites of each other, are meant not to be in antagonism but in harmony, and that they must be opposites to produce the most beneficial results, we should not see trade in the pitiable condition which is so often its lot.

And if rich and poor knew that these opposites must now exist, and that they are meant by God to be parts of one great whole, no rich man would despise a poor one, no poor man would envy a rich one; the man whose eyes were open would not make all rich, even if he could, any more than he would make all poor, but would bind the two together; and he would find that they fitted into one harmonious whole.

Never try to destroy opposites, but harmonise and place them; a time will come which shall reveal the mystery of their existence, as the time of harvest, with bursting barn and joyful feast, and the sower and the reaper rejoicing together, reveals the mystery of their opposite lots and opposite work on the property of the same Lord, and even in the selfsame field.

The next lesson taught us here is—

II. The existence of continuity; *i.e.*, that in God's providence all is one unbroken chain, though to our eye there may be no connection at all. There was a long break between the sowing and the reaping time, between the work of the sower and the reaper; but when the harvest time came, it was seen that the two were connected together.

GATHERING THE HARVEST.

THE SOWER.

Now, the unbroken linking together of one thing with another; the existence of a continuous chain, is not seen by us at first sight. The fact is, men see over only a very limited area. When a word is spoken or a deed is done, these are drops flung into the whirlpool where all individuality seems lost. One thing seems to drown another, and we appear to ourselves to live amongst a number of isolated acts; we think of each thing, as it is done, "There is an end of it."

And hence it comes that we know so little of the tremendous reality of life; that we are so trifling; that we do not think that it matters much about this little word or that little act. We do not connect this our sowing with some future reaping. Much of life is unimportant to us, because we do not see its results. But the chain linking us to a future reaping of results, whether they be good or bad, according to the seed sown, is a real, though a long one. That which is sown someone must reap.

To follow this out, as regards evil, would be a terrible subject. It is one which I am happily not called to enter upon now. The harvest spoken of here is a blessed one, therefore I must speak of blessed things.

Well, see what a long chain exists in the Church, binding together the sower and the reaper, so that they feast alike, and sing together, in the harvest day.

The blood of the martyrs has been said to be the seed of the Church. We, at this moment, are reaping the fruits of the sword and the stake of the martyrs of olden time. The self-denials, the executions, the sufferings, the humiliations of millions now passed from earth, are all seed which we are to reap, and in our lives, and according to the positions in which we are placed, are to sow again; so that we, with all holy sowers and reapers, may rejoice hereafter in the great Harvest Home.

The chain which binds together the seed sown and the corn reaped is, so far as man's labour is concerned, invisible, but the chain exists. The silent night-dews are its links, and the heavy rain, and the brilliant sunbeams, and the elements of earth and air; the slenderest link in that chain is forged by an Almighty arm.

Now, who would have thought that every dewdrop as it lighted on the tender blade, and every raindrop as it penetrated to the spreading root, and every breath of air as it waved the bending stalk, and every sunbeam as it poured its golden flood upon the ripening ear, were all linking together two men, who, it may be, had never seen each other before? The chain between the two scarce ever seemed to exist; but God had given the forging of it, in all its delicacy and strength, to many guardians; and in the harvest, when sower and reaper rejoice together, it shall be seen how well they did their work.

It is indeed a terrible thought for some, that their evil seed will go on existing—taken up by this and that, nourished by one influence, or person, and another, until he that sowed meets with him that reaped, and the two blaspheme together over their hideous harvest.

But I am upon other things now, mark—

III. The certainty of results.

THE HARVEST MOON.

There is something, to my mind, very affecting in the way in which the sower here makes his appearance upon the scene. He comes in, so to speak, incidentally. The harvest, the reaper, the fruit, had it at first all to themselves, and it would be the natural tendency of the mind to lose itself amid all this prosperity and wealth; but it is Jesus who is speaking, and He never forgets what is just; and so suddenly, without a word as to his work, appears on the scene a man who is unknown in the harvest field, but who must nevertheless be welcomed and feasted now. He is the sower—the man without whose casting away there would have been no ingathering. Yes! the man who sowed, and went his way—the long-forgotten man, hidden out of sight, now appears in full honour, in full recognition of his labour, in full reward.

The reaper is no greater man than he in this festive day: he has no richer food, no larger cup. The sower sowed for this day, and it has come; and with the day has come himself. And what have they met for now? That they may rejoice together.

The meeting is for joy; for termination of labour; for mutual recognition; for common interest in labour; for the celebration of a completed purpose. Perhaps the reaper had never seen the sower before. He may have come to reap from a distant part of the Lord's estate; but when he hears who he is, there is no envy, no separate interest. The harvest, the interest of the common Lord, binds them together, and so together they rejoice. And mark! their individuality is preserved, and the nature of their work. The harvest embraces both kinds of toil, but each is kept distinct. There was sowing, and a man who sowed; there was reaping, and a man who reaped. When the sower had done sowing, he was put out of the work entirely; then, in fitting time, he is brought in. He retires but to reappear. He got no feast; now he gets his full share of all that is to be had. He himself, while he sowed, ate the bread of which others had sown the seed; then he sowed himself, and in the great harvest is blessed.

And amongst other lessons you are taught the certainty of result.

If you sow for God, you may seem not to get anything; your seed and your toil may alike appear to be thrown away; but it shall not be so. You shall teach no child, give no shilling, look no look of love, nor speak of its soft rhythm one single word, but that it, and all like it, shall be harvested by someone, and at some time, and be garnered in heaven; and you—you, the sower—shall be at the Harvest Home, rejoicing with others whom you never knew, who are perhaps even unborn now, but who shall welcome you as brother-labourers at that Harvest Home which shall be the marriage-supper of the Lamb. For the Lord of the harvest's will is this: "that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

LUNA GORDON'S STEWARDSHIP.

BY MARY HAMPDEN, AUTHOR OF "THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

OCTOBER came, bringing many changes to the nature-world of Hilldon, as to the rest of the country, but few apparent changes to the Gordons, the Fanes, Philip, or the doctor. The leaves upon the limes in the avenue of Hillborough changed colour from tender green to saffron and orange and russet; the summer flowers faded, giving place to autumn favourites of glowing colour; hollyhocks bordered the walks of the old-fashioned garden, with dahlias, tall lilies, and taller sunflowers in the sheltered corners where the sunshine entered.

The Abbey itself seemed to have grown greyer in sympathy with the skies, and the Virginia-creeper blushed a fiery red with anger because the world was getting colder.

In the early morning silver dew gathered upon the lawn, to be brushed off in many places by the forage-seeking blackbirds. The missel-thrush sang in the shrubberies, giving warning of coming storms; and the river, swollen by heavy rains up-country, sang a loud song as it swirled past the reeds and rushes.

Philip's painting was finished—the portrait of Gwendolen Fane—and he had had to part with it; but, though no one knew as much, he had retained a small copy, a mere miniature, which yet was as true a likeness; for he felt that, though it did not seem that he could ever ask her for the priceless treasure of her love, still, his devotion to her, which was born of deep respect, was a gift which she need not, would not scorn, did she know of it.

And, though deprived of his dear work, Philip Carroll had not been idle. He had painted and despatched to a London gallery a picture which showed to its best the gift upon which he prided himself—his rarely delicate sense of colour. It was but a small work—a female head with uplifted eyes and half-parted lips. "Supplication" it was called, and the new tenderness of his sister Luna's look when she was thoughtful had given him the inspiration for it.

Luna's character *had* changed, though the difference in her was not apparent to people in general. She was happy still, as she had been that night of the concert, and carried her heart-sunshine in her face.

Theo had drifted apart from her relations. Anne she had never confided in, Luna and Philip she knew would not have approved her many foolishnesses.

It was to Jack Dauncey that she told all her troubles, and turned for approbation; and she met Jack often now when no one knew. As the Abbey grounds touched those of Fanleigh, this boy and girl could hold long conversations by the dividing fence—Jack talking arrant nonsense, boasting of his knowledge of the world, his twenty-three years' experience of men and things, and silly flattered Theo believing every word he spoke, thinking him the greatest hero of modern times.

Anne had not altered. She was the same cheerful, quiet, industrious little maiden who had patched tablecloths and kept accounts in the home in the Marylebone Road. She was perfectly content with life as it came, and gave to the flowers her special care.

And the doctor? The doctor did not seem different, except that his conduct had changed in one respect; and that might be for a good reason, as he was a busy man. He had given up paying his former constant visits to the Abbey.

Scarcely a day had passed, during the latter half of September, when he had missed coming into the Abbey, either to chat with the girls over the afternoon's sociable meal, or to consult with Philip over their many common interests. Now October had turned he had not been near Hillborough. The month was a quarter passed, and yet he did not show his welcome face there.

And perhaps the strangest thing of all was that, though Luna regretted his absence, she was not angry with him for keeping away. She seemed to understand the reasons which actuated him. It was Philip who resolved to find out those motives which held the doctor away from his friends.

With the autumn months Douglas Firth's work increased, for colds and coughs laid up many of his old patients, and he was obliged to ride long distances upon that big bony horse of his, the sight of which had excited Jack Dauncey's risibility. So Philip did not take the doctor's cottage by storm until late one evening. He was determined to deliver a sound scolding to his friend.

The cottage door was open, as usual, but Carroll did not enter that way. Crossing the gardens transversely, he approached the consulting-room, which was also the doctor's study, and, pushing the long glass window ajar, walked in without ceremony.

Douglas was there, stretched in a large chair, resting after a hard day's work, and meditating profoundly. His face wore a look of trouble. He gave a loud sigh as Philip neared him.

"A penny for your thoughts, doctor!"

Firth sprang to his feet.

"My dear fellow, I'm—I'm delighted to see you. My thoughts? Oh! they don't matter—they were not worth much. To tell the truth, I was just thinking of you and your people."

"Thank you for the compliment!" laughed Philip. "So meditations on such a subject are not worth much?"

The doctor coloured. He seemed not to have recovered from the start Philip's sudden entrance had given him.

"You know I don't mean that. Well, explanations only make mistakes worse. Come, sit by the fire."

"No, I've resolved not to accept your hospitality until I've got an explanation out of you, and relieved my mind of a lecture I've come to deliver. Are we to believe you fickle, or have you merely felt disinclined for the exertion of walking up to the Abbey? Because if the latter is the case we could have sent a conveyance for you."

"For a five-minutes' drive?"

"Better that than that we should have to bear being deprived of your society."

"Don't joke, Phil! There's serious duty behind this matter."

Carroll stood looking down at the doctor, who had resumed his seat. He saw that Douglas was in earnest, and laid aside his intention of a friendly scolding.

"Well, old fellow, we all miss you. You aren't vexed with any of us, are you?"

The doctor groaned.

"I guessed the truth would have to out some time," he said desperately, "so to-night is as good, or rather as bad, as another. I've behaved ridiculously, Phil—absolutely *ridiculously*, for a man of my age, who is at least *supposed* to have some common sense; and the worst of it is that I'm not ashamed of my own absurdity."

Light began to dawn upon Carroll's understanding. He took a chair opposite the doctor's, and waited for the rest of the explanation. Douglas fingered his moustache nervously, then went on, gazing into the gleedy coals instead of at his listener's face.

"You see, I've always been as much of a hermit as it's possible for a country doctor to be—that is to say, I've met many people in the course of my professional duties, but I've shirked society. My father wasn't popular in Hilldon, for many sufficient reasons. For instance, he owed money right and left—that doesn't endear a man to his neighbours. He left me a name which was held in bad esteem, and a legacy of debts; so I never knew what friendly society meant until you—you and your sisters came to the Abbey."

Again there was a pause. Douglas was not waiting for an answer; he was collecting his thoughts, so as to put his tale in as concise and clear a form as possible.

"Now, friendly society with a girl like your sister, Phil, means—falling in love with her. You notice that I don't try to defend myself. I don't say that I have gradually become attached to her in the way you would expect a serious man of thirty to do. I own my folly to its fullest extent—I've fallen, unknowingly, irrevocably, over head and ears in love with her, and I'm proud of the admission."

Philip leaned across, and laid a hand on the doctor's arm.

"You mean my sister Luna?" he asked.

"True! I didn't explain, did I? It never occurred to me that anyone could be supposed to fall in love with the others. They are exceedingly nice girls, but they are eclipsed by Dian's own radiance!"

"Then it is Luna?"

"Yes, Phil—there! don't scold me! Your lecture

would be out of place now, because I know my duty, and mean to do it, no matter how hard the fight is. I am going to dig a grave for my love, and bury it so deeply that no one will ever know it lived—no one but you. Do you understand how I shall build that grave, eh, old fellow? Why, with a lining of autumn leaves, to be sure; the winter's frost shall harden my handiwork, and spring sunshine have no power to penetrate it. Now, don't bewilder me into growing romantic again! This is a commonplace earth, and we are commonplace beings—or we ought to be!"

"As far as my wishes are concerned, I hope you will never succeed in burying your love, Firth!" cried Philip impulsively. "If Luna cares for you as you do for her——"

"No, no; it is impossible! You forget those debts, Phil; a new one has cropped up now. I shall not be able to pay it off until I am an old man, and my income, even without this burden, would not suffice. You must be mad to hold out hope to me, and I more mad than you to listen!"

Philip, though feeling the deepest sympathy for his friend, could say no more in the way of encouragement now that the doctor explained his exact financial position to him. Those liabilities of the father's, which the son felt bound in honour to meet, were not overwhelmingly large, but seemed so in comparison with that son's slender income. A small sum annually went towards paying off the amount—that was the utmost Douglas could do. He was not a man to indulge in sentiment for the pleasure of it. He spoke but little of the sorrow which had come to him; he did not even protest the endurance of his love, but quietly proposed to bury it away from the knowledge of his little world.

"Your sister is a beautiful creature, Phil," he said, later in the evening, after the two men had had a long confidential talk together; "and a man ought to be the better for carrying the thought of her in his heart."

This was what he contemplated—cherishing his love so worthily that it should prove a blessing, teaching him greater sympathy with sorrow, greater patience with all complaining souls, greater knowledge of his fellow-man.

"But it will be hard for you to meet her constantly?"

"Yes; I have been a coward of late, and have shirked facing her; but that shall come to an end to-night. I have realised—I was realising as you came in—that she is as far away from me as though she were her namesake the fair moon. Only children cry for the moon; and you shall see, Phil, that my childishness is past. Still, I need not come as often to the Abbey—sometimes, of course, but not as often, and you will understand why. Perhaps, without verging upon a lie, you can let her think that I am busier than I used to be. That is indeed the case."

Philip repaid confidence with confidence. Douglas learned that his friend also loved, and the circumstances of the two cases were not unlike. Carroll's position prevented him too from asking for the hand of his lady-love.

If the friendship of the two had been strong before, it now waxed stronger.

"Come and look me up often, won't you, Phil?" the doctor asked, as he let his friend out into the night. "My chimney-corner isn't a large one, but it always looks vacant in the evening when you aren't sitting before it."

Carroll promised to be often at the doctor's fireside.

CHAPTER XIV.

"ANNE, you are really most provokingly uninteresting this morning. You sit stitching away, as though your life depended upon finishing that cross-stitch chair-back, when you know that Gwendolen can buy as many decorations for her room as she cares to have, and that your work may not please her!"

Theodora was lounging upon a sofa in the girl's sitting-room. Anne looked up with a calm smile.

"I think she will like it. You see, I have chosen nice artistic colours, Theo; and as for Gwendolen's being able to buy as many as she likes, that is true, of course, but she will know that this was done to please her. It would be very hard to make gifts if presents were only liked because of their value."

"You old-fashioned girl! You look like a charity-child with your prim apron and plain hair. Don't you care at all about presenting a good appearance?"

Anne considered as she sorted her silks neatly.

"I think I do in a way," she answered dubiously; "but I haven't many temptations in that respect. If you were as plain as I am, you would not trouble so much as you do about dress and fashions. As long as I know I am neat and clean, and don't look extraordinary, I am quite contented."

"I believe you are! What wouldn't *I* give to be quite contented!"

Theo was in a fault-finding humour. She, in company with Luna, Philip, and Anne, was going to dinner at Fanleigh in the evening, but that excitement seemed a long way off, and she did not know how to pass the long hours which intervened.

"*Contented!*" she went on grumbling. "I wonder who could be contented for a long dreary day indoors? Just see how it rains! You can't be expected to understand how dreadfully I miss being able to go out, because you never go anywhere more interesting than to the village."

Anne's face grew grave. She guessed that Theo's walks often took her to the edge of Hillborough land, where the Fanleigh fields joined it; she had heard Theo speak with delight of the pleasure of going on the river, and they did not own a boat of their own. Anne did not want to know any more, because every half-confidence with which her flighty sister favoured her in moments of rare good-humour, added to her burden of silence.

"I can't tell tales—that would be mean," the little girl thought; "but I know that it is not right for Theo to meet Mr. Dauncey when no one else knows. I wish she would not give hints about her doings."

"It is such a pity that you have given up painting, Theo. Phil was saying only the other day that you have so much talent."

"I cannot waste my best years chained to an easel! Youth is the time for enjoyment. And Jack says

he hates to think of a pretty girl slaving all for nothing!"

"Do you think you ought to let Mr. Dauncey speak in such an impertinent manner?"

"You don't understand, child! Now, tell me, can you keep a secret?"

Theo was her laughing self again now, and nodded her head triumphantly at Anne, as she declared—

"I am quite sure—mind, *quite* sure—that Jack Dauncey is going to ask me to marry him."

"But you are both so young, Theo."

"*Young!* I am twenty-two, and Jack is twenty-

"Taking her hand, he looked her full in the face."—*p.* 812.

"I would rather not, indeed," Anne began; but her protestations were checked by Theo's laughter.

"Oh, don't be afraid, you little goose, that I am going to tell you anything that you would feel obliged to declare on the housetops. But have you no anxiety or interest as to the probable future of your elder sister?"

"A great deal of anxiety! Oh yes, dear," said Anne truthfully.

three—no, in his twenty-fourth year; and what does age matter, as long as we know we love each other? It is a mistake to confide in you, Anne. You persistently look at everything in the wrong light."

Theodora raised her curly brown head to a contemptuous height, and, rising from the sofa, walked slowly out of the room. She was indignant at the way in which Anne had received her confidence.

"No one appreciates Jack properly. They are all

jealous of his popularity, I suppose. Very charming people must often make enemies in that way."

With reflections such as these, all tending to praise the lieutenant, Theodora had perforce to comfort herself.

Perhaps it was because she had been defending him from unspoken disapprobation all day that, when she met him that evening, she responded with even warmer pleasure than usual to his greeting.

"Pity me, Theo," said young Dauncey, leading her away at once to a window recess in the drawing-room, where they could converse unheard by curious ears. "I'm in a state of mind bordering on distraction! Every mortal thing has gone wrong to-day."

"Oh, I'm *so* sorry!"

Jack looked down into the face she raised. Her eyes were growing large with anxiety as they watched his to read the extent of his trouble. He pulled the heavy curtain further across the alcove to shut out the sight of cheerful countenances, and explained, gloomily—

"In the first place, I began the day by quarrelling with uncle."

"How could he be angry with you? I'm sure he had no reason; but I often find that one's elders are unreasonable. I believe they take a pleasure in finding fault."

"He found out that I have applied for longer leave, and that vexed him. Of course, I haven't got it, so there was no occasion to say anything at all, was there? And I have got a horrid cold: I really don't feel up to work yet."

"And Sir Lucian scolded you?"

Foolish Theo could not understand how anyone could scold Jack with justice.

"Yes, he lectured me for a good hour on the necessity of work for a man who means ever to be of any use in the world. As though I did not know that without being told! You see, Theo dear, Sir Lucian is such an enthusiastic soldier. He discovers glory in everyday drudgery. Now, *I* don't find any. The routine is tedious to a degree."

Jack stroked his slight moustache, and looked the picture of despair.

"Oh, I am so very sorry!" Theo repeated, clasping her hands earnestly together as she spoke. "It seems such a shame that you should meet with such a disappointment. Of course, your holiday ought to have been lengthened."

"Don't you know what I mind most? How can I bear to go away from you?"

Theo's eyes filled with tears.

"Theo dear," added Jack, bending low, "you won't forget me, will you?"

"I couldn't—you've been so kind to me."

"I can't say all I mean now—people may interrupt us any moment; but you understand—I'm sure you do. Your folks are all set against me, but you won't be persuaded not to care for me?"

"Oh, Jack, you mustn't think that I could ever be so false!"

"I have got a lot to say to you, darling, before we part."

Theodora blushed and smiled radiantly through her tears.

"We won't think of parting yet," she said. "Besides, London isn't so far away. You will be able to come down sometimes, won't you?"

"Ah, you don't know the worst; and I don't know how on earth I am to tell you!"

Jack's voice had become tremulous. His own troubles had always power to touch him profoundly. He was so full of sympathy for himself! Poor Theo was more entitled to pity at the moment.

She turned pale—so white that Jack began to get alarmed for fear she should "make a scene"; but her tears helped her.

"*Do* tell me at once!" she pleaded. "Oh, Jack, you haven't got to go and fight?"

"No, it's not as bad as that," said the young man, "but we are ordered off to India."

"*India?*" Theo covered her face with her hands and sobbed. She felt that no grief could ever come to her which could be more terrible than this. Jack going away for months and years!

At dinner she appeared with painfully red eyes, and could only pretend to eat. Philip, seeing her woebegone little face, reproached himself for having allowed her to be so often at Fanleigh, as he guessed the cause of her distress; but, indeed, he would have found it difficult to interdict her visits to Gwendolen, who was the friend of them all: and of the frequent other occasions when Jack and Theo had talked their boy-and-girl nonsense Philip was ignorant.

Theo would confide in no one now. Not in Anne, who had dared to suggest that she and Jack were too young to know their own minds on the subject of love; not in Luna, who shared Dr. Firth's opinion that the lieutenant was only a silly, impertinent boy; not in Philip—Philip would be sure to find fault.

Once home, she locked herself in her own room, and, flinging herself upon the bed, sobbed and moaned over her first sorrow. Jack going away! Not only a few miles, but over the seas—to India! It was terrible! Deep down in Theo's heart was a fear which she would not let her thoughts express, that Jack's faith would not survive all those years of absence.

CHAPTER XV.

"PHIL dear, the doctor is coming to dine with us to-day."

Luna had entered her brother's study, where he was occupied with some of his art-work, and, laying a hand on his shoulder to attract his attention, gave him this welcome piece of news.

"*You* asked him to come, Lu?"

"Yes, as we walked home from church yesterday."

"Poor old Firth!" said Philip gravely. The words escaped him involuntarily, and he regretted them as soon as he had uttered them. It was better that Luna should not understand why Douglas was to be pitied.

"He is so good, Phil," Luna went on, still standing by her brother's side, and watching his busy pencil. "I find that out more and more every day. His work among the poor is unceasing, and so wise. I wish I could imitate him."

"You have given up a resolution you once made then, Lu? Do you remember telling me that you would never visit the poor again?"

"I am afraid girls are inclined to be like that," said Luna penitently. "Dr. Firth had vexed me, and so I proposed to vent my anger on the people he recommended to my care. Phil, I like talking to you. I want to ask you something."

Philip laid down his pencil and looked up at her.

"No, go on working."

Obedient Philip worked on and waited for her question. After a moment's hesitation it came, but it was not easy to answer.

"Phil dear, don't you think Dr. Firth is changed?"

"Men do alter, Lu dear. As for that, so do girls. You are altered yourself, so you have hardly the right to be surprised that others change."

"He looks sad; not that he is often grave, or his manner less hearty and—and boyish; but he has a sad look on his face sometimes, nevertheless. I thought that you, as his friend, might be able to reassure me—to tell me that I am fanciful and mistaken."

"As his friend, Lu dear, I am privileged to understand him, but not to make others do so."

"No, of course not; but do you really understand, Phil?"

"I don't think we have any secrets from each other, he and I."

"I cannot wonder that you are so much attached to him," said Luna softly.

Philip *would* look up at her then, and something in her half-sad smile made him reach a hand to stroke her face as though she were in need of sympathy. The caressing action reminded Luna of their childish days, when Brother Phil had been her comforter in all youthful afflictions. She kissed his forehead as he bent again to his work.

"There is one thing I may tell you, Luna, because it is no secret; all Hilldon knows it, and I only wonder that it should not have come to your ears. Firth is a very poor man; heavily burdened by debts which his father left him, which he feels bound to pay."

"Oh, Phil! I had no idea of that!"

"He has been encumbered by that duty all the years of his manhood, and he tells me that it will not be accomplished for many more."

"But how was it possible for his father to contract such liabilities in a quiet little place such as this?"

"Some were personal debts. The one which is a burden now is a debt contracted on behalf of the county infirmary which he was instrumental in building. Firth says he cannot imagine how his father came to promise five hundred pounds as one of the trustees; but the infirmary being in difficulties the authorities applied for the money."

"Can they prove that it was promised?"

"By the man's own signature, dear."

"What can the doctor do?"

"He has borrowed the sum and discharged the debt; but it will be a tax upon him for years to repay five hundred pounds as well as interest upon it."

"I wonder if my uncle can have led the doctor's father into that promise?"

"Did your uncle have much to do with the infirmary?"

"Yes, he built it. At least, I can write to his lawyers and ask. That can do no harm."

"Nor much good, I fear, Lu. So you would like to impoverish yourself for the sake of——"

"Nonsense, Phil! I have enough and to spare, whereas the doctor—poor man!—— Is that the *only* reason why he looks sad?"

"No, Luna."

Luna asked no more, not wishing to appear desirous of tempting Philip's honour.

In the back street of the village that afternoon Luna saw the doctor. He was entering a cottage where she had come to visit a sick child, and, after waiting a quarter of an hour, she followed him.

As Luna entered, her eyes fell upon the figure of the doctor. He was sitting by the bed with his arms round the child, and the little one's head resting upon his shoulder. His face was smiling yet solemn; a contradiction in terms, yet not a contradiction in reality. The mother was standing sobbing at the head of the bed, sobbing noiselessly so that her child might not hear, and keeping in the background for fear the sight of her tear-stained face might mar the interest of the doctor's words.

Douglas glanced at Luna as she neared him, but went on speaking to his small patient.

"Yes, the berries are all out in the hedges, but of course you cannot see them here, eh, little one? But I tell you how we will manage: going home to-day I will gather you some, and I'll bring them round to you to-night, if you're a good girl. Only there must be no more refusing to take the medicine. Such fine scarlet berries they are, too! Wouldn't you like to have a necklace made of them?"

"Yes," said the child wistfully; "but father thinks I'm going to die, an' then I shan't want a necklace! I don't mind *much*, doctor, but *do* tell me true. Shan't I never be any better?"

The doctor's big hand played with the curls pressed against his shoulder.

"Please God, you'll get well again and run about in the lanes to gather berries for yourself by next autumn, Nell. *I* think you will, if you ask me; but you must make up your mind to try hard to get strong—that is half the battle. Every time you feel bad anywhere, just say to yourself, 'The doctor says I *can* get well, and I *mean* to; I *will*, with God's help.'"

"Yes, doctor. I guess He'll let me, if I ask Him *very hard*, because father can't spare me, nor mother neither!"

Douglas tenderly laid the tiny figure more comfortably among the pillows, kissing little Nell's pale cheeks as he did so; and Luna, with tears in her eyes, turned to whisper hopeful words to the mother. Then, without having spoken to each other, the doctor and the girl left the house together.

"You are going home, Miss Gordon?"

"Yes."

"Then I will walk some way with you, if you will let me."

But Douglas seemed to have nothing to say. They

walked together through the quiet street, into the lane, and to the gate of the doctor's cottage before he spoke; and then it was with an odd abruptness. Taking her hand, he looked her full in the face, and Luna saw a dimness in his frank eyes.

"God bless you!" he cried. "Where you go you make sunshine; when you speak you utter music. When you have once learned your power in your world, you will reign over all hearts by the sovereignty of love!"

"I don't deserve such words!" Luna answered. "Your thoughts of me are far too kind."

"Kind?" echoed the doctor, as though scorning the meanness of the word. "I deny that anyone could be *too* kind to you."

The simple good-bye they exchanged was an attempt to resume the ordinary manners and courtesy of friendship.

"You are coming to the Abbey to-night, Dr. Firth?"

"I am not likely to forget."

So they parted for a few hours, each to think of the other.

"I nearly betrayed my secret," thought Douglas, ignorant that it was a secret no longer. When his heart was touched, the doctor forgot the demands of the world. He had forgotten also his debt, his humble position, and Luna's wealth; and his heart had spoken in his eyes. Now, little Nell was mainly responsible for this. The doctor was a child-lover, and her prattle had first touched him. Then, seeing Luna unexpectedly, he had found her more fair, more sweet, more admirable, just because that tenderness had been aroused in him.

And what of Luna's thoughts? All the way of her walk her heart was sounding the doctor's praises as earnestly as he had praised her. Where in all the world could be found a man as noble? This was what she asked herself; "and he loved her; his eyes had said so!"

At the Abbey there was a dinner that evening which, in point of enjoyment, greatly excelled that inaugural entertainment which Luna had given in defiance of her brother's wishes. Theo was not there to depress the simple festivity by her miserable little face; she had gone to pour the tale of her woes into Mrs. Grantley's willing ear. Philip was glad because of the atmosphere of gladness; he was too unselfish to brood over his own troubles when in others' company. Anne was always cheerful; Luna and Douglas both knew the reason of the joy which possessed them, though each relied upon the other's ignorance.

When the girls had gone to the drawing-room, Philip and the doctor were both anxious to rejoin them. There was a little desultory conversation, then Carroll rose and proposed an adjournment.

"With all my heart, Phil!"

The two men were no sooner in the wide hall than the doctor exclaimed—

"Ha, what a smell of smoke!"

Carroll paused.

"You are right. I had better inquire the cause of it."

He was proceeding to the head of the stairs leading down to the kitchen department when a cry startled him:—"*Phil! Phil! The west wing is on fire!*"

CHAPTER XVI.

In an instant Philip had summoned the servants, and was on his way, followed by the doctor, to the room where the fire had originated. This was on the ground-floor, but far down the corridor which ran all along one side of the vast building. The smoke was pouring out in great masses from the doors of the uninhabited rooms; but as yet the corridor was sufficiently clear to admit of passage.

As they hurried along, the doctor smashed a great window, so that a current of pure air refreshed them; and the clanging of the alarm-bell told them that aid was being summoned.

Guided by the crackling and hissing of the flames, Philip led the way to a room which stood at the corner of the house—a room whose windows looked two ways, west and north.

"The door is locked from the inside; we must burst it open."

"Together, Phil! Ah! that's right."

Throwing their full strength against the woodwork, they forced it down, and found themselves in the room. The floor near the hearth was charred, the wall at a red heat, showing that the mischief had begun in the wide flue. But the flames were spreading over the ceiling, mounting the dry tapestry of the hangings and gaining power every second.

The rush of hot air made Philip stagger back for a moment, but he soon recovered himself. If the Abbey were to be saved, the servants must be shown how to work. The doctor seized a bucket and set to his task till others followed his example.

But it seemed that the fire was stronger than those who battled with it. Scorching shafts darted up through the boards, showing that the flames had extended to the cellars beneath.

"You must send some of the men below, or the mischief will reach the other wings." shouted Douglas. The noise of the flames was so deafening that he had to repeat his words more loudly.

The men were sent, leaving fewer to aid on the spot.

A great beam fell from the ceiling; it was burning fiercely. Through the gap it left, long shoots of fire reached down as though trying to seize the workers.

"Look out, Phil! more to the right. The wall is falling."

With a crash it fell, sending showers of sparks into the smoke-filled air.

Philip was working desperately; but he was forced back inch by inch, and not a moment too soon. He had just rejoined the doctor in the corridor when the floor of the room he had left gave way, sinking into an abyss of fire which shot up from the basement.

It seemed child's play, useless, to throw pailfuls of water into that red hollow. The flames only hissed the more because of the feeble check thus offered them.

"We must back still further, Phil," the doctor was saying, when a cry of horror escaped him.

Luna was running down the corridor towards them; now he could see her plainly, now she was hidden in the volumes of dense smoke.

"Keep back; don't come! Child, what are you doing?"

Luna was now within a yard of them. Philip and Douglas warned her away, but either she could not hear them, or her purpose was resolute. As soon as she could touch the doctor's arm, as he stood near to her, she unwound the wet cloth from her mouth and spoke—

"Mrs. Wooley—I can't find her—they think she is in the store-room."

An exclamation of dismay escaped Philip's lips as he heard her. The store-room was at the other end of the corridor, round the angle; and the worst of the fire was between them and it.

At this instant a fork of flame shot up through the boards; another, and yet another. One seemed to almost touch the lace of the girl's dress. As she shrank back, terrified, with a low appealing cry, Dr. Frith forgot his prudence, forgot everything, indeed, but that the woman he loved so truly was in peril.

"Darling, cling to me. Don't fear, my dearest!"

"No, not with you," was the whispered tremulous answer.

In another moment he had borne her away into the safety of a flight of solid stone steps; and then he realised what he had done. The secret of his love was no secret any longer; the sight of her danger had forced those tender words from him.

Philip had followed the doctor and his sister. Even through his deep anxiety he smiled at them, while his thoughts were deciding upon means for saving good Mrs. Wooley.

"We can do nothing more in this direction, Firth; the corridor is impassable; but the store-room window overlooks the shrubbery, and there are ladders in the conservatory."

"You are right, Phil."

As the two men hurried away on their errand of mercy, they both carried with them the recollection of Luna's deathly pale yet courageous face. They were the two creatures she loved best in all the world, and they were seeking peril, braving the power of the fire, because their duty called them to the risk; but she spoke no word of entreaty that they would stay in safety; she made their task harder by no terrified cries. A silent prayer was at her lips; that was better than crying.

It was another quarter of an hour before the engines came from Hilldon and from Weirleigh, and by that time the fire had reached the second storey. By then, too, Mrs. Wooley had been rescued from the danger to which Luna had called the attention of Douglas and Philip: rescued, but not without work almost desperate in its intensity.

The good woman, unselfish even when death threatened, had shown the two young men that courage is not confined to one sex or one class; that the old may vie with the young in bravery; and that simple natures may hide heroic possibilities.

Years later, when the fire at the Abbey was an event of the far past, Philip remembered the stern, set face of the old woman at the window, as he saw it against a background of one red glow, and could recall the firm tones of her voice as she called to him—

"Ay, leave me, Master Philip dear. Never mind me—don't risk yourself. You're wanted more nor I."

He held the memory sacred, though in those after-years Mrs. Wooley herself would not credit the truth of it.

"Did I call that to you?" she would ask, incredulously. "No, now I don't believe it! If I saw a fire I should scream like a rusty weathercock in the wind, and want everyone to be saving me first."

It was early morning before Hillborough was secure. The damage had been confined to the uninhabited wing; no lives had been lost—there were no serious casualties. Philip and Douglas had not escaped without some severe burns about the arms and hands, which the doctor dressed, laughingly declaring that he had been too busy to feel his at the time.

The doctor tried to make light of his own prowess. Now danger was gone, his mood was restless, excited. He refused to stay the night at the Abbey, for fear that any sick-calls might come to him at the cottage, and in saying good-night to tired, pale Luna, he did not raise his eyes to her face.

Then it was, though, that he grew serious again—so much in earnest that his voice trembled.

"Good-night, Miss Luna. Go to rest and forget all—all the troubles of this terrible night. Thank God you are safe, both you and Phil!"

Luna obeyed him in one particular—she went to rest, but she could not forget the eventful hours through which they had all lived, nor the eloquence of the doctor's face as he had called to her, "Darling, cling to me. Don't fear, *my dearest*."

CHAPTER XVII.

The brilliant sunshine of the succeeding day seemed a strange greeting to Luna, as she looked from her bedroom window over the frosted lawn, where the trees were outlined beautifully, as by a white pencil, and where the birds were flitting to and fro in search of the crumbs with which Anne usually regaled them at this hour. Their breakfast was late to-day, and no wonder: industrious Anne was asleep—not a creature but Luna was stirring in the Abbey.

It was still comparatively early—not quite nine o'clock—so little more than five hours since she had sought sleep, but Luna wanted time for meditation rather than for dreams.

The fire was still red in the grate, so she poked it into renewed life, and sat down near it, stretching out her hands to the blaze. She had thrown on a warm morning wrapper, which clothed her from neck to foot.

Only the sun was privileged to see the radiance of her smiling face, the eloquent happiness of her eyes, though these were surrounded by dark shadows of fatigue. But, after all, what is a little bodily tiredness when the heart is full of gratitude for some gift of our bounteous God? Even pain seems easy to bear, because the soul knows that there are joys which compensate for all earthly suffering: and not heavenly

joys only—earthly ones, heaven-sent, sometimes. Luna's was an earthly joy this morning, the pride and tremulous gladness of a girl's heart when she knows herself beloved by him whom she has reckoned worthy of her own devotion. Nevertheless, that joy had spiritual elements in it—it was full of a pure, unselfish tenderness, it was noble because it was so innocent and true.

And as she thought, good resolutions came to her, and high desires. She saw life stretching away into a new future where much might be accomplished. Poor Luna! She might dream of that future, but she could not see a danger, a temptation, an ordeal, which awaited her upon its very threshold. Had she been tempted then, or been given some knowledge of the form which the tempter's craftiness would take, she would have crushed down the ill counsels; for faith is strong when love leads the heart. But upon the threshold of that future, though so near, her foot might not yet tread.

The sun mounted higher in the sky, and sounds of activity in the house began to be audible. Luna completed her toilet, and went down to the dining-room, where the girls met her with awed faces.

"Oh, Lu!" cried Theo, "to think that I was away last night! I did not come back till nine—Mrs. Grantley drove me—and then I saw the flames. I was so terrified!"

"Poor Theo! it must have given you a fright!" Luna bent and kissed her sister. "Then you and Anne had to encourage each other. I could not think of you—I scarcely knew you were there."

"We went to our room as soon as we saw that Philip and Dr. Firth were not seriously hurt," said Anne. "How brave they both were! I think they are quite heroes."

"I wished Jack were there. He would have shown how brave *he* is, and you would all have believed in him then," Theo declared; but added immediately, "At least, I wished that at first—afterwards I couldn't help being glad that he wasn't in danger."

Luna looked gravely at the girl's eager face.

"*It's a shame* of you and Anne not to let yourselves like him," Theo went on impetuously; "and now that he is going away—all the way to India—I wonder you can be so unfair. Don't you see how kind-hearted and brave he is! *Why* won't you believe in him as I do?"

This was a new mood of Theodora's. Only the day before she had been wrapped in silent enmity with all the world, trying to hide her unhappiness from everyone but her chosen friend, Mrs. Grantley. Now she was begging for sympathy, if not for herself, at least for Jack. Luna wondered why the change had taken place. Perhaps Mrs. Grantley had not held out many hopes as to the probability of Jack's coming home in the same mind, and her worldly wisdom had driven the credulous girl to seek consolation elsewhere.

Anne said nothing; Luna asked gently—

"Has Mr. Dauncey told you he cares for you, Theo?"

"Yes; at least, he said he will tell me all about it when we meet next. He had no time at that dinner. No one seems to think that he is in earnest. You do think so, really—don't you, Lu?"

Anne discreetly withdrew to a window, leaving the two elder girls to talk alone.

"He seems in earnest now; but he is so young, dear, that is why we doubt whether his words can be much relied on; and not only for that reason—because his character is so unformed, his ideas so boyish, he so rebels against all ties, even against Sir Lucian's guardianship."

"Sir Lucian is hard upon him. He is too high-spirited to submit tamely to being lectured and ordered about as though he were a schoolboy. Lu, I *must* make you like him. His faults are all on the surface, and you will stare at them, instead of searching for all his good qualities. You are unjust! People who set themselves up as being wiser than others always are unjust."

"Theo dear, I don't want to be. I should like to know your thoughts. I will try my best to share them, if you will explain them to me. Gwendolen is fond of her cousin, that is true; and she has known him long years before we did."

"Yes, yes. Oh, that's right, Lu! do be convinced! It has been just horrible being glad and sorry all alone. I have missed our old talks together, but you and Phil always seemed in league against me, and I hadn't a soul to tell things to. Only Mrs. Grantley," she added slowly; "and though she is very nice when things go right, she is no help when one is miserable."

"You must *not let* yourself be miserable, dear. After all, if Jack loves you truly, absence ought only to strengthen your affection. He can write to you often, and you to him. Years pass fast; he will soon be coming home again."

Theo's face was smiling when Philip came down to breakfast. Luna greeted her brother with a delightful, happy blush, and knew why he kissed her with more than usual tenderness. Had he not been privileged to hear those few wonderful, tell-tale, impulsive words spoken by the doctor in a moment of excitement?

Breakfast over, Carroll retired to his study; but he had not been there many moments before Luna hurried in to him, holding a letter in her hands.

"Oh, Phil! I telegraphed to the lawyers because I couldn't bear to wait; and they have answered already. My uncle did promise the doctor's father that five hundred pounds for the infirmary—so the debt is *ours*, mine only!"

"They have proof of this? Firth will not believe it without strong proof."

"That is all right! Mr. Cliffe has my uncle's journals in his keeping, and the proof is there. The money was to be promised as a guarantee fund by the doctor's father as trustee; but, if demanded, was to be paid to him by the late Mr. Gordon. You shall see the lawyer's letter. Phil, this is a world of happiness!"

"Though you have seen a great part of your property destroyed by fire, you can still say so, Lu!"

"The fire proved a—a blessing to me," Luna answered with hesitation, her eyes seeking the ground. She looked very beautiful, her brother thought, with that new shyness in her face.

"What are you going to do about this, Lu?"

"It is rather what you are willing to do, isn't it, Phil!"

"You want me to tell the doctor this unexpected news?"

"Yes, dear. Tell him that I am anxious to meet all my uncle's obligations. He can hardly refuse to let me pay this debt."

"I will go at once," said Philip, rising.

When Carroll reached the doctor's cottage, he was just in time to meet its owner on the doorstep. Douglas was going out, but fortunately his round of visits could be delayed for a quarter of an hour or so, as he had no fixed appointments.

When he saw Philip approaching, he gave a greeting nod, and led the way silently to his study.

Carroll studied the doctor's face with interest; and thought that he could understand its strained expression and gravity. Douglas was thinking of those words which had been wrung from him by the sight of Luna in danger.

Once in the study, the doctor took his stand before the fire, motioning his visitor to a seat. Then he said in an unnaturally cold voice—

"I can guess why you are come, and I admit my fault. Perhaps I regret it myself even more keenly than you can do; but all the same I must say, in self-defence, that no man could have helped it."

"My dear fellow, nothing is further from my mind than to find fault with you. You think that I want my sister to marry a rich man: but you are absolutely mistaken. On the contrary, I should like her to marry you; and your words last night have broken down the barrier between you."

"*Phil!*" cried the doctor, startled into being himself once more, and throwing off the subdued manner so unlike his own, "do you honestly mean that you don't blame me—that you think I should be justified in asking that sweet girl to wait for me while I win my way in life and throw off this incubus of debt? It would be waiting for years: could I, dare I ask her to do so much for me? You are her brother; answer me truly."

"I answer, yes," said Philip, with a smile.

The doctor's face grew radiant.

"Then I have at least as much chance as other men!"

"Do you seriously think you have no more chance than other men?" asked Philip slyly. "I do not speak from any knowledge of my sister's opinion of you—that would be unfair to her; but I must remind you that tell-tale words did not come alone from you last night."

"Ah! I don't need reminding of them. She said she was not afraid 'with me.' That might mean nothing more than friendship."

"Do girls usually reply in that way to mere friends who call them 'darling'?—I hope not; I'm sure Luna would not do so!"

"You may laugh at me as much as you like," answered the doctor, as he grasped his friend's hand. "Phil, that debt still shadows me, but, please God, I shall be free of it some day, and then——"

"Some day? Very soon, I think. It is not your debt at all, but the late Mr. Gordon's, and therefore now my sister's."

The doctor could not be persuaded to accept this point of view until Carroll had explained the whole affair to him. Then he felt indeed that his troubles had come to a sudden end. Love, or the right to ask for love, was no longer denied to him; and he was free again from financial worries. Though his income was too small to maintain a home fit for Luna, as it would only a little more than suffice for his own maintenance, still, there was no harm in realising that she was rich. For her own sake, Douglas was glad of this; he was too sincere a man to trouble himself for fear enemies might accuse him of harbouring mercenary designs.

"That glorious fire!" cried the doctor, his hearty laugh sounding pleasurably again in his friend's sympathetic ears, "I am deeply grateful to it! Shall I be worth more to my Luna than the property it spoiled? I hope so!"

"You bear it no malice for your burns, then?"

"If it had given me weeks of suffering, this joy would have compensated for all! Phil, let's shake hands again! I can never be sufficiently grateful to you for not fulfilling your brotherly duties better. The world will blame you for encouraging a poor country doctor to aspire to your sister's hand."

"The world may go its own way and keep its own conscience," laughed Philip: "mine is very much at ease as far as this affair is concerned. Now, dear fellow, when will you come and see Luna?"

The doctor coloured like a schoolboy.

"The first moment I can spare from duty," he answered emphatically. "Let me consider; ah, that can't be till this evening, then!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

After parting from the doctor, Philip walked on in the direction of Fanleigh. He knew that the Fanes would be anxious to hear the correct account of the fire at the Abbey, and proposed to himself to pay a short visit just for the sake of letting them know that all at Hillborough were uninjured. Country gossips often add terrible imaginary details to any tale of the kind.

Philip saw that life for him was changing. There would be no need for him to seek an elderly lady as companion for his sisters, if Luna married the doctor:—and he had little doubt as to her love for him. The wedding, once arranged, would probably be not long delayed; and Luna would then be sufficient chaperon for her younger sisters.

Philip had resolved to leave Hillborough as soon as he had found someone whom he could trust to take his place there; and soon he would have no further excuse for delaying his departure. Perhaps he had been weak in remaining so long already, so he told himself; but the temptation had been great when, by staying with his sister, he had been able to see Gwendolen Fane day after day—spending often long hours in her company.

Never had Philip betrayed his love for her by one unguarded look or word; but the events which had

"Sir Lucian was impatient for her to go."—*p.* 817.

broken down Dr. Firth's resolute silence warned him that delay is dangerous.

Sir Lucian was at home, and greeted Philip with his usual cordiality.

"My dear Carroll, I was grieved to hear of the calamity at the Abbey. No great harm done, I trust?"

Philip gave a succinct account of the fire, passing lightly over the details of his own work.

"Ah, the damage might have been worse," said the baronet; "your sister will have to rebuild that part of her property. By the way, gossip is busy with your family. Are you aware of that?"

"No, but I am not surprised. Gossip is sometimes right, Sir Lucian."

"It declares that your sister Luna has captivated the village doctor."

Philip was on his guard. He wished neither to deny nor to give authority to the report.

"A good man's love is an honour to the girl who gains it," he said simply; "so village folk confer an honour on my sister when they believe their own gossip."

The two men were standing side by side in the back drawing-room of Fanleigh—a spacious apartment communicating with the other by folding doors, over which were draped heavy velvet curtains. Sir Lucian's face, lit up by the red glow of the firelight, was stern, with a slight expression of displeasure caused by Carroll's words. Philip noticed this, but made no further response to the question, which the baronet had intended also as a caution.

"Firth is a great friend of yours, I know, Carroll;

still, you must desire a different kind of alliance for your sister. Miss Gordon's grace, beauty, and sweet disposition should surely win her——"

He hesitated, and Philip finished the sentence.

"A true, worthy, enduring love. I trust that it may, Sir Lucian; and be the position of the man who can offer that worthy love to her what it may—as long as he is intellectually her equal—I shall give her to him with confidence and satisfaction."

"The late Mr. Gordon would not have shared your opinion."

"He did his best once to separate two people who knew the value of that love," said Philip, "and he failed. I know that Luna's father never regretted sacrificing his worldly prospects for my mother's sake."

"Nevertheless, you must recognise the fact that your views are peculiar."

"Perhaps you will alter the word to 'unusual.'"

"I, for one, do not share them."

"No, Sir Lucian?"

"When Gwendolen gives her heart, it must be to a man in *all* ways worthy of her, not worthy in the matter of affection alone. I shall require that he shall abstain from declaring his love if his position is inadequate; and, as it is improbable that she will ever be thrown in the way of any but gentlemen, he will, I am sure, respect my wishes."

Sir Lucian's keen glance was upon Philip's face. The young man felt it, and replied, with no attempt at concealment—

"I can only assure you, sir, that I respected that wish of yours before you expressed it in words. I guessed what your views would be upon this subject; but I shall be content with less for my sister that you desire for your daughter."

Sir Lucian respected this plain-speaking, and grew more friendly towards the young artist, leaning a hand on his shoulder, and asking with real concern—

"I hope you have not been thrown too often in Gwen's way, Carroll? Young people are sure to get the heart-ache at one time or another, but I should be sorry to think that my daughter should have caused you yours."

"My presumption is alone to blame."

"You will soon forget her, once you are away from Hillborough. Take my advice, Carroll, and make up your mind to that; force yourself to believe that this is a mere young man's fancy, and soon the belief will be easy to you."

Philip raised his head proudly, and looked the baronet steadily in the face.

"I cannot take your advice," he answered firmly, "even if I would. In my opinion, love should not be subjected to such treatment. I have built no hopes for which you could blame me upon my feeling for your daughter, Sir Lucian; but that feeling is no young man's fancy. I am not young, and as I love her now, so I shall love her in years to come."

"*Father!*"

Sir Lucian turned hastily, and saw Gwendolen standing just inside the doorway with the velvet curtains. Her face was pale, her eyes entreating.

"I came in without knowing Mr. Carroll was here," she explained, falteringly. "I—I heard his words——"

Philip kept resolutely from looking at her after the first glance. He longed to search her face for some responsive smile, some evidence that his presumption had not offended her, but he would not allow himself the gratification. In all sincerity he had just assured Sir Lucian that he respected his wishes for his daughter's future, and would not go against them; he must be true to that promise now, when an accident had made it almost worthless.

The baronet was silent for a while. Being naturally a hot-tempered man, he had the wisdom to let his vexation die down before speaking to his daughter. Philip felt that it was not for him to explain or apologise.

"You had better leave us, Gwen."

The girl came forward, and timidly touched her father's arm.

"You will tell Mr. Carroll for me that I—I am deeply touched by his kind thought of me?"

"Yes, yes, Gwen."

Sir Lucian was impatient for her to go. Still keeping her hands clinging to him, she turned her eyes in Philip's direction, and spoke the next words bravely—

"Tell him, too, father, that I shall always prize his love beyond any other love on earth. *Always*—that is the most I can say."

The declaration was made, and Sir Lucian was powerless in the matter as far as the mutual understanding of these two young people was concerned. He glanced angrily at Carroll, but the young man was standing still with face averted; the only sign that he had heard Gwendolen's speech being the smile of happiness which hovered round his lips; and Gwen herself had gone. Sir Lucian could not express his anger to her, even if he had desired so to do.

After all, Philip himself was the first to break the silence.

"You need not fear that I shall speak to her. I shall not do that until I have won a place, not unworthy even of her, among my fellow-creatures. If that time never comes, it will not be for need of striving for it."

"The whole affair has been most unfortunate!"

"From your point of view, Sir Lucian, I admit that it has."

"You will leave Hillborough soon, I hope?"

"Not immediately; but that will not inconvenience you. You trust me not to make any effort to see Gwendolen?"

"Yes, I rely upon your honour."

"Thank you, Sir Lucian," Philip answered, as he held out his hand in farewell. "Let me explain to you that my sisters know nothing of all this, so that you need not deprive them of your daughter's friendship."

When Philip found himself once more outside the walls of Fanleigh Hall, he realised with pain, yet with pleasure, that he would not re-enter it again for many a long day. The pain was the pain of parting, the pleasure was the joy of knowing that

Gwendolen knew of his love and cared for its possession.

As he reached the iron gateway leading into the wood which skirted the Abbey land, he stood to take a last look at Gwendolen's home. The sun was gilding the sculptured stone of the pinnacles and bringing into prominence the bold outline of the oriel windows. There was the terrace gay with urns of scarlet flowers, where they had walked together more than once; there were the seats under the verandah where she spent many hours with book and needle; the flowerless rose-branches twined round the latticed casement of her sitting-room, as by that of the library, where he had painted the portrait, every feature of which was limned for ever in his memory.

"Darling," he murmured, grave sensible man though he was—and the articulation of his thoughts gave him courage—"darling, I must go and work for you!"

Poor Philip! The task which he had set himself might never bring him the success he needed, and he did not deceive himself with many hopes. He was no youthful enthusiast credulously confident of making fame his own; he was only a man who would not tamely yield to adverse fortune without a struggle. Visions of a wonderful winning of prosperity did not claim his thoughts as he walked homeward; he was foreseeing rather the daily drudgery which attends all great attempts—the disasters, trials, and failures of an artist's life—and yet his heart was brave within him, because these ills were to be borne by God's aid and for the girl he loved.

(To be concluded.)

SPIRITUAL FAILURES.

DEMAS.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

EMAS was regarded by some writers of the early Church as an apostate. We have no authority for such an opinion. He did not deny the faith, nor (so far as we are informed) did he attempt to leave the Christian community. And we remember him among spiritual failures not because we dare to pronounce upon his destiny, but that in a great spiritual trial he was found wanting.

It is impossible for us to assume that he was a rare instance of such failure. Many of his kindred have been found in every generation; and though none may now be called by his name, the relationship of thousands may be ascertained by their deeds.

Demas was a Christian. He was baptised; he was apparently in full communion with the Church; he was a Christian worker; he died, for all we know, a Christian still. Failure fell upon him because of his fault; and unless we remedy our own faults we shall be subjected to failure too.

Of the history of Demas we know nothing. He bore a Greek name, and he was, probably enough, a Gentile convert of St. Paul's, from Greece or from Asia Minor. He is mentioned three times in the New Testament. In the Epistle to the Colossians he is coupled with St. Luke in sending a message of cheer and courage to that Church. In the contemporary letter to Philemon he is described as a fellow-worker with the apostle. But in the darker days which fell upon St. Paul he is dissevered from the beloved physician, and has forsaken the prison at Rome for Thessalonica. There the record ends.

We see, therefore, with that clear definiteness which distinguishes the Bible, the three points of weakness in his character. He loved the world; he forsook his friend in the time of need; and did both because of only partial consecration to Christ.

"He loved the world." The world means the present system of things considered apart from their relation to God. It is this element of isolation which constitutes its curse, and because of this St. John says that "If a man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." It is precisely the same sin which Jesus describes when He tells us that if we are apart from Him we can do nothing: that is, our spiritual life from the very nature of such a circumstance is bound to be barren.

That world, too, must pass away. Its transience and mutability are a part of its evil. It is not the material bodies of the earth and the stars. They will be transformed in the future, as they have been in the past. The epochs of the earth have their marvellous history suggested within its own rocky records—fragments of the libraries of romance that await our intelligence in another world. But whatever the change, the earth has been itself through them all. Before the light glowed out of darkness, it was the earth; it will be the earth still when the lurid fires of the concluding age shall have gone out. The whole material universe is changing, but the universe still remains. Stars cease to shine; burst asunder by some incalculable force, they are scattered far and wide in the trackless space. But the shattered pieces are somewhere—wanderers in some region of their own, or new accessories to the bulk of other bodies. Yet, who can regard the heavens and say that when the last day has come the eyes of the rising bodies of the saints shall behold no firmament? That were too

bold a speculation. And in truth, it were a state of things beyond our conceiving. We cannot think of the sun or the moon, or the sweet evening star as no more. In some form or other all must subsist.

So the love of the world does not mean the love of nature; the tender affection for the lone corners of the mountains; for a far-sweeping English valley; for the rich colouring of Irish heights around a lake that mirrors their outlines and their hues; for the wildness of the forest depths, and the grandeur of the play of the sea. The purest of poets has told us of his own purest days:—

> "For Nature then
> To me was all in all. I cannot paint
> What then I was. The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colour and their forms were then to me
> An appetite: a feeling and a love
> That had no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, nor any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye!"

It may be taken for granted that we who love these cannot dissociate them from their Creator. If you have ever entertained a true affection for them, or for one of them, try to draw it apart: to imagine it by itself: to think of it without some association or environment of a mightier and purer Power. It is because we are compelled to think of these *together* that the love of the material world becomes an elevating passion. It will not make us Christians even in name, and still less will it make us saints; but if we are true saints and lovers of Christ, we shall be better Christians than before.

But to take the world as it stands—not the solid fields and hills, but these as related only to ourselves for our own immediate personal advantage: to take the men and women upon it as creatures to contribute only to our comfort, or to be tricked and cheated if we are cleverer than they: to place them all on one side and each man by himself upon the other: to let loose his own grosser passions, to gather up his being, his interest, and his heart closer and closer within himself, until selfishness rolls him round and round as they rolled in linen the Egyptian corpses—this is the destruction of the soul, the denying of God, the eternal fixed gulf that separates us from salvation.

There is another love of the world which is equally perilous. It is to love the approbation of the world as distinct from that of God. In this case "the world" means the worldly society that is upon it. And this weakness is commoner than many think. There are scores of people whose chief thought is to win such approval, whatever it may cost—the frenzied love of higher society than we have been accustomed to; the labour, expense, and galling disappointment we submit to, and even welcome; the desire to be thought well-born, well-bred, well-educated; the affectation of manners and habits that are utterly unreal to us; the miserable and laughable devices we adopt to make ourselves prettier than Nature, with her better sense, ever intended us to be: all are examples and instances of the love of the world. It will never pay us. That world would gladly help us to spend our money; it will sit at your table with polite appetite, and use you as long as you may be of use. But if you were starving it would not give you a guinea to save you from a premature grave. If you were sick, it would never visit you. If you were dead, it would recall your name as it ran down the list in the morning's paper, and rush on to its own enjoyment or occupation, and forget you before an hour had gone.

There is another world yet. It is the world we fear. And it is more than likely that this was the world which sullied the fair fame of Demas. His earthly position was not enviable. Neither was St. Paul's. Christianity was not popular in Rome. "Cæsar's household" of the Epistle must have changed a good deal in Nero's time. Christians turned into torches; bodies ablaze along the streets in dark nights; sensitive limbs torn from quivering trunks in the theatre—were sights to make the boldest quail. Men will do faulty things through fear which they would never do under the direction of a calm and balanced mind. Their actions look bad in after-time. They do not sound well when read from a book. Abraham tells his lie unblushingly. Joseph's brethren follow their grandsire's example. Saul seeks an incantation. Peter denies his Lord. Demas may claim fair company in fearing that huge selfish Roman world that shouted in its own exultation outside the prison gate.

The hero lay hard by. It was a closer imprisonment than the former one; St. Paul is no longer in his hired house. But, like the three Hebrew children in the midst of the furnace, he has the companionship of the Son of God. At first there was Crescens; Tychicus, too, was with him for a while; so was Titus; so were Luke and Demas. Some are sent upon distant missions, until only two are left. Then Demas goes, and Luke remains alone, second in heroism only to his great chief. But all men are not heroes; some never think of becoming such, and would be infinitely surprised if they stumbled by chance into heroic ways. About the time of this occurrence it is said that St. Peter also was in Rome; and the clamour of persecution and the murmur of bloody threats rose about him, and he tried to flee. But just as he emerged from the city, his Lord met him. Peter could only stammer out his amazement in the words, "Lord, where are you going?"—"To Rome," was the pathetic answer, "to be crucified." And the Apostle, stung by the reproof, turned back, and was there crucified himself for the Master's sake.

Here is an office in the City. A youth has just come to it for his daily work, fresh from his home and the hallowed associations of his early life. If he has had little experience in religion, at any rate the Kingdom of God holds the first place in his heart. He listens to the conversation that now and then is whispered near to him. Everything which has been sacred to him is laughed at and contemned. The older hands are the boldest and the loudest in their ribaldry. No one but himself dares to utter a word for God, and when he

attempts it he is met with the laughter which cuts more quickly than arguments, and those jeers which few can steel themselves to stand. Day by day the process is repeated. If the young man is to stay there he must either change his companions or change himself. But they are too many for him, and to stay there means employment and bread. Gradually the poison enters into his soul; apathy takes the place of earnestness, and the fear of companions has hunted salvation from his soul.

This varied world—the worldliness which we are apter to learn than most lessons—makes us like Demas, and we fly.

This led Demas into the second element in his failure. He forsook his friend at the time when he was wanted most. There is a tendency in our country—perhaps, if we knew them, we should find it the same in all countries—to forget the sacredness of friendship and the duty of personal service to our fellow-man. Poor Goldsmith—buffeted enough as he was by evil circumstances—must have felt it when he asked the question—

> "And what is friendship but a name,
> A charm that lulls to sleep;
> A shade that follows wealth and fame,
> But leaves the wretch to weep?"

Friendship loves more and more the fair weather, and cowers under the gloom and growl of the rising tempest. Above everything, it delights in its own security. Was it not, therefore, with a profound insight into character that Jesus defined greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven as service? He who is able to serve all people around him is the greatest; and Demas was able to serve awhile and serve a little, and then faith, like himself, fled.

There was yet a third element, which, indeed, runs through all the characters we have been considering: and that was imperfect consecration to God. There is no nobleness in trying to hold on to both worlds. The very division of interest and affection blurs the sight, and we look forth into a haze shot with different hues. We are driven and drawn in contrary directions, and kept all the while in uneasiness and doubt. The single eye was an important factor in Christ's true man. It let the light straight in. There was no unnecessary refraction or discolouring from crooked or tainted mediums. Christian life is like the apex of a pyramid. Let the top and crown of it be God, and that will determine as by a natural and easy process the outlines of the whole. Christ, all in all, lets us attain and keep our right position in the world. The things which are above are, as Plato dimly saw, the realities and types of which the things below are only the shadows.

If Demas could have feasted his eyes upon them: if he could have learnt how short the last step of earth's life is, and how very easy, he would have held by the higher duty until the end. Had he thought of life as a cheap thing compared with the valour and virtue of his manhood and the honour of the Master who saved him, he would have reached Paradise all the sooner and all the happier, and he would have left behind him a better reputation than this—that he loved the present evil world.

When will the Church learn that thoroughness is an essential of happiness and religion: that God and Mammon cannot subsist side by side in a man's heart: that between Jesus in glory and Dives in hell there is an impassable abyss? Jacob cheating; Saul half-converted; Solomon sensuous and selfish; Jonah renegade and coward; Judas blind and greedy and untrue; Demas affrighted by the world and lured to dastardly desertion—these failed to attain the highest and the happiest. To all, that free land of the saints is open. The narrow ways of men lead right up to it, as well as the kingly highways; and he who follows on—consecrated, devoted, glad, and strong in the Lord—will find that—

> "The toppling crags of Duty scaled,
> Are close upon the shining table-lands
> To which our God Himself is moon and sun."

SOME FAMOUS CRYPTS.

CRYPTS and the building of crypts have gone out of fashion. There was a time, however, some centuries ago, when they were considered a very important part of an edifice set apart for worship. The more stupendous and sumptuous the building, the more certain it was that there was a crypt painstakingly placed below it. A small church might be built without one; but a large one, never. Thus we find crypts below such of our cathedrals as were founded in Saxon times, though smaller churches of the same antiquity may not possess them; and curiously, such edifices as were furnished with crypts to begin with, retain those features even when, as in some instances, they have been rased to the ground, and rebuilt from that level in later centuries; and in some cases Saxon crypts were not quietly preserved just as they were, but were enlarged and elaborated in additional subterranean work made subsequently. Occasionally, even now, these hoary old relics, long unused and sometimes quite forgotten, are discovered beneath ancient churches, either partially or quite filled up with rubbish, or containing evidence that they have been taken advantage of for burial vaults. The custom of crypt-building lasted for five or six

THE CRYPT OF ST. PAUL'S.

hundred years; for some of the examples we still possess are of seventh-century workmanship, and some must be attributed to Edwardian workmen; and now, as has been said, it has ceased.

It is worth while to examine these enduring remains of old times. There are two examples north of the Humber, that have not been tampered with, that are of indisputable Saxon workmanship. The first of these is the crypt below Ripon Cathedral; the second is that beneath Hexham Abbey Church. The Ripon crypt is a plain barrel-vaulted chamber about eleven feet long and nearly eight feet wide, with no pillars or groining, nor ornamentation of any kind in it. A few steps downwards is a dark narrow passage about forty-five feet long, giving access to it from the nave. The term "needle," or "St. Wilfred's Needle," has been applied to this crypt, on account, probably, of a practice that has been made of creeping through an opening in the north wall, into a narrower cell or passage on that side of it, as a possible means of securing good fortune. There is no evidence that the aperture in question was made for the purpose of being threaded in this manner, and we shall probably never ascertain now the exact intention of it; but it is something to see this relic as the old Saxon worshippers saw it in the seventh century, with the low semicircular vault overhead, the dark walls with their recesses, and the rough floor. The Hexham crypt is somewhat like it, only longer. It measures more than thirteen feet from west to east, and nearly eight feet across. It is also approached from the interior of the church, and it is below the fine tower. Those who descend into it find themselves first in a small chamber, or ante-chapel, from which a semicircular-headed doorway opens into it. As at Ripon, there are low niches hollowed out of the walls, in which lamps may have been placed to lighten the darkness. There are also built into the walls some stones of Roman workmanship, such as a fragment of an altar, and tablets with long inscriptions upon them, but so built as to show they were of no account, but only used as ordinary building materials. For more than a thousand years these venerable subterranean chapels have remained as we see them, whilst the structures above them have undergone various reverses of fortune and rebuildings in the centuries that have slowly come and gone. We may notice that the builders in the Plantagenet days at Hexham, who reared the grand Abbey Church that has come down to us, adapted their great central tower to this crypt and the three sets of steps that communicated with it. They placed the foundations of the north-west pier of their tower on the south side of one descent to it, and those of the south-west pier south of the second descent, and they contrived that the third descent, or ascent, should also come within the confines of their structure. Thus all three entrances and the crypt were like a core, complete in themselves within and below the other edifice, in the centre of the commencement of the eastern end of the nave. The Ripon crypt is also in the centre of the building, below the front of the choir. In old times "relics" of martyrs were generally kept in these underground chapels; and on occasions such as anniversaries of the leading events in their lives, or perhaps their births or deaths, special services were held therein in remembrance of them. In the seventh century, especially, keepsakes of this sort were collected from all parts of Europe, and brought to Hexham by one of the bishops, named Acca, who was a contemporary and friend of the Venerable Bede. He is said by early writers to have made the church so sumptuous with carvings and pictures, that there was nothing to compare with Hexham Abbey Church on this side of the Alps; and

this writer—Prior Richard—makes special mention of crypts, underground oratories, and winding passages with which it was constructed. Again and again antiquaries explore these subterranean cells, hoping to light upon further remains or make explanatory discoveries.

There is a third Saxon crypt, as perfect, in Derbyshire, below Repton Church. This is of a somewhat later date. It is larger than those that have been mentioned, being about seventeen feet square. The roof is supported on four columns, which, though they have but plain square caps, are wreathed with ornamental carving. There are three entrances into it, two of which are in the church above it, and the other is on the north side of the exterior, conveu in subsequent buildings of the kind. The two descents from the church were intended for the officiating clergy and worshippers respectively, and the exit on the north side for the departure of the latter on the conclusion of the service. This plan left room for the descent of a further instalment in the stream of worshippers, without giving rise to any confusion. As in the other instances mentioned, the Saxon fabric that once rose over Repton crypt, that saw the Saxon maidens at their devotions, and heard their silver-toned singing, has been superseded, and the building above it that has been handed down to us is of much later workmanship.

Crypts built in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries are of considerably larger dimensions than those of the dim old hoary times, when the Saxon masons, with few appliances, carried their stones laboriously and set them in their places. The roofs of these later structures are superbly groined and upheld with columns, cylindrical or clustered, according to the fashion of the day when they were built, furnished with handsome bases and carved caps. The history of the crypt under St. Paul's is interesting. In the thirteenth century the Church of St. Faith,

CRYPT, CANTERBURY.

ST. STEPHEN'S CRYPT, WESTMINSTER PALACE.

which, like the parish church of St. Gregory, was then above ground, with a chapel adjoining it, was transferred to the crypt, to make room for an extension of the cathedral. It will be remembered that both St. Paul's and Westminster were founded in Saxon times; but the crypts of both, that we now find in them, like those below York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral, belong to a subsequent period. Old views show the windows and buttresses of St. Faith's below those of the north side of the choir of the cathedral. All perished in the Great Fire in King Charles's reign; and when Pepys went out to see the extent of the damage, he saw, as he tells us, "the body of the quire fallen into St. Faith's."

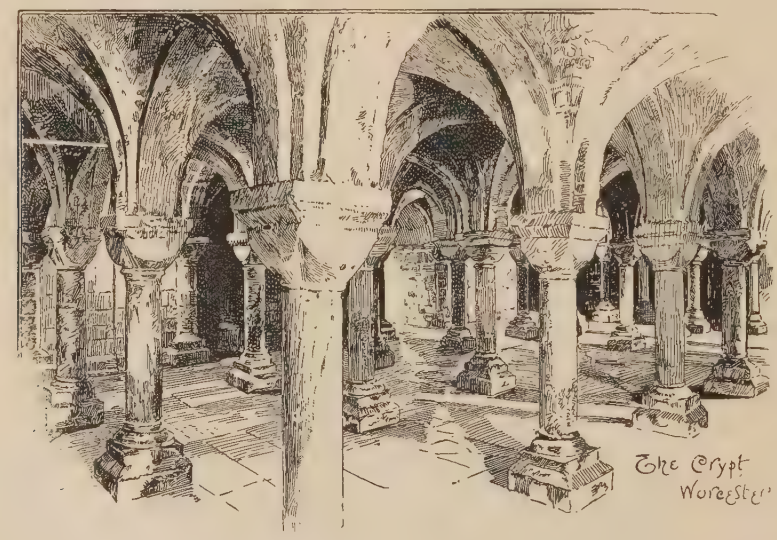
The crypt under Canterbury Cathedral, which is under the whole of the east end, is called the undercroft. Queen Elizabeth granted the Walloons the privilege of carrying on their trade of silk-weaving in it, and afterwards it was still reserved for the use of foreigners as a place of worship for French Protestants, as it is now. That under Rochester Cathedral is also called an undercroft. Kentish antiquaries state that the stone that forms the vaulting was brought from France. It is light and dry, and extends under the chancel and transepts. Though these edifices were both of Saxon foundation, all traces of Saxon work in the crypts are now effaced. In the case of York, after we have scrutinised the first view of the great subterranean chamber, with its vistas of stalwart columns and its general effect of solemnity and secrecy, its deep draw-well and fine lavatory, it is open to us to examine more minutely the various details; and here and there we may come upon massy fragments that we may take to be portions of the original Saxon edifice, left, perhaps, by the subsequent builders as of no account. This is beneath the choir, from which it is approached by a descent on either side of it.

The position of crypts varies considerably. The centre of the building, it will be seen, was not always chosen. In Hereford Cathedral the crypt is under a side chapel. It is divided into a nave and two aisles by two arcades with stately columns; in the centre of it is a tomb erected to the memory of a citizen and his wife, who died in 1497. Besides the ancient doorway in the chapel leading down to it, there is a flight of twenty steps on the north side of the building, that also gives access to it from the exterior. The ancient crypt below Beverley Minster is on the south side of the south-west tower. The example below St. Mary's Church, at Beverley, is under the north-east portion. This has a groined roof, and was upheld by nine pillars supporting semicircular arches, only three of which are now to be seen, owing to modern partitions. In connection with the great religious establishment at Durham there were at least three crypts, the largest of which was divided into bays by nine massive columns. This was under the dormitory, which was upwards of a hundred and ninety feet long. There was another crypt under the refectory, of Norman workmanship, with a double row of pillars in it, which divided it into three aisles of equal width. This one was about fifty feet long and thirty wide, in round numbers. The third was beneath the prior's chapel, and measured about forty-six in length and sixteen in width, internal measurement; but there was no crypt dug out under any part of the cathedral. At St. Peter's-in-the-East, at Oxford, there is one under the chancel; and in Holy Trinity Church, Bosham, Sussex, a crypt occupies a similar position, and the chancel is raised to make room for it. At Lastingham, in Yorkshire, the crypt extends under the whole of the church, including the semicircular apse. In Winchester Cathedral, beside the great crypt, there is a smaller one under the sacrarium, always called the Holy Hole: there is a small doorway blocked up

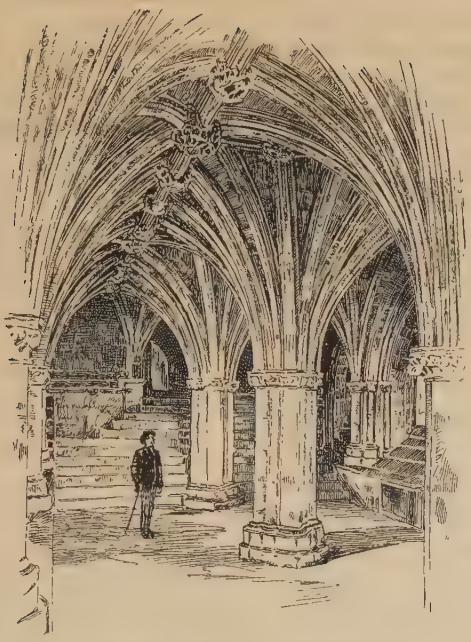
with masonry that once opened on to steps that led down to it. A Latin inscription informs us that the purpose for which it was intended was the sepulture of holy persons. At Wells the crypt is below the chapter-house; owing to the numerous springs in the neighbourhood, it was probably thought unwise to excavate to any great depth, and this example is, therefore, not altogether underground. At Waltham Abbey Church there is a crypt below a chapel on the south side. There is a superb example, about a hundred and twenty feet long, below the immense refectory that belonged to the Priory of St. Bartholomew, in Smithfield, in splendid preservation. It has a passage-way through it, which leads from Great to Little Bartholomew Close. St. Stephen's Crypt, Westminster, is under St. Stephen's Hall, formerly St. Stephen's Chapel, the old House of Commons. This is also a fine example; it is about ninety-five feet long. At Chester there is a crypt on the west side of the cloister that should not be passed over. At Madley, in Herefordshire, there is an example under the chancel which, owing to the rapid fall of the ground, is scarcely underground at all. There was a dimly lighted crypt below part of the north transept of Wenlock Priory Church, of which only the walls and window-sills remain. We may assume there was no rule regulating their situation, seeing there was so much diversity.

There are fine Norman crypts, with massive cylindrical columns and low semicircular arches, below Gloucester and Worcester Cathedrals, that must be also specially mentioned. As in the examples at Canterbury and Winchester, they follow the apsidal configuration of the structures above them. We hear of the crypt at Gloucester showing signs that the springs of water in the soil were undermining it as early as the time of the Norman Conquest; and then we have word that one Serlo strengthened it before he repaired the choir. Worcester Crypt was built by Bishop Wulfstan in the same distant time; and from the south-west transept of the cathedral we may still descend into it, and look upon the work of the Norman masons as they left it. Each sturdy pillar is placed under a similar pillar of greater height in the structure above it. Passing along the pleasant cloisters, we come upon a second Norman crypt under the refectory; and there is a third sub-structure, lost to sight, beneath the site of the old charnel-house, which may be, or may not be, of later date.

After the Norman masons who reared these works laid down their tools for ever, and had all departed, and their children had grown old, and *their* children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren had, in turn, grown old and ripe, and fallen off the tree of life, and been gathered to their fathers likewise, in the certain rotation that is dealt out to us all, there were masons as strong and hearty as they were in their prime, building other crypts. Glasgow Crypt belongs to this later period. There is a flight of wide low stone steps leading down to it from the cathedral, and then there greets the eye the marvellous vaulting, with its bewilderment of ribs with bold mouldings making deep strong lines of light and shade, meeting, crossing, departing, proudly curving in opposite directions, and compliantly branching towards central points, marked with foliated bosses, all resting upon clustered columns, with caps ornamented with sculptured foliage, placed upon mighty bases enriched with handsome mouldings. It is impossible not to be impressed with the solemnity expressed in this stonework. Like the rest, it seems a veritable legacy left to us all by vanished hands.



As an instance of the recovery of the knowledge of the existence of an ancient crypt after it has been forgotten, mention may be made of the example found below Bamborough Church a few years ago. This edifice is near the verge of the Northumbrian coast, and so much sea-sand had drifted against it that the



CRYPT, GLASGOW CATHEDRAL.

doorway into the crypt was covered up and lost to sight. On some chance examination of the flooring of the chancel, a flight of steps was found below it, and those whose curiosity led them to make the exploration found they conducted them to a low, narrow subterranean chamber, with a very small window at the east end of it, and a doorway on the south side of it that opened into a larger chamber of double the width, with a groined roof and two small splayed windows at the east end of it.

A similar discovery of a subterranean cell was made about twenty years ago at Bruton, when, in the course of alterations in the parish church, the floor was lowered, and the workmen came upon a chamber which had been used as a burial-vault, but which was identified by the local archæologists as the crypt of an ancient church, which had once occupied the site of the present one. The roof of this crypt is groined, and supported on four freestone columns.

Though we no longer build crypts, we can but look upon them with much interest. They mark a period of peculiar thought and feeling that has passed away, but which is a part of our history. When we enter them we seem to go back into bygone centuries more completely and curiously than when we pass the portals of the edifices reared above them; and they help us to realise the conditions of life in old times. They help us, too, to realise the splendour of the progress we have made since Wilfred built his dark crypts at Ripon and Hexham, or since the more accomplished Norman masons fashioned their larger and handsomer examples at Gloucester and Worcester, and even since Queen Elizabeth granted the Canterbury undercroft to the foreign refugees; and in this way, as well as in their structural aspects, they give us peace and pleasure.

SARAH WILSON.

ON LOSING ONE'S BALANCE.

IT is hardly necessary for me to observe that there are many ways in which a man may lose his balance. One very effectual, and, in "muddy weather," very disagreeable way, is to topple off a stile; another, equally disagreeable—bad weather of another kind—is to overdraw one's account at the bank; another, and in its consequences often the most disagreeable way of all, is at some critical moment of one's life to find oneself in such a state of mental obfuscation as to be incapable of making that decisive movement which would end in success. In a very modest way, then, I purpose here to give a few instances of loss of balance. When I was a very little boy (and that, kind reader, between you and me, was many years ago), I was, after long and earnest application, lifted up on to one of my father's horses by the groom who was "exercising." He led the horse and held me by one leg. But that was not half good enough for me; I wanted to ride "all by myself." And I did—but not for long, for the moment the horse broke into a trot I lost my balance (if I ever had one then), and rolled over ignominiously to the ground. To add to my humiliation, at that precise and bitter moment Miss Letitia Jones and her string of young lady pupils came down the road. It was very distressing, but it had its useful as well as its painful side, for then and there the great lesson was forcibly impressed on me that Pride must have its fall. And the result was that ever since that day I have had a distinct dislike to meet a lady's school.

Many years after that initial fall I was a member of a river picnic party, given to celebrate the majority of a very charming young lady, who was, by the way, an heiress. Amongst the party was a man named Snead, one of the most objectionable young men I have ever met. He made desperate love to the heiress, would let no one else get in a word edgeways, sat by her all the way up the river, and would have stuck to her till the trip was over if—but I am overrunning my story. There was a small cartload of eatables in the boat, and amongst the good things was a large dish of gooseberry-fool that had been made by the fair hands of the

heiress herself. Most of these things were placed in the bow. All had gone well—except for the behaviour of that very objectionable young man—and we were nearing our landing-place. At this point a strong current—a rapid in miniature—had to be encountered, and the rowers began to tire. Here was an opportunity for the objectionable!

"Let me pull you up this," he said, with an eloquent glance at the heiress. "You all get as much into the stern as possible, so as to lift her bow, then I'll show you how to pull up a rapid."

They all got into the stern; he sat on the seat nearest the bow; he put in the sculls and pulled for dear life.

"She's almost over!" he cried, and then he was quite over himself, and he fell plump into the gooseberry-fool, which flew all round him, and over him, and into him, so that his eyes and his mouth were full of it, and he couldn't say a word (neither could we, for laughing); and indeed, he hardly said another word to anyone the whole day.

If any little boy should read this paper, I hope he will not think I am approving of the use of nicknames when I say that that most objectionable young man was called "Gooseberry-fool" for the rest of his days.

It is often said that troubles never come singly, but that one seems to bring another—as it is said that if you kill a wasp two will come to the funeral. And, indeed, it is a strange thing that so many calamities do come all at once, as it were, to some individuals. Now, when this sort of thing has to be borne, he who has to bear it is regarded with sympathy and compassion by his fellow-creatures. But there is a cheering side to this doleful picture; for as a man can suffer only so many sorrows and ills during his short temporal life, the more he bears at once the sooner will they all be over—that is to say, he will lose his balance of troubles. I knew a man whose early married life was one continual struggle with adverse circumstances. He was but a poor man, to start with, but he was an industrious man, full of energy and patience.

First of all, some of his horses died through breaking into a field of growing wheat and eating a lot of the crop. Then, before he had fairly recovered from this serious loss, his cattle had foot-and-mouth disease. This was a knock-down blow, but he put his shoulder again to the wheel, and lifted himself and his belongings up again. The following corn harvest was a bounteous one, and he hoped to reap his reward then, but a loitering tramp set fire to his stacks, and though, like a prudent man, he was insured, the loss was still very considerable. Once more he faced disaster bravely and patiently, and things were beginning to look up, when the spring floods came, and swept away some of the best of his sheep and lambs. Did he give in at this? No; he was not one of the "give-in" kind. He sold every unnecessary article he possessed, and he said to his wife, "Cheer up, old woman! we've had more than our share of troubles, and there can't be many more to come." And he was right. He had lost his balance, you see, and from that time he began to prosper, and he is now one of the most thriving men in his neighbourhood. It would do you good to hear him trying to cheer an unfortunate friend or acquaintance.

"Cheer up, my lad!" he says. "The longest rain that ever fell will have to stop some time. Don't give in—keep pegging on. It's only a matter of patience and perseverance. It's a fight between you and misfortune, and the one that lasts the longest will win in the end."

A young man in our little town got into bad odour with his neighbours. No one knew exactly what he had done, nor was it at all certain that he had done anything. But that didn't matter. The neighbours said he was a bad lot; and you know the old proverb about giving a dog a bad name. Certainly, a few people stuck up for him on the ground of common justice, being unwilling that a man should be hanged before he had been found guilty; but the *vox populi* was too much for them, and this young man had a very bad time of it. They turned him out of the choir, they shut their doors in his face, they wouldn't be seen talking to him if they could help it—and yet that young man had the amazing presumption not to seem utterly crushed. His smile was as pleasant as ever, his step was as free and as light, he went to church as regularly as before, though he no longer sat in the chancel; and though he was generally voted an evil-doer and a hypocrite, he avoided as carefully as ever the companionship of the dissolute. By-and-bye people wondered how he spent his time and his money, for he was in receipt of good wages, and his personal expenses were evidently few. Then someone discovered that he supported an old mother who lived in a distant village, and someone else found out that he was helping to keep out of the workhouse two or three old people who were no kin to him at all. Then public opinion began to waver, and finally it went completely round; the scales were readjusted, and the balance of ill-will was completely lost—and was never found again.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ROBERT ALLINGTON.

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER. BY ARTHUR T. C. DRAKE.

"[illegible] run up and ask Robert if he knows what the time is, will you?" said Mrs. Allington one hot August morning, after she had sat patiently for a quarter of an hour, waiting to pour out her son's coffee. "I'm afraid he must have overslept himself: he seemed so tired last night."

Dora ran up-stairs.

"Are you getting up?" she asked, tapping at her brother's door. "Why, you haven't even taken in your hot water!"

After waiting a few moments, and getting no answer, she opened the door. The window was open, and the breeze, blowing straight from the moor, which rose at the end of the garden in gradual ascent till it touched the distant blue hills, struck her with a strange chill as she entered—either that or the unusually empty appearance of the room. Everything was in its place. The bed was untouched, and had evidently not been slept in. The writing-table alone showed signs of having been used, the candles having apparently burnt out, and the blotting-pad and pens were lying on the floor.

She went down-stairs again quickly, into the dining-room.

"Well, is he getting up?" inquired her mother. "I've never known him to be so late bef—— But is anything the matter? Is he ill? You look as if something had frightened you."

Dora tried to laugh.

"Oh no, nothing's the matter," she said; "only—only Robert's not there."

"Oh, is that all?" said Mrs. Allington, in a relieved tone. "I daresay he's gone out for a walk; but I hope he'll be back soon, or he'll hardly have any time for his breakfast."

"But I don't think he slept in his room last night," went on Dora, trying to speak in an unconcerned voice. "The bed hasn't been used, and——" She paused, for she couldn't put into words the feeling which had come over her in that empty room.

"Not used?" said Mrs. Allington. "I must go and look. I heard him moving about very late;" and she walked up-stairs, followed by her daughter. But there was nothing fresh to be seen: only the empty room. Robert was evidently out somewhere. His ordinary clothes were gone. Nothing else was missing. Even his watch lay on his dressing-table.

"You had better go to the bank, I think," said Mrs. Allington, "and tell them that—that Robert is—— Or perhaps he may be there; though he would hardly have gone without letting us know. At any rate, it's getting rather late, so you'd better make haste." And she left the room, trying to keep down the vague, undefined fear that was coming over her.

Dora put on her hat and started. As soon as she was out in the bright morning air, her spirits began to go up, and she soon came to the conclusion that there was nothing very remarkable in Robert's being out. Very likely he had gone for a walk, and back to breakfast, with Edward Fulton, a brother-clerk. His rooms were just against the bank, and that would have saved Robert a good deal of time and a tolerably long, hot walk. She had even dismissed the subject so far as to wonder, as she ascended the steps of Morton and Evans' bank, whether John Morton would be there, and to feel glad that she had put on her prettiest cotton dress. Mr. Fulton was alone in the bank as she entered.

"Good-morning!" she said. "I came down to see if Robert was here. He hasn't been in this morning."

He was looking rather strangely at her.

"No, he's not here," he answered abruptly; and then John Morton came through the door from the inner room.

"Would you mind coming in here, Miss Allington?" he said. "My father wishes to speak to you for a minute."

She followed him without a word, and soon found herself mechanically answering Mr. Morton's questions.

"I think," said the old gentleman, after an awkward pause and a few whispered words with his son, "that I will walk back with you and see Mrs. Allington."

"Perhaps Robert will be back," said Dora.

John Morton gave a sympathetic squeeze to the little hand she held out to him, and then watched them depart with a gloomy expression on his face. Very little was said as they walked along. Mr. Morton's few commonplace remarks were almost unheeded. Dora's mind was too fully occupied by the fears which were coming over her again about Robert. Something must have happened to him; yet she dared ask no questions.

When they came to the house, she silently showed the banker into the dining-room, where her mother was still sitting in front of the coffee-pot, and then went up-stairs to her own room to wait. She was not kept long in suspense. In little more than five minutes she heard the hall door close, and her mother's step on the stairs. Mrs. Allington came into the room with a white, set face.

"Oh, mother, what is it?" cried Dora, springing up. Her mother's look terrified her. "Is Robert dead?"

"No," answered Mrs. Allington, in a slow, calm voice. "It's worse than that. They say he has robbed the bank of five thousand pounds."

Then she passed on into her own room and locked the door.

Days lengthened into weeks, and weeks into months, but nothing more could be discovered. Robert Allington and the five thousand pounds had completely disappeared. Of course, the news was all over the

little town of Hatford within a few hours, and the most wildly improbable accounts of the affair were circulated. The local paper was full of it, and one London daily even devoted three [illegible] But after the first shock was over, Mrs. Allington found it necessary to look about her. Robert's salary had been the mainstay of the little household, and now that her income was reduced to about fifty pounds a year, she felt that she must try to do something. Dora had wished to leave Hatford, and seek work in some town where they were not known, but Mrs. Allington firmly resisted this.

"Wherever we go," she said, "someone will find out who we are, and that might do us much more harm in a place where we were strangers than it could here."

She was right. While everyone was astonished and shocked at Robert's behaviour, nothing but sympathy was felt for his mother and sister. Mr. Morton, to whom Mrs. Allington had gone with the request that he would take her small amount of capital to repay part of the money of which he had been robbed, and who had been deeply touched as he gently but firmly refused to do so, had done his utmost to assist them. At his recommendation, Mrs. Evans, his partner's wife, engaged Dora as daily governess. Other people followed suit, and Mrs. Allington had several answers to the modest advertisement in which she announced that she would be glad to give instruction in music. But, notwithstanding people's kindness and sympathy, it was hard work, and hardly brought in enough for even such a good manager as Mrs. Allington to keep their little home together. Dora, who had never been very strong, found the monotonous hours of daily work, with its two-mile walk there and back, very trying, especially in the cold winter months; but she kept on bravely, and was only thankful that she was not actually ill, as she had generally been in former winters. Poor Mrs. Allington's lot was even harder. The one servant had been dismissed, and all day long she was alone in the little house, except for the few hours she was engaged with her pupils; for although since that terrible morning she had never spoken even to Dora of her son's disappearance, yet she had not recovered from the shock sufficiently to be able to visit any of her former friends.

Public interest in the affair had rapidly faded after the first excitement. Though people still spoke of the missing clerk's mother and sister as "those poor Allingtons," very few troubled themselves any more about them. One, indeed, noticed that Dora was looking pale and worn out, and that was John Morton. The day after that August morning when he had bidden her good-bye in the bank, he had gone abroad on business which it had taken six months to complete, and on his return he had been startled and pained to notice the change in her. It was in church on the Sunday after his return that he first saw her. Their eyes only met for a moment, and then a deep flush had covered her face. It was several days, however, before he had an opportunity of speaking to her. He was engaged to dine with Mrs. Evans a few days later, and as the March evening was so beautifully fine he had decided to walk there. At the lodge gates he met Dora. Her face lighted up at first when she saw him, as it used to do in the old happy times. Then she seemed to recollect herself, and prepared to pass him with a slight bow.

"Miss Allington [illegible] you will stop and speak to me for a moment, won't you? It seems such a very long while since I saw you."

"Yes, it is a long while," she answered, stopping, but not offering him her hand. "It was last August. But I must make haste. I 'm rather late this evening, and my mother will be wondering where I am."

"No, I oughtn't to stop you," he said. "But perhaps you will let me walk some of the way with you. I 'm much too early as it is, so it would be a kindness on your part."

Tears came into Dora's eyes. It was such a long while since anyone had spoken to her in the old friendly way.

"Certainly, if you wish it," she said quietly, and then began to fear lest he should think her ungrateful.

They walked some way in silence. Then he began—

"You must find the walk here more pleasant now than it was in the winter, don't you?"

"Yes, a great deal," she said. "It was dreadful then. I am so thankful the winter is over."

John looked at the pale little face beside him.

"So am I," he said, "for your sake. You 're not fit for this sort of work. It 's too much for you. I hadn't the least idea that you 'd been doing it all the winter. I only wish I 'd been at home."

"Oh, I don't dislike it at all now," said Dora, trying to speak briskly. "I didn't like it very much at first; but, you see, it was absolutely necessary for us to find something to do. And I think that it was best that it should be so," she went on, with a slight tremor in her voice. "It kept us from having too much time to think about—about Robert. Oh, Mr. Morton, I can't believe that he really—really did it. I suppose, perhaps, I ought not to say so to you, or even to talk to you about it, but, oh! that 's been almost the hardest part of it: to have to bear everything in silence, and never to speak to anyone about it—not even to my mother. She 's never mentioned his name since that day."

She had stopped still in her excitement, and her tears were flowing fast—not altogether tears of sorrow, though. John came closer to her, and took her hand.

"My poor little Dora," he said, "what a wretched time you must have had! And how splendidly you and Mrs. Allington behaved! I 've heard all about it; but you mustn't go on like this. You must let us do something to help you."

"Oh, no!" sobbed Dora. "You 're very kind, but we couldn't think of taking anything from you."

John moved still nearer to her.

"Look here, Dora," he said, "it 's no good beating about the bush, and I don't intend to see you making yourself ill like this. You must marry me, and then everything will be all right."

"Marry you!" she gasped. "Oh, indeed I couldn't!"

"And why couldn't you?" he asked. "I thought that you used to care about me," reproachfully.

"So I did," answered Dora, "and so I always shall; but I could never think of bringing disgrace on you."

"My dear little girl," he said seriously, putting his arm round her, "you mustn't talk such highflown nonsense. You have no disgrace to bring; and you say yourself that you believe Robert innocent."

"So I do; but I suppose, all the same, he must have done it," she answered illogically. "Oh, John, you are very good, and I do care for you, but you mustn't tempt me. I could never marry you unless it was clearly proved that Robert didn't take that money." She moved away from him as the sound of approaching wheels was heard on the road. "Now I must make haste home—and, besides, I am making you late."

She held out her hand. Something in her tone showed John that she meant what she said.

"Well, I won't worry you now," he said. "But I won't promise not to try and make you alter your mind; and I shall come and see you."

The next moment a carriage drove up and stopped beside them.

"Is that you, John?" called Mr. Evans; "you'd better jump in here, or else we shall be late."

Dora was already disappearing down the dusky road, so he obeyed, and in a few minutes he was being welcomed effusively by Mrs. Evans, who was really delighted to see him after such a long absence, and who had invited one of her many unmarried sisters there especially for the occasion.

"'Ask Robert if he knows what the time is, will you?'"—*p.* 827.

When Dora reached home, she found her mother eagerly looking out for her. For the first time since her son's disappearance Mrs. Allington seemed interested, and even a little excited.

"Oh, Dora," she began, "here you are at last! I've been expecting you for the last hour, and longing to tell you my news. I believe that our affairs are going to brighten a little; and it's such a relief, as I've been worrying lately about your not looking well, and about paying the rent next week."

"What is it? Not more pupils?" asked Dora.

"No, better than that," said Mrs. Allington. "It's Mr. Fulton. He came here this afternoon and talked to me for some time; and then he went on about his lodgings, and said that he wasn't very comfortable; and at last he asked me if I should be willing to have him live with us. And somehow it was all settled in a few minutes; and he put everything in such a nice way, making out that he would get all the advantages of the arrangement. He's going to pay a hundred a year—he wouldn't hear of anything less—and he's coming in a few weeks."

Dora was not at home when he came. Mrs. Evans had noticed that she wasn't looking well, and had invited her to spend the first week of the Easter holidays at her house. When she returned, everything seemed changed. Their old servant, who had tried three places without finding one to suit her, had come back; Mrs. Allington, now that the difficulty of making both ends meet was taken away, looked more like her old self; and certainly Edward Fulton's presence in the house did make it much brighter. Then by degrees their old friends began visiting them and asking them out again, so that by the time the summer came, it seemed as if everyone had forgotten about Robert Allington's disappearance. It was not destined, however, that the affair should be forgotten. One day the news began to circulate throughout Hatford that the five thousand pounds had been restored. The tale was told in many ways, and with so many variations that Mr. Morton thought it best to write to the local paper, stating the simple fact that the money had been returned, addressed in an unknown handwriting, and without any other communication.

People then turned their attention to speculating as to whether Robert Allington would come back, and whether Mr. Morton would forgive him. Mr. Morton settled that question by putting a letter in the principal daily papers asking him to return; but there was no answer. Mrs. Allington did not speak of the matter to anyone, and Dora chiefly wondered what difference this would make to John Morton. She had seen very little of him lately. He had called several times, generally when she was out, and they had met once or twice; but that was all. Now, she asked herself, would he seek her out again and try to persuade her to marry him? And what should she say? Daily she asked herself these questions; but she might have spared herself the trouble, for John never came. The fact was, he was jealous; angry that Edward Fulton should have forestalled him in assisting the Allingtons; jealous whenever he saw him alone with Dora. Of course the good people of Hatford were not slow at putting two and two together and making five, so John was perpetually having to listen to remarks about Miss Allington's and Mr. Fulton's partiality for one another, some people even going so far as to state that the engagement would shortly be announced. On the day after the money had been returned, he had determined to go boldly to Dora and again try his fate. He knew that she left Mrs. Evans's at five o'clock, so about half an hour before that time, having dressed himself with more than usual care, he sauntered slowly in that direction. But he was doomed to disappointment. Though he did not reach the house till long after the hour, Dora had not met him. Mrs. Evans received him as effusively as ever. When he had answered all her questions, he ventured to ask after Miss Allington.

"Oh, she left a few minutes before you came," said Mrs. Evans. "Mr. Fulton came for her. He was going to drive her home by Belminster."

John remembered that a dog-cart had passed him just outside the town, but he hadn't noticed who was driving.

"Do you know," went on the talkative little lady, "I think that Mr. Fulton is very much in love with Miss Allington."

"So everyone tells me," answered John, trying to speak indifferently.

"And what do you think?" she went on. "I believe I've made a discovery"—she was always discovering something, as John knew—"I haven't told anyone yet, as I've only just thought of it. It was Mr. Fulton who paid that money back."

"Fulton paid the money back! Why should he?" said John in astonishment.

"Why, so that Miss Allington should marry him, of course," answered Mrs. Evans calmly. "She's just the sort of girl who would refuse to marry a man because her brother had robbed somebody. Now, of course, she'll think it's all right."

"But where did he get the money from?"

"That's just it. I heard the other day from some friends who knew an old aunt of his, and they said that she had died and left him ten thousand pounds. Nobody knew she had anything to leave. Now, you see, he didn't say anything about it, but sent half of it to repay that money, and apparently intends to set up housekeeping on the other half."

John left as soon as he could. Fulton seemed to be beforehand with him in everything. Why hadn't he thought of paying the money back? It would have been nothing to him. Then his pride came to the rescue for a while. If Dora preferred Edward Fulton, he certainly wouldn't interfere. How fickle she was! Only a few months before, she had said that she loved him, and now—— So on the whole John was very unhappy, and he kept out of Dora's way.

In the meantime poor Dora waited and wondered. Not the slightest suspicion of what people were beginning to talk about crossed her mind. Edward Fulton had been a friend of her brother's, and had been very kind to them, but she had never thought of him as anything more than a friend; nor had he ever given her any reason to do so. Since he had lived with them, his chief object had seemed to be to give all the pleasure he could to Mrs. Allington and Dora, but that was all. August came, as hot as it was the year before. The 9th, the day before the anniversary of Robert's disappearance, was very close and sultry. Mrs. Allington had been lying down all the day with a headache, and Dora, who had felt too much oppressed by the heat to go out, had stopped at home to attend to her. She was sitting in the garden when Edward Fulton came in that afternoon, and she noticed, as he walked over the lawn towards her, how pale and worried he was looking.

"I forgot to tell you that I should be out to dinner this evening," he said. "I 'm going to the Everards', so I shall have to make haste."

"To the Everards'?" said Dora. "Why, it 's twelve miles. I suppose you won't come back till to-morrow?"

"No, I shall come back to-night, though I dare-say it will really be to-morrow. It isn't much more than eight miles across the moor. I shall ride there; so it won't take very long. Don't let anyone trouble to sit up for me. I can let myself in with my latch-key, and I 'll be very quiet. I hope Mrs. Allington is better now. How is her headache?"

"Oh, she says she's feeling better," answered Dora; "but I don't think it 's all the headache. You remember what to-morrow is?" in a lower tone.

He gave a slight start.

"Oh yes! I remember," he said; "but I must hurry now. Good-bye."

Feeling very tired, Dora went to bed early. She woke up, however, before long, in one of those sudden unaccountable fits of fear which occur to all people occasionally. The storm which had been gathering all day long had broken, and was raging all around; but it was not that which frightened her. She had waked with the feeling that someone was in great danger. At first she thought that it was Robert. Then, when her mind became clearer, she remembered that it was Edward who was out. Had he come back yet? She opened her door. The hall-lamp, which she had left for him, was alight still, and on looking at the clock she saw that it was not one yet. She lay awake for some time, listening for him to come in. Gradually, however, the storm passed away, and she fell into a light doze. Then suddenly the front-door bell rang loudly. She sprang up, and quickly put on a dressing-gown.

"I must have forgotten to leave the door on the latch," she said to herself as she ran down-stairs. "Is that you, Edward?" she called, before opening the door.

"No, miss; it 's me," answered a voice that she knew well, it being that of the ostler of the stables where Fulton hired his horse.

"What is it? Where 's Mr. Fulton?" she asked, opening the door quickly.

The man shook his head.

"He 's very bad, miss," he said. "He 's been thrown from his hoss, up there on the moor. I was sitting up for him; and just when that storm was getting over, Captain trotted in by hisself. I called Thomas, and we took Mr. Fulton's dog, and somehow between us we found him up there by the big pool. I stopped with him while Thomas went for Dr. Graham. He told him that he couldn't do much for him, and then Mr. Fulton said I was to come and fetch you and Mrs. Allington, and he told Thomas to go after Mr. Morton. And the doctor he said to me that I was to tell you that if you wanted to be there in time you 'd have to be very quick."

Dora ran up-stairs. As she passed the door of the room which had been Robert's, and which Edward Fulton had been occupying, the rush of air from the front door blew it open. She glanced in. The empty room gave her the same chilly feeling of fear as it had done that day year. She hastily closed the door, and went into her mother's room. Mrs. Allington was awake.

"What is it?" she asked.

"We must be quick," answered Dora. "Edward has had an accident, and wants to see us. Are you well enough to come? The ostler from the 'Angel' is waiting to show us the way."

Mrs. Allington began dressing immediately.

"I shall be ready as soon as you are," she said. She had read the truth at once in Dora's look.

In a few minutes they were walking over the moor. The day was beginning to dawn, and it was almost light when they reached the pool.

"Take care, miss," said the man, as he left the hardly visible footpath and struck out across the rough trackless grass. "Follow me, and don't be trying no short cuts. We 're close by the pool now; and if you once fell in there, there 'd be no getting you out. What beats me is how Mr. Fulton managed to get where he did without tumbling in—and in the dark, too."

They followed him in silence. At length they reached a good-sized level piece of ground, jutting out into and almost surrounded by the pool, which was really a disused quarry. Edward lay on the grass, propped up with rugs and cushions from the doctor's cart. He was quite motionless, and his eyes were closed. Dr. Graham was bending over him. He rose when he saw them.

"You are almost too late," he said. "Ah! here 's Mr. Morton, too," as John came up.

Edward opened his eyes.

"Come close to me," he said. "There 's something I must say. Can you raise me a little higher first?"

Mrs. Allington sat down on the grass, and gently placed her arm under the cushions at his head.

"That 's better. Thank you," he said. "But I must tell you quickly. Mr. Morton 's there, isn't he? He must hear. I took that money."

"You?" exclaimed Mrs. Allington. "Then why did Robert leave us? Where is he?"

"I will tell you, but I can't do it very fast. Last year I was awfully in debt; I didn't know what to do; I had no one to help me, so I thought I 'd get away from the country, and start again in America or somewhere. But I couldn't do it without money, so I took that five thousand. I started that night to catch the 1.30 express, and I came across the moor, so as not to be seen. I hadn't got far before I met Robert. He said he hadn't felt able to sleep, so he 'd come out for a walk. I had to make up some tale about being suddenly called away, and he seemed to suspect nothing; he even walked some of the way with me; and when he came to about here, he turned back."

"Then where is he?" asked Mrs. Allington, almost impatiently.

He made a slight movement with his hand.

"In that pool," he answered.

"Thank Heaven, then, he died without any disgrace!" she said, in a low voice.

"When he left me, I turned round and watched

"Mrs. Allington sat down on the grass, and gently placed her arm under the cushions at his head."—*p.* 831.

him for a moment. He was walking very quickly, and suddenly he disappeared. I went back carefully, and soon found myself at the edge of this pool. I called to him, and tried to make my way down to the water, but there was no answer. I waited till it got light, and I searched everywhere, but I couldn't see anything. Suddenly I remembered that the train would be gone, and that there was no other for hours. Then the thought came to me that there was no need for me to go away; so I went back. No one else had seen me. When the money was missing, of course no one suspected me. Then an aunt of mine unexpectedly left me some money. I paid back what I had taken, but I hadn't courage enough to tell the truth and clear Robert's name. That's all. Can——"

He paused for a minute. His breath came in short gasps. "Can you forgive me?" he asked, looking up at Mrs. Allington.

She hesitated for a moment. "Yes," she said at last, "I can; as I hope for forgiveness myself."

He closed his eyes, and Dr. Graham poured a few drops down his throat. Then he roused himself with a final effort. "Dora," he said. She came closer to him. John turned away his head, but nevertheless could not help hearing every word.

"I've left everything to you, Dora, but I want you to promise me something. Will you write to Florence King—you know I told you we were engaged—and put everything to her as gently as you can; and send her my ring and my desk—and—and——"

But the exertion had been too much. He could say no more. He looked round at them all entreatingly. John held his cold hand, and Dora stooped and gently kissed his forehead. Then his eyes closed for the last time. They sat for some minutes in silence. The sun had risen from behind the hills, and was shining down on the little group. Gradually the expression on Edward's face changed; he gave a slight shudder, and his head sank back.

"It's all over," said Dr. Graham quietly.

* * * *

Six months later a bride and bridegroom were leaving Hatford station.

"Now, how much better it would have been," said John Morton, in a mock-serious manner, when the train had borne them out of sight of their friends on the platform, "if you had put aside your foolish pride and married me last year! We've wasted a whole year's happiness."

"Then if you had wanted me, you should have shown it a little more," answered Dora, boldly transferring the war to the enemy's camp. "I think I have the most reason to complain. You gave me great encouragement for a while, and then you hardly came near me for three months. You could scarcely expect me to make advances," in assumed aggrieved tones.

"My darling," said John contritely, "that was only because I thought that you—you cared for someone else. I'm afraid that you've got a very blundering fellow for a husband, after all; but I'll try to improve."

"No, don't, John," she answered, nestling closer to him, and smiling lovingly up into his face; "because, on the whole, I think that I really like you best as you are."

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SEPTEMBER 18TH. REVIEW OF QUARTER'S LESSONS.

Golden Text—Heb. ii. 4.

NTRODUCTION. Have had eleven lessons on the Acts, or doings, of the Apostles after the Resurrection of Christ. The Golden Text sums up their work, showing how it was done. They were called by Christ, sent forth by Him, were endued with the Holy Ghost to help them, were able to work miracles, received witness from God the Father. To-day's lesson illustrates these points from the quarter's lessons.

I. THE APOSTLES' CALL. (Acts i. 1—12.) They were—

Chosen by Christ during His life on earth.

Taught by Him, especially after the Resurrection.

Were to be witnesses of His Resurrection.

Also to preach the Gospel to all nations. (St. Matt. xxviii. 19.)

LESSON. "Lo, I am with you alway."

II. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST. (Acts ii. 1—12.) Notice—

It came with supernatural signs—wind and fire.

It gave them miraculous powers, namely—

(*a*) *Speaking in strange languages.*

Benefit—all nations could receive the Gospel.

(*b*) *The interpretation of strange tongues.* (1 Cor. xiv. 27.)

Benefit—making prophecies understood.

(*c*) *Power to read other people's hearts.*

Instance—Simon Magus' hypocrisy exposed.

Benefit—protection of the infant Church.

(*d*) *Giving the Holy Spirit to others* (viii. 17).

Benefit—confirming Christians in faith and life.

LESSON. "Without Me ye can do nothing."

III. WORKING MIRACLES. Of healing—the lame man at the gate of the Temple (iii. 7).

Of destruction—Ananias and Sapphira killed.

Result—enemies confounded, large increase of numbers to the Church.

LESSON. "Blessed are the merciful."

IV. THE WITNESS OF GOD. Shown in different ways.

By angels sent to stimulate their hope (i. 11).

By God's opening people's hearts to hear (ii. 37, 47).

By giving Apostles boldness to speak (iv. 13).

By signs of prayer being answered (iv. 31).

By delivering them from prison (v. 19).

By giving Stephen a vision of heaven (vii. 55).

LESSON. "The Lord knoweth them that are His."

V. THE INFANT CHURCH. (*a*) *Admission by baptism.*

Converts at Jerusalem (ii. 38) by Apostles.

Ethiopian eunuch by Philip (viii. 38).

(*b*) *Growth*—from 120 to many thousands.

(*c*) *Christian love*—all things shared in common.

(*d*) *Patience* under persecution.

LESSON. "See that ye abound more and more."

SEPTEMBER 25TH. THE LORD'S SUPPER.

To read—1 *Cor. xi.* 23—34. *Golden Text—ver.* 28.

INTRODUCTION. Roman soldiers took an oath of allegiance to the emperor on entering the army, and renewed it at the beginning of each campaign. This oath was called *Sacramentum.* The Christian Church adopted the word for the two institutions appointed by Christ: viz., Baptism, the entrance into Christ's army; and the Lord's Supper, the renewal of allegiance. To-day's lesson treats of the latter.

I. THE INSTITUTION. (23—26.) Notice—

The name. The Lord's Supper (ver. 20), because instituted immediately after the Passover Feast. (St. Matt. xxvi. 20, 26.)

The accounts. The first three Gospels all contain details of its first institution. St. Paul seems to have had a special revelation (ver. 23).

The time. The Paschal Supper was going on—the night before Christ's crucifixion. (St. Luke xxii. 14.) Twelve disciples present.

The Passover bread set out. (Ex. xii. 18.)

Cups of wine, as by long-established use. (Ps. cxvi. 13.)

One of these was called the "cup of blessing." (1 Cor. x. 16.)

The ceremonies. Christ took bread in His hands.

"Gave thanks," or "blessed." (St. Matt. xxvi. 26.)

"Brake it" into portions for each to take.

Gave it as His gift of love to all.

Called it His body, broken for them.

Bade them perpetuate this solemn feast.

So with the cup blessed, poured out and drank.

The object. A memorial of His death.

Told out to men in outward symbol.

The bread broken, as His body was bruised.

The wine poured out, as was His precious blood.

II. THE PREPARATION. (27—34.) No one to partake carelessly of this spiritual food. What is needed?

1. *Discernment* (ver. 29): *i.e.*, realisation of the meaning that it is a partaking of Christ.

2. *Self-examination* as to the state of heart.

Otherwise in danger of despising Christ, and of doing dishonour to Christ's body and blood.

Incurring damnation: *i.e.*, condemnation or judgment.

Sometimes, also, punishments in this life (30, 32).

Therefore, this not to be made a common meal.

LESSONS. What does this feast teach?

1. Christ's *love* in giving Himself to die.

2. Christ's *remembrance* of His people always.

3. Their *duty* to partake of His feast.

4. The blessing of simple *faith* to realise Christ's presence in the soul.

5. The danger of coming to holy ordinances unprepared.

OCTOBER 2ND. SAUL OF TARSUS CONVERTED.

To read—Acts ix. 1—20. *Golden Text—St. John iii.* 3.

INTRODUCTION. Saul first mentioned (vii. 58) in connection with Stephen's death (viii 1). Then he began a fierce persecution of Christians, thinking he was doing God service; but by a vision of Christ he was wonderfully converted.

I. A JOURNEY AND ITS RESULTS. (1—9.)

The object. To seek for Christian disciples at Damascus, a large Jewish colony, six days' journey from Jerusalem (130 miles).

The victims. Men and women to be imprisoned for their religious belief.

The vision. At noonday, a flash of bright light.

Above the brightness of the sun (xxvi. 13).

And a personal appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. ix. 1.)

The voice. Saul called by name.

Why is he thus persecuting Christ?

(For He and His people are all one.)

Saul is resisting the pricks of conscience.

The answer. Acknowledges Christ as his Master.

What is there he can do for Him?

The command. Arise from his prostrate position.

Go into the city for further instructions.

The result. Temporary blindness and prostration.

Three days' fast and humiliation.

But a real conversion, or turning to God.

II. RESULTS OF TRUE CONVERSION. (6—20.)

Instruction The new convert must be taught.

Ananias means of restoring Saul's sight.

Also conveys God's further message to him.

Prayer. Christ's persecutor now prays to Him.

Work. Chosen by God Himself for missionary work to Jews and Gentiles.

Suffering. For Christ, whom he had persecuted.

Baptism. Outward profession must be made. Inward illumination of Spirit. (St. John iii. 5.)

Communion. Received into fellowship with the Church.

III. LESSONS. 1. *The power of God.* Can change the hardest heart.

2. *The power of prayer.* Saul prayed, and was forgiven.

3. *The power of obedience.* Saul obeyed at once.

Entered the city, listened to instruction, was baptised.

4. *The blessedness of serving God.* From this day his whole life given to Christ till received crown of glory. (2 Tim. iv. 8.)

OCTOBER 9TH. DORCAS RAISED TO LIFE.

To read—Acts ix. 32—43. *Golden Text—ver.* 36.

INTRODUCTION. Story turns now to St. Peter, the other prominent Apostle. Last heard of as confirming the Church at Samaria, in company with St. John. Persecution having for a time ceased, the churches have rest. (Ver. 31.)

I. ST. PETER AT LYDDA. (32—35.) His tour—

He visits the plain of Sharon, between hills of Judea and Mediterranean Sea.

How heartily he would be welcomed. Why?

For instruction. Edifying: *i.e.*, building up the faith of the newly made Christians. (Ver. 31.)

For strengthening. With special gift of Holy Ghost, as at Samaria (viii. 15).

For healing. As this paralytic at Lydda.

Notice about this miracle—

The cure—attributed to Christ alone.

The effect—in turning men's hearts to God.

Christ's promise (St. Mark xvi. 18) proved abundantly true.

LESSONS. 1. I am He that liveth and was dead.

2. My word shall not return to Me void.

II. ST. PETER AT JOPPA. (36—43.) *The place—*

A great seaport on coast of Palestine.

Nearest harbour to Jerusalem.

Hiram, King of Tyre, here landed his cedar-wood from Lebanon for Solomon's Temple. (2 Chron. ii. 16.)

Jonah fled from there in a ship. (Jonah i. 3.)

The cause. Sorrow among the Christians.

Death of the saintly widow Tabitha Dorcas.

An urgent message sent to the Apostle.

The visit. St. Peter came without delay.

Found the widows weeping round the corpse.

Is shown the garments made by Dorcas.

The miracle. Turns all out of the room.

Kneels down and prays, like Elijah. (1 Kings xvii. 20.)

Addresses the dead body, like Christ at Nain.

Presents the widow alive to her many friends.

The result. The report spreads far and wide.

Many unbelievers won to the Christian faith.

As after the raising of Lazarus. (St. John xi. 45.)

St. Peter stayed some time there.

III. LESSON. 1. Works of mercy secure a blessing.

Done to Christ's people, accepted by Him. (St. Matt. xxv. 40.)

2. The prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Christ raised dead by His own power—St. Peter after prayer.

3. Dead souls still raised by Christ's power.

Therefore must work and pray for those still dead in sin. (Eph. ii. 1.)

My Song shall be of Mercy.

Words by H. Downton, 1845.

Music by Charles H. Lloyd, M.A., Mus.D.
(*Organist of Christ Church, Oxford.*)

1. My song shall be of mer - cy— To Thee, O Lord, I sing,
2. My song shall be of judg - ment: All - wise and ho - ly God!

Who all my life hast hid me Be - neath Thy shel-t'ring wing;
Thou mak - est all Thy chil - dren To pass be - neath Thy rod;

Who still, in love most pa - tient, This mor - tal jour - ney through,
Thou scourg-est whom Thou lov - est, Yet, oh! my soul shall tell

Hast fol - low'd me with good - ness, And bles-sings ev - er new.
That when Thy stroke is sor - est Thou do - est all things well. A - men.

3. My song shall be of mercy:
Come, ye who love the Lord,
Who know that He is gracious,
Who trust His faithful Word!
Tell out His works with gladness,
With me exalt His name,
Whose love endures for ever—
To endless years the same.

4. My song shall be of judgment:
Ye who His chastenings feel,
Oh! faint not nor be weary,
He wounds that He may heal!
Yes, bless the hand that smiteth,
And in your grief confess
That all His ways are wisdom,
And truth, and righteousness!

HOW THE POTATOES WERE *NOT* BOILED.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

"ALLY, if you were to stay at home from school to-day, do you think you could manage to look after the house for me?" inquired Mrs. Brown one bright summer morning, as Ally was collecting her lesson-books together. "Your father was sure you could."

"Of course I could, mother," returned Ally confidently. "Is anything the matter? are you ill?"

"No; but Mrs. Thomson down the road is, and I promised to go in and help her a little. The only thing is, that Uncle Sam is coming in with father to dinner, and I don't feel quite easy; he is rather particular."

"You needn't be uneasy a bit, mother," said Ally, with some indignation; "why, for years I've been able to manage the housekeeping. Everything will be just as nice as if you were at home."

"In fact, mother is quite unnecessary," said Mrs. Brown, laughing as she tied on her bonnet at the hanging-glass beside the window. "Very well, Ally; you must do your best. Remember, you are mistress in my place. Keep up a nice fire and a tidy hearth, and have plenty of potatoes boiled for dinner exactly at one o'clock. The meat is ready in the cupboard, so the potatoes are all you have to cook. Do be careful, my dear."

Mrs. Brown gave a final look round, and went down to the tiny green gate. Ally stood on the top step, and watched her brown bonnet as long as it was visible over the hedge-top; then she went into the house, and launched her book-bag into the depths of the corner cupboard.

"Lie you there till to-morrow," she laughed. "Hurrah! there's no school for me to-day! I'm the housekeeper now, though I believe mother thinks nobody can do anything but herself."

It was delightful to walk about with full liberty and nothing particular to do—better far than going to school and learning horrid lessons all the time. Ally glanced at the fireside; it was a great deal too early to tidy it up yet: it would be all dusty again long before dinner-time and Uncle Sam came. There were the breakfast-things to wash, and mother always did those first; still, it seemed a pity to bother about such a few; she could do them quite well with the dinner-things all together.

Ally tried on her mother's best bonnet, turned over her own odds and ends of finery, and finally danced out into the sunshine. It was too bright to be shut up in the house all day.

Once in the garden, time simply flew. There were the bees to look at, a brood of dear little yellow chicks to feed with all the stray crumbs she could find, a big bunch of ox-eye daisies to gather from the meadow behind the cottage. Ally came back at last, quite tired with all the running and dancing, and began to think about her duties.

"Perhaps I'd better do those potatoes first, then they can be boiling while I dust up the kitchen. Dear me! mother made such a fuss about keeping house; it's a deal easier than going to school."

A great deal. Ally thought she might as well do those potatoes out in the sunshine. She brought out a seat for herself, a stool for her feet: it was as well to be comfortable. "Mother would call that a lazy way," she said to herself, "but it doesn't really take a bit longer. There, I think that's all; and there is plenty of time."

Ally had forgotten to look at the fire when she went in. Fires are apt to be forgotten on warm summer days; winter is the time for remembering them. She settled herself beside the doorway and began.

Two or three potatoes, and Ally laid the knife down to rest her fingers, and began to consider. Mother always boiled a panful; but Ally felt quite sure they could not need so many to-day. Two for father, two for Uncle Sam, one for herself, ought to be plenty. They were awkward things to pare, too. When she was grown up and had a house of her own, she would not trouble about potatoes every day. She would have a little parlour with a carpet in the middle, and pink vases on the mantelshelf. Those daisies would look lovely in pink vases; or perhaps by then she might have real hothouse flowers, like Katie Green. Katie's father was a gardener, and they never thought of putting common wild flowers in their windows.

Ally tucked her head comfortably into the angle of the door to think over this point. She looked up at the blue sky and tiny fleecy clouds overhead, and planned out a dozen day-dreams for that blissful time when she should be housekeeper always, not just for a day by chance; and by-and-bye sky and clouds and plans grew hazy and indistinct together—the housekeeper was sound asleep at her post.

And there she slept, utterly unconscious of her responsibilities, till a click at the green gate, and her father's voice, brought her down from the clouds with a startled rush.

"Well, little housekeeper," he cried cheerily, "have you got any dinner ready for two hungry men?"

Ally looked up at him confusedly, at Uncle Sam's sober face behind, at her half-finished task on the ground; then she made one despairing spring indoors. Alas! here matters were worse still; how could she have forgotten that fire? Not a single spark of it was left, and the sun was shining right down on the dusty hearth and untidy table.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded her father, surveying the room with displeased surprise.

Hot tears splashed down Ally's face. It was bad for her father to have found her in this plight; but before Uncle Sam, who never gave her credit for being able to do one thing properly, it was terrible.

"Oh, father! I did mean to have it all so nice for you," she sobbed. "I could have done everything

just as well as mother, if only I hadn't got so tired first."

"Little girls are always a deal cleverer than their mothers; we know that quite well," remarked Uncle Sam, in his most aggravating fashion.

"Ally brought out a seat for herself."—*p.* 836.

"Well, you can go back to your play," said her father quietly. "It's too late for repenting now. There must be no more housekeeping for you at present."

Ally ran away to the end of the garden, and cried her pinafore damp, under the shade of the cherry-tree. Oh, if she had only had the sense to do things as mother did them, instead of trying plans of her own! How was she to tell mother about it? How was she to make father understand all she had meant to do? How was she to face Uncle Sam again? Nobody would ever trust her any more, or forget how she had disgraced herself to-day; and she might live to be quite old! What was to become of her till then?

Father and Uncle Sam went away again half an hour later. Father looked back at her, as he opened the gate. "Go straight into the house, Alison," he said curtly, "and remain there till your mother comes home."

Ally crept in very soberly and shut the door. She wanted to see no more of the sunshine; all the brightness had gone out of it. She commenced to straighten up the house as well as she could, seeing everything through a mist of tears. While she was in the midst of those neglected breakfast-things, the door opened and Mrs. Brown came in.

"Well, my girlie," she began cheerfully; and then, as she caught sight of Ally's woe-begone face, "Why, what is wrong, my dearie? Have you hurt yourself?"

"No, mother; but I've not been doing one single thing right, the whole day. I'll never think I'm clever any more; and father's so angry with me, I do think my heart's just broken."

By degrees the whole sad history came out. Mrs. Brown listened gravely, but perhaps she thought the little culprit had suffered enough, for she made no reproaches.

"All the time, too, mother, I was thinking how clever I meant to be when I had a house of my very own, and how nice I should make it; and now I don't feel as if there would be one bit of pleasure about it."

"There is plenty of time to think of that, Ally," mother told her presently; "and I've always found that little present duties well done are worth far more than good intentions for the future. Leave that to take care of itself, and do your very best just now; it's the only safe way."

Ally's heart was not quite broken, after all; indeed, two or three days later there was little trace of the disaster, beyond a certain shyness in Uncle Sam's presence. But mother will leave her to keep house with fewer misgivings next time. Ally is finding out that something more than mere good intentions is needed for doing one's duty.

SARAH PITT.

IN MOTHER'S PLACE.

"IN mother's place"—so father said,
His kind hand resting on my head,
While all the burden of the day,
The care and trouble, fell away!
New purpose seemed to grow in me
To struggle for the victory,
And by the fireside's happy light
I breathed a silent prayer to-night!

I never guessed in times gone by
How much there was to fret and try
The sweetest temper all day long!
Was it to-day when things went wrong,
I checked the hasty, angry word,
Hearing the tones my childhood heard,
Seeing, in memory, the while
The vision of a vanished smile?

The children, crowding at my side,
Need me, and will not be denied!
The home her presence made so bright
Needs me, and I must be its light!
The girls and boys too soon will go
From sheltering arms of love, I know—
May the sweet influence of home
Be theirs wherever they may roam!

Yes! it is little I can do;
Yet faith in God will bear me through,
And give me wisdom to fulfil
My duty, since it is His will
That these, who need a mother's care,
Should find in me—bereft of her,
And longing for her loving face—
A guide and friend in mother's place!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

THINGS THAT ARE LOVELY.

A LAYMAN'S HOMILY.

"Whatsoever things are lovely—think on these things."—PHIL. iv. 8.

ONE of the greatest hindrances—I believe the *greatest* hindrance—to the spread of Christ's Kingdom on earth is the unlovely life of so many who profess to be Christ's followers—they follow Him at such a distance that they seem to lose sight of His beautiful character, and their imitation of it would stand a good deal of improvement.

The world judges Christianity by the lives of those who profess it. That is a wrong way of judging, but so it is; they may not read the Bible, but they read *us*, especially our shadowy pages. They watch for our halting, and are glad when they see it; it gives them comfort, for they know they are in the wrong. A Christian is a marked man, and a marked man needs to walk warily, for there are many critical eyes upon him to spot the smallest inconsistency.

Paul, in the passage I have quoted, gives a list of things we are to think on, to act out, if we mean to recommend our profession. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure." Sterling uprightness, without any compromise, is required. There

are some—though I hope not very many—who name the name of Christ, and yet condescend to tell what is called a white lie when they think it is to their worldly advantage: who meet to worship God on Sunday, and think it clever to get the better of another in their dealings on Monday; who are so just to themselves as to shave things bare enough to others: and who let their thoughts wander on the mountains of vanity.

These are outstanding and very noticeable inconsistencies of the Christian character, which everybody admits are bad. Yet I am not sure if they stand as much in the way of the coming of Christ's Kingdom as some lesser things, which are far more general, and some of which are actually regarded as virtues, even by good people, and which may be classed under the head of unlovely. It is our bounden duty to lead beautiful lives. Yet how many Christians there are who, while thoroughly true, and honest, and just, and pure, who would scorn to take advantage of anyone, and who keep themselves unspotted from the world, nevertheless punctuate their daily walk with unlovely and disagreeable points of character, and place a wall of repugnance in the way of many who, but for that, might be Christ's disciples.

One may have a habit of saying sharp and cutting things without much cause: words that sting and irritate, and are hard to bear; and people contrast him with worldly men, who use pleasant words, and consequently think little of him and his religion.

Another may go into a shop to buy something, and, though charged only a fair price, complains of it, higgles and beats down as if he thought the seller was trying to cheat him. The shopkeeper contrasts him with some other customer, who makes no profession of religion, who pays cheerfully and without a grudge, and thinks the latter the better man of the two—and, as far as business goes, he is right. When will all Christians come to see how unlovely is meanness? It does not pay to be mean—for the small gain of a penny in money he loses a pound in character, leads people to think he is a sham and a hypocrite, and grieves the heart of his Saviour.

Or he may be just, but so stern and hard on the failings of others that, though they may respect him, they fear him too much to love him, and he can never gain their confidence. Though we hate the sin, let us deal kindly and mercifully with the sinner, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. Let us wish everybody well, and show them that we do so. The kindly word and the soft answer that turneth away wrath are very lovely and attractive.

Some good people have peculiar ideas of the respect due to them, are very touchy about it, indeed, and keep people in constant fear of offending them, for they will not speak to or take notice of the offender. It is a very unlovely trait, and they make themselves as well as others unhappy about trifles. Such a spirit is very far from dignified, and not at all in keeping with that Christian meekness and humility which go to the making of a beautiful life. We should always remember that deference may be only an outside show; that respect is a thing of the heart, and that God has so formed the minds of men that they are compelled to respect those who deserve it. Let us, then, by *manly* humility be above taking umbrage at small things, and so deserve respect, and we shall get it.

There are also those who have a habit of fault-finding, and are so particular about small things that no one can please them, and of grumbling about every slight crook in their lot that, though it may not mean much, by its constancy becomes very disagreeable and irksome, so that one would rather get a good scolding and be done with it. To keep down this most unlovely habit, let us think how often we give offence ourselves, and what cause we have to be silent about others. Instead of fault-finding, let us have hearty appreciation wherever and whenever we can; and if sometimes we must do otherwise, let it be in a kindly and considerate manner.

There are also social perfectionists, whose ways are perfect and as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, who think other people's ways abhorrent, and show them that they think so. This imperfect perfection is far from being lovely. When we think of how our ways may be as disagreeable to others as theirs are to us, it should make us very kindly and tolerant in these things.

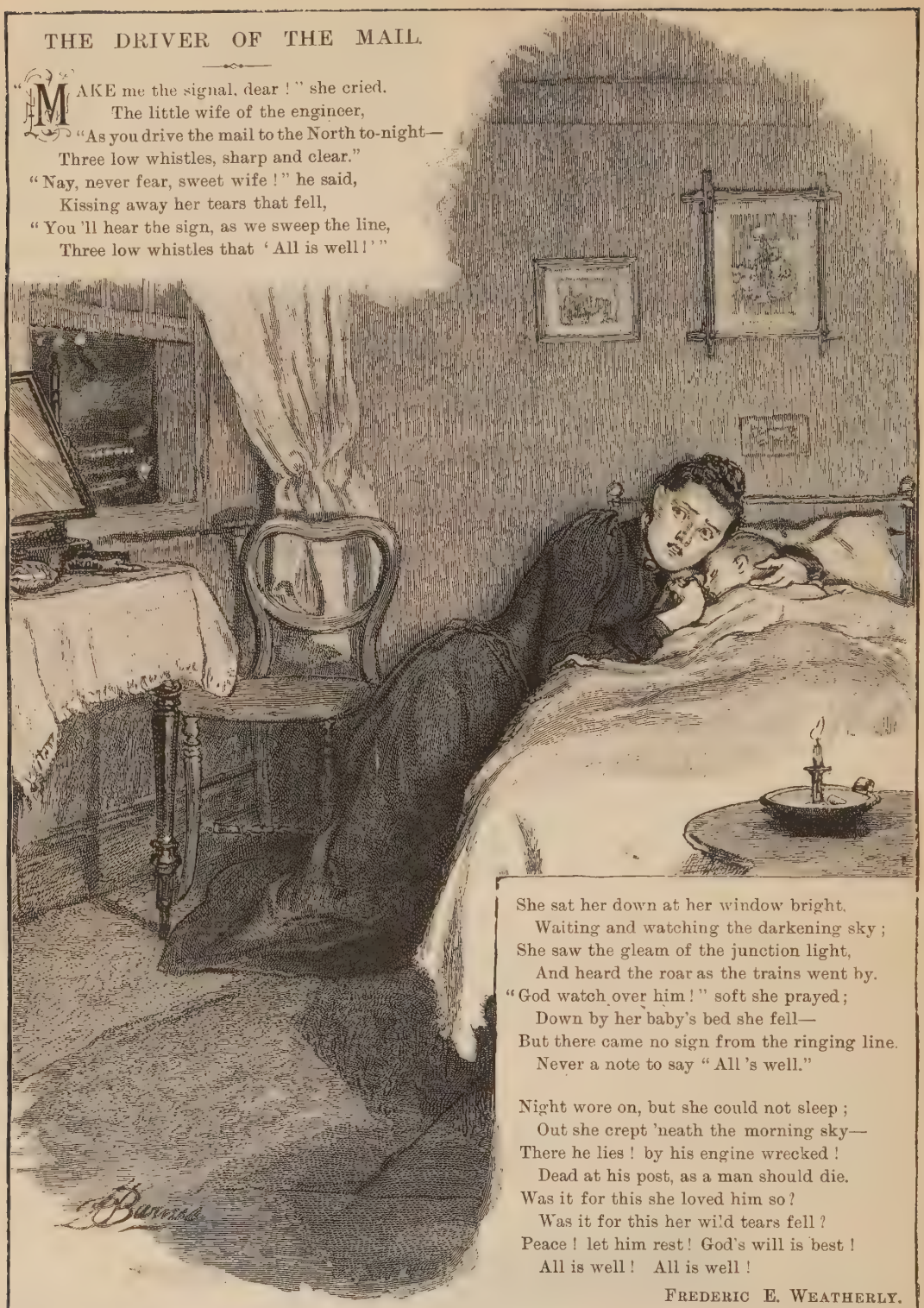
A forgiving spirit is a lovely thing. But there are many who do not know its beauty and blessedness. Something done, perhaps thoughtlessly—some word uttered, perhaps in a hasty moment—is remembered with bitterness and hard thoughts of the other, till it becomes almost revenge. But if we are conscious of having offended others, let us seek an opportunity to explain and get their forgiveness. Our pride revolts at that, but it is the noblest thing we can do. And if others have injured us, let us forgive them, whether they ask it or not. It takes out the sting of bitter feeling. The thought that we have forgiven falls on our own heart soft and sweet as the dew of heaven. And let us show by our words and actions that we have forgiven them, that we love them as brethren.

These are a few of the many ways in which we may avoid unlovely things, and think on those that are lovely. It is sometimes hard trying to live the beautiful life that is Christ-like—it goes against the grain of human nature. But that is just what Christianity is to do for us—to enable us to live a higher life than the merely human, the life that is more than *manly*: the life that is *God-like*.

J. HUIE.

THE DRIVER OF THE MAIL.

"MAKE me the signal, dear!" she cried.
The little wife of the engineer,
"As you drive the mail to the North to-night—
Three low whistles, sharp and clear."
"Nay, never fear, sweet wife!" he said,
Kissing away her tears that fell,
"You 'll hear the sign, as we sweep the line,
Three low whistles that 'All is well!'"



She sat her down at her window bright,
Waiting and watching the darkening sky;
She saw the gleam of the junction light,
And heard the roar as the trains went by.
"God watch over him!" soft she prayed;
Down by her baby's bed she fell—
But there came no sign from the ringing line.
Never a note to say "All 's well."

Night wore on, but she could not sleep;
Out she crept 'neath the morning sky—
There he lies! by his engine wrecked!
Dead at his post, as a man should die.
Was it for this she loved him so?
Was it for this her wild tears fell?
Peace! let him rest! God's will is best!
All is well! All is well!

FREDERIC E. WEATHERLY.

A LINCOLNSHIRE LASS.

BY C. E. C. WEIGALL, AUTHOR OF "THE TEMPTATION OF DULCE CARRUTHERS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

"True best is last; true life is born of death."

"AM a little bit tired of you, Nan," said Miss Dempster one afternoon in February, when the world outside was keen with east wind and rain, and the trees around the house were creaking their branches shrilly at every gust.

They were sitting over the fire idly, doing nothing; for Miss Dempster held every feminine employment in abhorrence, and Nan's work had fallen untouched to the ground beside her, while she wove disconnected stories out of the caverns among the glowing coals.

"Everything has bored me during the last week, and you almost most of all. I shall be thankful when you are married and done with; and the sooner we go up to town the better, say I."

Nan quivered imperceptibly at the unkind words; but collecting herself in an instant, she laughed hardly, and moved a little further out of the radius of the firelight.

"Perhaps we are mutually tired of one another," she answered carelessly. "Anyhow, I shall be no less glad than you are to leave Dalton Court for good."

"I never expected you to be the least grateful for all I have done for you, for I became aware long ago that there was no gratitude left in human nature—least of all in Nan Fawcett," remarked the elder lady bitterly.

"For my own part, I rather think that I have repaid all your benefits by becoming a sort of general servant, and doing odd jobs for the household," Nan said, thinking of the weary life she had led for the last few weeks, when she had run hither and thither at her tyrant's command, overlooking the linen and the groceries one week, when Miss Dempster was taken with a sudden fit of suspicion that her housekeeper was a thief; mending the old lady's stockings and trimming her caps when the unfortunate lady's-maid was prostrated by a cold which seemed to attack every portion of her frame with equal severity; and reading aloud by the hour when Miss Dempster fancied that her eyes were weak, or that she could not sleep at nights.

The whole of that winter had been to Nan a season of penance, during which she had many times repented the wilful freak that had made her an inmate of Dalton Court.

They had had no visitors, for Miss Dempster had suddenly been attacked by a fit of economy, during which she saved every penny that she could scrape together; and Reginald had gone off on a tour round the world, in the hope of picking up an heiress—or rather, perhaps, to separate him the more effectually from Nan, round whom he fluttered, whenever she was within reach, like a moth round a candle.

Not a word had been received from Hume, save a brief note with the completed portrait, just about Christmas-time; and Sir Vernon Basset had been equally silent, so that there was no wonder that, shut up day by day with the mistress of Dalton Court, Nan should gradually grow paler and more subdued.

"A general servant, indeed!" snarled Miss Dempster. "Do general servants wear silk and satin gowns? and are they dressed up like peacocks by people who take them out of charity?"

Nan started to her feet. Her nerves were rather overstrung just then, and although these words were nothing new, yet they struck her with a keen sense of bitter humiliation.

"I will not stop here another moment!" she cried, grasping her throat nervously with one hand, to keep down the hysterical ball that was rising within her, and threatening to choke her. "I will leave you, and go back to those who love me, and who will welcome me kindly, and treat me as if I were a girl—and not a dog!"

Miss Dempster lay back in her chair, smiling grimly at the sight of this young thing beating out her heart against the bars of her gilded cage.

"Go, by all means!" she said, with a shrug. "Why on earth don't you go? The greengrocer's shop is holding out its arms of welcome to you; and no doubt they have a spare room, though the potato-sacks *may* be stored in one corner or under the bed. Your sister will no doubt be glad to have someone to help her in ironing the family stockings and handkerchiefs, and you may develop unknown or latent powers of getting up your brothers' collars and making mutton broth."

Nan slowly relaxed her tragic attitude. The cold words fell like water on red-hot iron, and she moved forward to the fireplace again.

"I am growing to think that love and poverty are better than riches and discomfort," she said in a low tone. "I have not yet strength of mind to face all the trials of life on an income that would provide you with gowns for one year; but a few more discussions such as we have just had, and I shall venture all to find happiness."

Miss Dempster felt that she had gone too far, and had been on the very verge of losing a companion who was extremely useful to her, and whom, moreover, she fully intended to have under her thumb when she became Lady Basset.

She sat silent for a moment, studying intently the outline of the graceful figure on which the fitful light of the fire played, and then she said, smiling—

"Ah well, Nan! let bygones be bygones. The fact of the matter is, child, that we are bored with the country and with each other's society. Let us go up

to town on Monday. We can surely be ready in three days' time; and you shall be fitted out in gowns by Madame Celise when we get there."

A smile shone on Nan's face at once, and she clapped her hands joyfully.

"Oh yes! I am dying to see London and all the sights, and I am ready to start immediately, if you like. The weather will not seem half so bad there as it does in the country."

And Miss Dempster, who looked forward with something like pleasure to seeing some of her old cronies again, assented, well pleased, and began to plan all the arrangements for their departure. The time sped very quickly during those busy days, until they were established in Park Lane, with all their household goods around them, and Miss Dempster was writing a note to Sir Vernon at his club, to tell him to come and look them up at once.

Nan petitioned to be allowed to go off to Chelsea next day and visit her brother and sister, but she was told that Miss Dempster could not spare a servant at present to go with her, and that she must defer her visit for at least a few days.

She tried to curb her impatience and to interest herself intensely in this new life, but she longed to see Mary, and to find out the reason why she had had no letter from the little household for more than a fortnight.

"Oh, by-the-bye, Nan," said Miss Dempster one day, "just write a note to that artist fellow. Your picture has been scratched in the journey, for that ass of a Tompkins never packed it in straw; and I must have it restored, for I have half a mind to exhibit it somewhere this season, and make your face the fashion! People will wonder where you sprang from, and I shall get my full share of *kudos* for introducing the new beauty."

Nan turned away to hide her vivid blush as she hunted for some notepaper in the writing-table drawer.

The thought of seeing Cecil Hume again was almost more than she could endure; for absence, instead of weakening her affection, had strengthened it, until it had become a mighty tree, with roots deep-grafted.

But she flattered herself that she could command her feelings, and turned to face Miss Dempster bravely, with the note in her hand.

"Of course you have written in the third person, as you would to a servant?" said the old lady, peering through her spectacles with a malicious air.

"I have written as any lady would write to any gentleman," answered the girl coldly.

Miss Dempster seized the dainty scented paper in her hand, and tore it in half.

"Do as I tell you," she said, "and say:—'Miss Dempster presents her compliments to Mr. Hume, and will be much obliged by his coming to Park Lane to restore Miss Fawcett's portrait, which has been accidentally damaged, as soon as possible.' Will you do as I bid you?"

"No," said Nan, folding her arms quietly over her gown: "I will not insult Mr. Hume, who is as true a gentleman as any man in the world, and whom we know quite as intimately as any man in London."

"I believe you love him, you great idiot!" cried Miss Dempster, shaking with rage, and stamping her foot upon the ground. "If I thought so for one instant, I would half-murder you for disappointing and disobeying me. Write as I bid you!"

Nan was silent, but her face expressed quiet determination, and a sudden look of lofty, nobler feeling.

"And would there be any scorn in a girl loving a man who was as far above her, mentally and morally, as Mr. Hume is above me?" she said calmly. "But if I do recognise all the beauty of his character and his religion, it does not follow that I love him, does it?"

"You had better not! you had better not!" hissed Miss Dempster through her closed teeth, looking more unlovely than ever in the heat of her passion.

But at that moment the imperturbable butler opened the door, and announced Sir Vernon Basset. He had heard loud voices as of quarrelling as he wended his way up-stairs; but he had so many old scores to settle with his mistress, that instead of coughing loudly to give notice of a visitor's approach, he solemnly and silently launched the London dandy headlong into the fray.

Nan, who was perfectly calm, though her face was strangely pale, stooped to pick up the torn letter, and then went forward to greet their visitor, giving Miss Dempster time to recover herself. Sir Vernon was looking exactly the same as he had done at Dalton.

He looked even more utterly bored with the world at large than he had done in the autumn; but that might, of course, be due to nervousness at meeting under rather awkward circumstances the girl he hoped to marry.

"Did I—ah—um—interrupt? Ah, how do you do, Miss Fawcett? 'Pon my honour! quite refreshing to see you again," were his first words, as he tugged with his left hand at his moustache and frowned in the vain but noble endeavour to keep his eyeglass in his right eye.

"How do you do?" said Nan sweetly, wishing, in the swift critical glance she cast at him, that his face betrayed a little more expression, a touch of emotion of some sort, and that he would not regard her quite so fixedly with his vacantly admiring stare.

Miss Dempster, having arranged her cap and her temper, came forward, determined to ignore everything unpleasant, but inwardly vowing prompt vengeance on Tompkins.

"How *very* nice to see *you* again, Sir Vernon," she said. "Of *course* you will stay to luncheon, and take Miss Fawcett out afterwards, for the weather has been so bad that the poor child has been nowhere as yet, and I quite look to you to amuse her."

"Delighted, I 'm sure," he said, sitting down heavily on a chair near at hand.

"Now," went on Miss Dempster, turning to the girl with a strange smile, "you had better go and change your frock before luncheon, so that you may not keep Sir Vernon waiting."

Nan departed obediently, only too glad to escape from the painful atmosphere of the drawing-room.

And Miss Dempster continued, in a low, impressive tone, and with a sudden change of manner: "I am really very much worried about Nan, Sir Vernon. I have a

strong suspicion that she must be in love with someone: her manner has been so languid and *distraite* of late, that I cannot make her out. Do you think it possible that she could care for that young fellow whom you brought down to Dalton to paint her picture?"

"Cecil Hume?" said Vernon blankly, his jaw falling, and his eyeglass taking a sudden "header" on to the carpet. "I was under the impression that you —that she——"

"Of course I should not care for the match," continued Miss Dempster, taking watchful heed of his confusion; "but it is the girl herself who puzzles me. She does not even blush at the mention of Mr. Hume's name, and speaks of him quite calmly; but—I scarcely think it's fair to her to tell you—but when you are the subject of the conversation her cheeks are vivid with blushes, and her manner is most nervous."

"There wasn't much nervousness or blushing about the way she received me this morning," said Sir Vernon ruefully. "A cucumber couldn't have been cooler!"

"Ah! that was because I had just been scolding her, and telling her that it was most unmaidenly to give her affection before a word had been spoken by the man in question. I confess that we both lost our tempers," she continued, with an air of absolute frankness.

This put the subject in so new a light to Sir Vernon that he recovered his spirits at once.

"Oh, well! I say! Perhaps she has taken a fancy to me," he said, smiling, well pleased. "And I don't mind telling you, Miss Dempster, that my feelings towards Miss Fawcett are quite lover-like. In fact, I'm quite ready to marry her, though she is a penniless girl; for I am sure that her beauty would make her quite the fashion in society; and I want a wife who has lots of go and plenty of good looks."

"I am quite your friend there," said Miss Dempster. "But Nan is terribly headstrong, and I cannot answer for her;" thinking it quite as well to keep him in a little wholesome suspense.

"There are not many girls in London who would refuse to marry me, headstrong or not headstrong," said Sir Vernon complacently; "and I think I can answer for Miss Fawcett's answer to me when I propose to her."

But there were some things beyond even that astute gentleman's comprehension, and one of them was the mind of Nan Fawcett. For in that long winter of loneliness and discontent in the midst of a luxurious household, she had begun to study herself. And her self-examination had thrown light on several subjects that had hitherto been ignored or misunderstood by her. And one of them was the exceeding isolation and loneliness of a selfish, loveless life.

CHAPTER XIV.

"AND where shall we walk to this afternoon?" said Sir Vernon, as Miss Dempster dismissed him and Nan after luncheon, saying that she was anxious for a nap and an hour of solitude.

"I don't care a bit," said the girl indifferently, as she stepped out into the street, and turned towards her companion to await his decision.

She was looking even better than usual in her handsome furs and Spanish hat and feathers, and his eyes rested upon her with an approving glance and a bold desire to display his conquest to the eyes of the world.

"Well, then, with me be the decision. A turn down Bond Street and a peep at some of the jewellers' shops, and then half an hour in the Park."

Nan smiled, well pleased, and they set off to hail the first hansom they should come across on their way.

Miss Dempster peered out at them through her curtains, and told herself what a good-looking couple they were; and surely that idiot Nan would see the advantage of the match, and not develop headstrong insanity just at the wrong moment. . . .

Meanwhile, Nan was doing Bond Street with placid content.

Sir Vernon had guessed rightly that the thing a country girl most enjoys in town is to see the magic delights of the shops, and he was a most patient, indulgent cicerone, receiving her little ecstatic remarks of delight with a patronising air of possession, which made one or two people smile as they passed by, under the impression that they were a newly married couple on their honeymoon.

He brought her to a stand at last outside a jeweller's, where on their velvet cases reposed diamonds and sapphires, flashing back the light in dazzling myriad prismatic colours.

"*How* exquisite!" said Nan, with a little sigh of delight; for the stones were magnificent enough to turn the head of any less unsophisticated girl.

Sir Vernon drew a little nearer to her.

"Nan," he said, in a low tone, "if you will say one little word to please me, you shall have any of these jewels that you like—necklace, bracelets, and tiara. Will you say that word, Nan?"

Nan hesitated. The diamonds were marvellous in their much-to-be-desired beauty, and the thought of how they would become hers dazzled her for the moment, and she seemed to see herself admired and courted by everyone—the centre of observation—as the bride of Sir Vernon Basset.

Something prompted her to glance up the street at that instant, and there, not six yards away from her, but perfectly unconscious of her presence, stood Cecil Hume, gazing into the window of a picture-shop.

He was looking at a picture of the Crucifixion, and his face had caught some of the pathetic nobility of the expression of the central figure.

Quiet and reverential he stood, absorbed in his own thoughts, and evidently far, far away from the giddy crowd of Bond Street; but that one glance was enough for Nan. It suddenly awoke the higher side of her nature, and she drew away from her lover with a touch of dignity.

Peace and love were on one side of her, riches and the world on the other; and Nan, for the first time in her life called to decide her own future, took the thorny path of right—the narrow way which would be beset with troubles and self-denial for her.

"I am so sorry if I have in any way misled you, but it is impossible for me to say that I will marry you," she answered gravely.

Sir Vernon looked at her in blank astonishment. It seemed impossible to him that any girl could refuse the many advantages which marriage with him offered. This must be mere modest coyness on Nan's part, and he smiled a little pityingly.

"I daresay you are astonished," he said reassuringly; "but you must have seen for some time that I regarded you with great admiration and affection, and that I thought you worthy to fill the highest position in the land—a far higher position even than that of my wife."

"You are very kind," murmured Nan, wondering if any of the crowd of passers-by would be likely to guess that the quiet and fashionable-looking couple in front of the jeweller's shop were discussing the *pros* and *cons* of matrimony.

"I think that you do not understand what you are saying when you refuse me," went on Sir Vernon. "I am quite willing to allow you some time to consider my offer; and meanwhile, let us study those lovely rings, and fix on the one you would like best for your engagement ring. Do you care for diamonds alone, or mixed with emeralds or sapphires?"

But Nan was not to be tempted again by the glittering jewels. In her restless glances towards the print-shop, she had caught a swift look from Hume. He had only smiled a little gravely and lifted his hat, and passed on; but that was enough, and for the second time that day the thought of him strengthened her, and brought her fresh courage.

"I am really in my right mind, and I quite know what I am doing, Sir Vernon. I quite appreciate your goodness in thinking me worthy to be your wife, but I could not with truth and honour marry you, for I do not love you at all as a wife should love her husband."

"But love would come," said Sir Vernon eagerly, feeling, as the prize seemed to be slipping from his grasp, that he really cared for Nan far more than he had ever imagined. "Don't refuse to have anything to say to me, Nan, for I should make a very good husband; I would be very kind to you."

The girl smiled at his rather tame appeal.

"Please say no more," she answered decidedly. "I could never marry you; and I should like to return at once to Park Lane."

There was no more to be said after this, and Sir Vernon, who was a gentleman, though a very angry one at that moment, escorted her home in silence.

At the door Nan turned to him with a white face. "Good-bye," she said. "I shall never see you again, for I shall return to my own people at once; only if I have misled you, or given you sorrow to endure in any way, forgive me, for I am about to go through a scene of more suffering and humiliation than you can even imagine."

"I should think that Miss Dempster will be furiously angry," he said sullenly, with a secret sense of satisfaction that the girl who had refused the honour of his hand, and given him a pang of wounded pride, would not be let off scot-free herself.

He was not generous, and Nan felt his meaning keenly, for she had hoped at least to have had his sympathy to help her through the bad quarter of an hour which was at hand.

Her footsteps made no sound as she slowly and wearily ascended the velvet-pile-covered stairs that led to the drawing-room. But when she reached the door she paused, half afraid to enter and risk her fate.

As she stood irresolute, some words that Hume had once spoken to her at Dalton flashed across her mind: "Meet doubt and perplexity on your knees"; and she quietly turned round and went up to her own room.

It was the first time for many a long day that Nan had done more than say a few hasty words night and morning at her bedside, and when she rose from her knees there was a happier look on her face and a brighter light in her eye than had been there since the days of quiet home-life—before the Dempsters came to break up the peace of Dalton.

Her step was quite firm as she entered the drawing-room, where Miss Dempster was sitting with a novel in her hand and her pug at her feet.

"Halloa, Nan!" she said, looking up keenly. "What on earth have you done with your victim? I suppose, by the happy look that you are now wearing, that I am to wish the future Lady Basset much joy?"

"No, dear Miss Dempster," said Nan quietly. "I cannot marry Sir Vernon, and I have told him so, because I do not love him. I know that you will be very angry with me, and I have deserved it. But if you like, I will leave Park Lane at once, and go to my sister; although I should like to stay with you until you have found someone to take my place, to show you how grateful I am to you for all your kindness to me."

Miss Dempster's astonishment had been so great as to deprive her of all power of utterance, and she had merely sat gasping open-mouthed as Nan had proceeded, like one of the fish in the Brighton Aquarium. But when at last she found her tongue, her very lips seemed powerless to form words of invective bitter enough to hurl at the girl's head. She lost all control of herself, and with clenched hand threatened every instant to strike the patient figure in front of her with deadly powerful aim, while strange words and terrible curses were hissed out with every breath.

Nan stood bravely facing the storm, though her face was deadly pale, and her lips quivered with the fear that possessed her. But at last, when Miss Dempster seemed exhausted, she turned away.

"Good-bye!" she said. "You will be sorry for your words some day. I shall go to my sister at once."

"Go!" shouted the angry woman, "and let your face never darken my rooms again, or Tompkins shall have orders to turn you out into the street. And—do you hear me?—you are only to take away with you the beggarly things you arrived in. I'll have none of my fine presents flaunting down the back streets of Chelsea, where I suppose you'll spend the rest of your days, with your wealthy family and the artist fellow. Good-bye, Mrs. Hume: that is to say, if he is idiot enough to take you with only your good looks to recommend you."

"'Allie dear, don't you know me?'"—*p.* 846.

But Nan had heard enough. Another insult would have broken her down, and she felt that, even regarded in the light of a just punishment, those cruel and cutting words were not good for her to hear.

She hurriedly packed away all her old possessions in her small trunk, and put on the plainest dress and jacket that her wardrobe contained, and then rang the bell, and asked the maid to carry her box down-stairs.

As they passed the drawing-room door, Miss Dempster called out—

"Tompkins, if Miss Fawcett has not money enough, you can pay her cab; but don't give the man more than half a crown, or I shan't repay you!"

Nan received this crowning insult patiently; but she turned to the butler in the hall with a stately dignity that checked any inclination towards impertinence on his part.

"Tell the man to drive to Back Street, Chelsea," she said clearly. "And, Tompkins, I prefer to pay my own cab-fare."

She breathed freely once more when the cab had rattled out of Park Lane away towards her new home, and she leaned back against the ragged cushions and closed her eyes, while two tears rolled slowly from under her long lashes and splashed down on to her black gown.

She had foregone a great deal of what she called happiness for the sake of her love for Hume, and she had left behind her every possibility of wealth that existed for her in the world.

The only question now was as to how Mary would receive her, and whether the resources of the little household would be too heavily taxed by her unexpected arrival. If that should prove to be the case, she said to herself, she must get a situation of some sort, either as companion or servant—for she was not clever

enough to become a governess, and she would prefer to work her fingers to the bone rather than return to Park Lane and give in her submission.

As they drew near their destination she sat up, and pulled down her veil to hide the traces of tears which were still on her cheeks, and alighted at the door of the greengrocer's shop, and dismissed her cabman with as much *sangfroid* as though she had lived in Back Street all her life.

Nurse Allison opened the door to her, and was evidently much surprised to see the fashionable young lady waiting so calmly there, with her trunk at her feet.

"I think you 'll have made a mistake, ma'am," she said respectfully; and then as Nan said, with a smile, "Allie dear, don't you know me!" she clasped her nursling in her arms.

"Miss Nan! Why, it 's my bright, bonny Miss Nan come back to us! And you 'll have to nurse Miss Mary—poor lamb! She 's sitting up by the fire for the first time to-day."

Allison had always cherished a great love for and belief in Nan, in spite of her desertion of her brothers and sisters and wilful following of her own way, and she welcomed her back with as much triumph and delight as though she had been a royal princess and the shop a marble palace.

"Come up to the drawing-room, honey," she said; and Nan, with a beating heart, followed her.

Mary was sitting over the fire, muffled in a shawl, when the door opened, and she turned her head languidly at the sound, thinking that the boys must have returned from their work earlier than usual.

She was looking so fragile, with a faint pink flush on her thin face, and her listless hands folded idly in her lap, that Nan, throwing caution to the winds, sprang forward.

"Mary, my darling—my sweetest—here is your tiresome old Nan come back again to love and torment you!" she cried, flinging herself on her knees at her sister's side, and trying to restrain her passionate tears. "I never knew that you were ill, or I should have come long ago to nurse you."

She had her arms round Mary's neck by this time, and had drawn the golden head on to her shoulder, where the dark and fair locks of the two sisters mingled together once more in perfect contentment.

Allison slipped out of the room and left them together to their joy. She had tears in her old eyes as she hastened down-stairs to tell her sister the unexpected good news, and to plan a bedroom for the new inmate of the tiny establishment.

"I shall get quite well at once now," said Mary, when the first shock of their happiness had worn off, and she had raised herself from Nan's clinging embrace. "It is so lovely to think that you will never leave us again, and that we can share all our joys and sorrows as we used to do of old."

The two sisters had so much to tell one another that evening, that when the boys came home to shout with delight at the sight of Nan, the story was not half finished, and part of Nan's adventures had to be retold to a most sympathetic audience.

"Well, all I can say," said Cyril severely, as he threatened imaginary Miss Dempsters in the air, "is that we seem to be a most remarkable family, and that nothing can happen to us in an ordinary fashion What a joke it would be to meet that lover of yours—that Sir Somebody Something—in the street or behind the counter, and to have the satisfaction of telling him that the lady of his admiration is perfectly happy in the greengrocer's shop of her choice."

CHAPTER XV.

NAN was "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever" to her little sister Gloire, when, next morning, she came down-stairs in her smart gown and apron, to make the tea and look after the housekeeping.

It was not that what the girl wore was at all magnificent—for her gown was a plain black serge—but there was something in the cut and style of it that spoke of a London dressmaker, and would better have befitted a duchess than a girl who lived over a greengrocer's shop in Chelsea.

Gloire lingered over her porridge, admiring her sister from the crown of her fashionable head to the silver châtelaine at her waist, until Nan playfully boxed her ears, and threatened her with instant annihilation if she did not at once finish the last spoonful.

Mary, too, looked at her sister with something like dismay as she sat up in bed propped up by pillows, nibbling daintily at her piece of toast.

"It is very nice to be waited on, Nan," she said, "and to have you here again; but you do look somehow rather beyond Back Street in that gown, and with that general air of magnificence."

"I am so sorry," said the girl earnestly. "I would get another frock, but I cannot afford one as yet, and my châtelaine I bought myself out of my savings. It may come in useful some day when you want an extra dainty or so."

"Cyril calls getting money for things at pawn-shops taking them to his uncle," said Gloire meditatively, as she sat on the end of Mary's bed, swinging her legs backwards and forwards with an air of delicious precocity.

"You are a great deal too sharp, young woman," said Nan, laughing. "What do *you* know about pawn-shops? But how nice it would be if our real uncle turned up just now—having made his 'pile' in America—and adopted us all!"

"Not the least chance, my child. Why, he has never been heard of for nearly twenty-five years, and never even knew that mother was married. You see, he ran away from home after getting into some scrape, and I should think he died long ago."

"Nice people always die in story-books," said Gloire, with the air of a sage; "and I have often wondered why you have not died before now, Mary, because you are so fearfully nice. I wonder, too, why you were not born hump-backed, because I shouldn't be a bit surprised to see wings sprouting behind *your* back; and though some hump-backed people look nice and kind, yet a great many of them aren't a bit like angels."

"*What* a funny child you are!" said Nan, regarding

her queerly. "I really believe that you think that legend is true, and that hump-backed people are merely undeveloped angels."

Gloire was about to answer her indignantly in the affirmative, when Mary interfered, and laid her hand gently on the child's lips.

"Gloire knows quite well, dear Nan, that angels and human beings are quite different creations, and that just as some day we shall be 'higher than the angels,' so it is quite impossible for us ever to become those celestial beings—for our sphere in heaven will be a different one," she said wisely, knowing that it is a dangerous thing to overturn rudely a little child's belief even in a pretty legend. For a child's blind faith is easily shaken, and often enough—forgetting that reasoning comes with age and understanding—we are apt to sow the seeds of doubt in a heart that is pure and trusting as the very heaven itself.

The Nan of old days would have laughed lightly enough at her sister's scruples, but she had seen too much of the harshness of an unbelieving life not to feel that Mary was right.

"And now to our housekeeping," she said at last, jingling with great importance a bunch of keys which she had annexed from the dressing-table.

"It is positively delicious to think that I shall have no more ice puddings and oyster *pâtés* for the present."

"No, certainly not!" laughed Mary. "Porridge for breakfast, porridge for luncheon, and porridge for supper, besides afternoon tea, will be more your present style."

It was finally decided that Nurse Allison had better be left in possession of both keys and housekeeping for the present; and Nan, assuming a solemn air of importance, broached another subject which she had been turning over in her mind for the last twenty-four hours.

"I am going out to look for work, like the unemployed," she said. "I could manage either singing or guitar pupils, for both those accomplishments I have been studying for the last six months as if my life depended upon them."

"*Does* this neighbourhood look as if guitar and singing pupils would grow on every bush? I am afraid that blacking grates and making clothes are the principal accomplishments sought after in Back Street," said Mary quaintly.

"No; but I have an idea—and a very great one, too. I have taken a great fancy to Cyril's account of his old man, and I mean to go and make love to him this morning, and either stick up a card of advertisement in his shop, or let him introduce me personally to customers who might have aspirations in the way of guitars or voices."

Mary would not for worlds have thrown any cold water on the scheme propounded by the bright-faced girl who had had no experience in the difficult hunt for remunerative work; so she smiled cheerfully, and telling Gloire to put on her hat and take great care of sister Nan, she started off the two girls on their voyage of discovery, which she half feared would end in sad disappointment. But their merry voices and laughter as they ran down-stairs brought a more hopeful look to her face, and she lay back on her pillows and closed her eyes—thankful to have light-hearted Nan with her once again, and more thankful for the change that tribulation had wrought in her nature.

The girls walked soberly down the street, choosing the quieter byways that led to Louis Street, for Nan's face and figure were apt to attract too much attention from the passers-by as they walked along, and the country-bred girl hated to be stared at.

They stopped short at last in front of the little secondhand bookshop, where old Aaron Davis alone was to be seen, busy with some fusty old volumes behind the counter.

Cyril was not in sight, and Nan, with a mischievous glance at Gloire, took up one of the volumes from the window-ledge with the air of a connoisseur.

"Surely the original edition would be of an earlier date than this," she said distinctly to Gloire—apparently studying the title-page with great earnestness.

Old Aaron pricked up his ears, and came slowly forward, scenting an intending purchaser in this fashionable young lady.

"I can assure you, madam," he said, bowing and rubbing his withered hands nervously together, "that this is the first edition of this particular volume of Rousseau. I was offered three guineas for it the other day, but I cannot take less than six."

Nan looked up with her most entrancing smile, under the influence of which even Aaron lost his head, and might have even gone so far as to offer the volume for nothing, had not Cyril suddenly appeared from the back regions of the shop.

"Halloa, Nannie!" he said, much astonished to see his sister's lovely face framed in the darkness of the low shop window. "What on earth are *you* doing here?"

Then, as Aaron fell back a pace or two in blank wonder at his audacity in addressing the divinity so roughly, the boy added—

"This is my sister, Mr. Davis. May she come inside the shop for a moment?"

"If she will condescend to honour me so far; but it is only a poor place for her to come into. And is she really your sister, Mr. Cyril?" stammered Aaron, falling over chairs and folios in his haste to admit his visitor.

"Thank you so much, Mr. Davis," said Nan, still smiling, as she passed through into the little parlour, and sank down with a gracious air of dignity into a chair. "I want so much to make your acquaintance, because I have heard how good you have been to my brother."

Cyril pounced upon Gloire in the background, while Aaron was stammering out some unintelligible reply.

"What does she want? What is her game, Gloire?" For he knew of old that Nan never exerted herself to be dangerously fascinating unless she wanted to extract some favour from her victim.

"Wait a bit," said Gloire, highly delighted at the whole scene, and perching herself like a little sparrow on the edge of a huge Spanish chair.

"And now," went on Nan, with a tinge of pathos in her flexible voice, "I want you to help me. I have

suddenly become very poor, and have come to live with my brothers and sisters, because I was not happy in Park Lane with an old lady who was not kind to me" (Aaron gave an involuntary groan at the mere idea of anyone presuming to treat this girl in a manner that even savoured of harshness), "and of course I do not want to be a burden on my family, who are all supporting themselves. So I want to get some pupils to whom I can teach singing and the guitar, for those are my only accomplishments."

Aaron's brow was crossed with a line of perplexity, "but there's one thing, Miss Fawcett, that I should dearly like you to do for me before you go."

"And what is that?" said Nan sweetly. "Anything that I can possibly do to please you in any way, Mr. Davis, I shall only be *too* glad to do."

Aaron's answer was to open one of the dark oak cupboards that lined the walls of the little room, and he turned towards her, a moment later, with a quaint old-fashioned case in his hand.

Still silent, he unlocked it, and taking from its green-baize recesses a guitar, he put it into her hands.

"She sang them with an exquisite pathos."

for the collectors who came to buy his books were not the sort of people to whom the guitar would appeal; but he answered earnestly at once—

"I am a rough sort of fellow, Miss Fawcett, but I'd do anything I could to help you—I would, indeed. Now, there's one thing you can do, and that is to let me put a card in the window: 'Young Lady gives Guitar Lessons; inquire within,' or something of that sort. And there's another thing I can do, and that is, go up to an old Lady Dunford I know pretty well in a business way. She's a 'cute one at a bargain, but she's got some nieces, and I know a sure way to her heart."

The sure way to Lady Dunford's heart was through her pocket, and Aaron meant to say that a certain Bible in his possession should pass into hers at her own price, in return for any kindness bestowed on Miss Fawcett.

"I'll go up and see her to-night," he continued; "Will you play it for me?" he said. "I always keep it strung and tuned."

It was a perfect instrument, inlaid with scented woods, and curiously enamelled with, as far as Nan could see, some Italian name.

She slipped off her gloves, and began to touch the strings with her white fingers: then she strayed into a pathetic little prelude, and took up, softly and sweetly, "The Flowers o' the Forest."

Her voice, never a powerful one, was admirably suited to the Scotch words and air, and she sang them with an exquisite pathos that brought tears to the eyes of one at least among her audience.

When she had finished, and the last notes, "The flowers of the forest are all wede away," were still quivering through the room, Aaron came forward, and taking the instrument from her, replaced it in its case.

"No one shall touch it again in old Aaron Davis'

lifetime," he said abruptly. "It would be just profane after that perfect singing of yours. And it was strange that you chose that bit of air, for it is full of old memories to me, and minds me of my mother."

Nan, touched by the old man's words, rose to leave.

"I cannot thank you enough for all your kindness," said Nan simply, as she put out her hand to bid Aaron good-bye.

The old man bowed over the slim fingers with an air of courtly reverence.

"You have done me an honour this day that I shall not forget," he answered; and, to Cyril's utter astonishment, stood looking after the two girls till they were out of sight.

The boy had expressed his keen amusement and wonder to Gloire by sundry winks and nudges as the interview progressed; but the whole affair had been beyond his comprehension, and the ledger that he was balancing seemed to be full of the "Flowers of the Forest," and each volume of figures seemed to be turning into enamelled guitars and white dainty figures weaving melody.

But the girl's song had awakened an old chord in Aaron's heart, which had lain dormant for years—some old memory of mother and home in the far-off land of his childhood. And while that chord was still vibrating, he was strangely tender to Cyril, strangely unmindful of driving a hard bargain with every customer.

"You 've a deal to be thankful for, young man," was his parting remark to Cyril, as they put up the shutters together. "Beauty such as your sister owns is a rare gift, and comes from God—and you who live near her ought to be happy indeed."

This was such a new light to Cyril, who had been apt to regard Nan as the black sheep of the family, that he suppressed a laugh with difficulty.

"And if you can bring her down now and then to look at any rare book we may have in stock," went on Aaron, with a rather shamefaced manner, "I 'll be obliged to you. Now I 'm off to my Lady Dunford, when I 've had a snack of supper."

Miss Dempster, left to herself, could hardly realise the fact that Nan Fawcett, her submissive *protégée*, had taken the bit between her teeth and left the house for good.

She quite expected to receive a note of apology next morning, or at any rate a message from her imploring to be restored to favour, and when no such letter came up with her early cup of tea, she turned upon her unfortunate maid, and in a few moments, by the aid of her active tongue, had reduced her to a present state of weeping imbecility.

The morning dragged its slow length along very drearily without that bright companion, who had been always so ready to amuse or, at any rate, to work for her; and at lunch time Miss Dempster was so depressed at the want of anyone to argue with or abuse, that she determined to send for Sir Vernon Basset, and see if matters could be patched up between him and Nan, and the girl thus restored to favour.

An imperious note to his club brought Sir Vernon to afternoon tea, and he discovered, when he had been for five minutes in the drawing-room, that his hostess was in a temper which can only be described as the reverse of lamb-like.

"You must have made a pretty fool of yourself with Nan Fawcett yesterday!" she said causticly, when the butler had brought in tea and retired. "Why on earth did you let the girl refuse you? You have lost yourself a lovely wife, and have deprived me of a very charming companion."

Sir Vernon, much embarrassed, began to tug at his moustaches.

"Ah—um—I 'm very sorry, I 'm sure," he muttered.

Miss Dempster's wrath was rising, for meekness never found favour in her eyes, and the more a person laid himself on the ground to be trampled on, so much the more did she rejoice in crushing him to powder.

"Yes," she continued, gazing with deliberation into the teapot, "I 'm sorry to say that I have come to the conclusion that Nan Fawcett is an ass, and that you are another, and I want to know what you intend to do."

This was more than Sir Vernon could stand. His natural pride came to his assistance, and with considerable dignity he rose to his feet, and took up his hat.

"Even from a lady such language is unpardonable," he said quietly. "And allow me to tell you, Miss Dempster, that this is a free country, in which people are allowed to alter their minds, and girls are not compelled to marry husbands for whom they feel no affection. I am truly grateful to Miss Fawcett for being honourable enough to spare me the pain of taking a wife who cared no more for me than for her pet dog."

"Oh, go on! go on!" shivered Miss Dempster vindictively. "We all know that, with your good looks and brilliant powers of conversation and wit, half a hundred girls would fall in love with you at first sight, even though you were as poor as Job."

The ungenerous taunt went home, and Sir Vernon flushed up to the roots of his hair.

"I had rather be as I am," he said briefly, turning on his heel, "than a malicious-tongued woman, for whom society has not a kind word, and who, in her old age, is left desolate through her own fault. I wish you good-afternoon, and good-bye, Miss Dempster."

And he was gone.

Miss Dempster sat where he had left her, motionless as though turned to stone, with a look on her face of slow-dawning surprise and shame.

Then suddenly, with a passionate gesture, she laid her face on her trembling hands, and burst into a flood of tears.

(To be concluded.)

WORKERS IN WEAKNESS.

HEALTH and strength are such precious possessions, and the deprivation of them is so reasonable an excuse for quiet, inactive days, that sufferers do not always do their best with broken powers. The fortitude that can endure is present, but not the heroism that can labour on in seasons of pain and lassitude. A rare enthusiasm is required to work in weakness.

But the chapter of biography is a bright and full one, that discloses how much the world owes to active spirits hampered by bodily infirmity. A glance within is helpful and inspiring. As a rule, this type of steady gallantry receives less notice than it deserves. The result of the toil is praised, but few ask, At what cost? It is only in isolated instances that circumstances compel men to observe how heroic has been the devotion which has kept the worker at his post to the last. It was the pathetic reprieve accorded to Charles Haddon Spurgeon that stamped upon the public mind the impression of an indomitable will sanctified to his Master's service, preaching when the frame was weary, writing the familiar message of God's love when the Tabernacle was left for ever, and eager to speak it even in the invalid's circuit at Mentone. For many years the great English preacher had been a resolute worker in weakness; the end placed a beautiful emphasis on the fact.

The work of the brief life-day of Robertson of Brighton, another prince of the pulpit, was accomplished against similar odds. For six years, as minister of Trinity Chapel, he exercised a wonderful spell. His words burned like a fire in his hearers' memories, and remain a vital force in literature. And those marvellous sermons were due to the fervent purpose of a failing man. The preacher was the victim of disease and weakness, but he never flagged in energy or zeal. The will refused to surrender until the hour of release drew near.

Some of the most notable names in the glorious record of Christian missions are those of ambassadors of the Cross who have laboured strenuously in spite of bodily decay. Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, the forerunner of Carey and Marshman in the enterprise of evangelising India, seemed, perhaps, ill-fitted physically for his tremendous task. Even as a youth an hereditary sickness clung to him. He was delicate, and liable to waves of overwhelming depression. But the young German was fired with love for souls, and he went out to the Danish settlement of Tranquebar, and, feeble as he seemed, inaugurated a successful mission in the teeth of bitter and unscrupulous official opposition. To the end he was undaunted by the frailty of the flesh. After an unjust imprisonment at the hands of a tyrannical governor, he returned to the West to appeal for freedom to preach. His progress was a triumph in two senses. The people knew that a hero was amongst them, and they filled the streets to receive him and the churches to hear him. And Ziegenbalg—"very weak"—was indifferent to fatigue, and charged the crowds to help in delivering the heathen from their darkness. He went back to Tranquebar and resumed his beloved labours with the conviction that the time was short. In the last week of an old year he preached; on the first day of the new year his voice was so weak that few could hear it, and it was his last effort in public. But still he called the native Christians to his bedside, and tenderly urged them to be faithful. Only death could stay the working course of this earliest Protestant missionary to "darkest India." And being dead, he witnesses that those who are not robust may attempt and do large things for the Master.

David Brainerd, who seemed to throw his life away as a worthless thing in the haunts of savages, was a distinguished worker in weakness. The Indians of prairie and forest were foes to fight, not brothers to win, to the stern founders of modern America. But treading in the footsteps of John Eliot, the Red Man's Apostle, young Brainerd sought patiently for their souls. Exposure planted seeds of consumption in his frame, but he struggled on, and taught in sylvan clearings and shadowed wigwams until, at the age of twenty-nine, he entered into rest.

Torch kindles torch down the years. It was reading the "Life of David Brainerd" that caused a Cambridge Senior Wrangler, named Henry Martyn, to devote an unstinted service to Christian missions. Again the worker was handicapped by bodily infirmity. A dangerous lung-disease declared itself, and physicians ordered Martyn home from India. But a rumour reached his ears that his Persic translation of the Gospels was a failure. The natives could not understand it. This news fixed his goal. It was not England, but wherever he could best hope to master the Persic tongue, and ensure that the people should have an idiomatic rendering of the Gospel story. Borne up by a great resolve, the hero of faith went to Bushire and Shiraz, studied hard, and re-translated the Scriptures. He was so weak that a fever from over-fatigue lasted upon him for two months. His journal contains incidental glimpses of the price he was paying for a noble decision. He speaks of "a fire within my head, my skin like a cinder, and the pulse violent," and elsewhere of "a cold so piercing that with all the clothes we could muster we were shivering"—all of which meant the increase of his malady. And one day Henry Martyn found an unknown grave in the wilds of Asia Minor. Who shall say that he perished prematurely? His example of loyal work in weakness has had a shaping word for many a young man gazing wistfully on life's white leaf—

> "Though thou have time
> But for a line, be that sublime."

The early Moravian missionaries to the West Indies were sometimes those who could not reasonably look

for either buoyant power or a lengthened career in a malarious climate. Frederick Martin, who went from Count Zinzendorf's settlement at Herrnhut to St. Thomas, was of frail physique, and often overborne by his labours. Another of the band, Israel, was deformed as well as sickly. But a passion for proclaiming the good news was upon these feeble ones, and through all difficulties and dangers they persevered until a Christian Church, with an independent native basis, was flourishing even in these islands cursed by slavery. It is another proof that a weakly frame has not prevented successful Christian enterprise, and that grand results have been attained with means, to man's sight, wholly insufficient.

If these sacred efforts are highest of all, they do not stand alone. There is scarcely a department of human activity in which notable achievements are not placed to the credit of men and women apparently condemned by a melancholy fate to inaction, or at best to poor and futile service.

Professor Edward Forbes, who superintended the arrangement of the Geological Museum in Jermyn Street, London, and whose "History of British Starfishes" disclosed a scientist of high rank, worked in the years of his short prime that were most crowded with public engagements under onerous conditions of weak health. An Eastern fever, contracted on a journey in the interests of science, left permanent mischief behind. But hampered though he was, Forbes was not foiled. He proved that he could still "toil terribly." He lectured brilliantly, wrote much, constructed valuable maps, and steadily increased the sum of human knowledge. A true hero of industry passed away when the end came, in his fortieth year.

In other fields of scholarship the same lesson is taught: that a brave heart can make life useful even when physical powers seem harshly abridged. For many years Lindley Murray, the Quaker grammarian of Pennsylvania, ruled the English classes in our common-schools. He passed his name into a proverb, the force and fame of which is not yet spent. With all its shortcomings, his popular text-book was a serviceable gift to his age, and commends the author to grateful remembrance. It was the production of a worker shut off from the world by paralysis. In the midst of the chronic feebleness that confined him to his couch the immigrant in Yorkshire framed his "English Grammar Exercises" and "Key." The blow had fallen, but it did not crush enterprise and effort. In the midst of the shadow and the pain the man was faithful to the faculty that was in him, and his courage has its own simple lesson.

It is, however, not one sex alone which supplies examples of work prosecuted under trying conditions, and putting heroic meaning into a life.

Rich treasures of song, the product of a muse steeped in culture, were offered to the world by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. They were largely a woman's work in weakness. A dreamy, fragile girl, who for years—and those the most impressionable—walked in the valley of the shadow, she was mentally active at a time when many would have resigned hope and effort together. To her the fine image of Jean Paul has been aptly applied: "The world does with poets as we do with birds: it darkens their cages until they have learnt what they are to sing." And Miss Barrett was storing power as well as proving her gifts in the invalid's chamber. To the period of darkest days and lowest ebb of physical strength her poems of "The Seraphim" and "The Romaunt of the Page" belong. And though there was recovery and a happy marriage to one who first addressed her as poet writing to poet, Mrs. Browning was always more or less a worker in weakness. The picture Miss Mitford draws is vivid, and true to a persistent fact:—"Mr. —— stands upon the hearthrug, and uplifts the MS. and his voice, while our dear friend lies folded up in Indian shawls upon her sofa, with her long black tresses streaming over her bent-down head, all attention."

What intellectual energy can do to sustain and animate a frail frame is shown in the contributions to literature of Alexander Pope, Friedrich Schiller, and Heinrich Heine.

Pope's "long disease, his life," accounts for much that must be regretted in his disposition. His infirmities were a drag upon his genius, but could not keep him from painstaking and brilliant labours. "He was so weak as to be unable to dress himself without help." His own statement was that he did not expect to enjoy any health for four days together, and the evidence of his contemporaries makes it clear that he did not exaggerate. Pope had many enemies, and he gave them legitimate ground for sharp criticism of his conduct, but he cannot be robbed of the honour of industry in difficult circumstances.

The finest fruits of Schiller's muse were gleaned in years of prolonged suffering. He was incessantly racked by pain, and often visited by a dangerous and harassing insomnia. But he would not abandon work. His gallant spirit made the best of its frail tenement, and each new assault of his foe seemed to strengthen his resolve to make the fullest use of the salvage of wrecked hours.

Heine's name is a word of tragedy to all conversant with literary history. They think of his keen storm-spirit condemned to imprisonment in a body slowly robbed of every power and attribute except bare life and dauntless thought. And in that dismal cavern of his despair the poet, through an amanuensis, still bravely added to the volume of his life-work.

Thomas Hood was a worker in weakness; and Mozart when he composed his "Requiem"; and Wilberforce when he fought the battle of the slave in the British House of Commons; and Buckle when he toiled at his gigantic fragment, "The History of Civilization in Europe"; and Ulysses Grant as he wrote his "Memoirs," to reverse an evil financial fate and secure a competence for those he loved; and Charles Tyrwhitt Drake as he surveyed Bible-lands for the Palestine Exploration Committee; and Wedgwood when he experimented and produced, and clothed a poor and despised handicraft with the dignity of a fine art; and James Watt as he worked at his discovery of the steam-engine; and Commander Cameron when, in spite of frequent visitations of African fever, he crossed the Dark Continent on foot; and John Howard, the prisoner's friend; these, and many another.

Each life is a parable, with its pearl of meaning ready for the earnest seeker. That meaning surely is that out of the rough, displeasing material of trial great gain is to be obtained. Weakness cheerily met may give strength to character. A firm will and sincere purpose can do very much for God and man even in shadowed places, and with an equipment in which suffering seems the chief feature. The feeble ones come to the goal when they carry a brave heart. And then a world ready to despise them as incapables is equally ready to acclaim them as belonging to the race of heroes. To fold the hands and patiently endure may be well; to lift them and labour with what power is still possible must be even better.

W. J. L.

THE RAINBOW.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BURNET, M.A.

THERE is no more lovely object in nature than the rainbow. Its arch of inimitable grace and airy lightness, springing as if from earth and spanning the very vault of heaven, its exquisite combination of colours seen in brilliant contrast to the dark masses of clouds behind it, the suddenness with which it appears and then vanishes away, have always made it a source of delight to lovers of the beautiful. The sun is grand beyond expression; but we cannot gaze upon it without being dazzled by its splendour; whereas we feast our eyes with untiring pleasure upon its rays refracted by the raindrops and dispersed upon this natural spectrum.

It was a suggestive thought of the old Grecian mythology which personified this phenomenon as Iris, the daughter of Thaumas the wonderful, and of Electra the brilliant, the swift messenger of Jupiter and Juno.

But the Bible invests it with a far higher and nobler meaning, as at once the visible emblem of the Creator's character and the sure pledge of His everlasting covenant.

To Noah and his family it must have afforded immense relief. When the sky was overspread with clouds, they might have reasonably dreaded a recurrence of the awful calamity from which they had just escaped, had not their fears been dispelled by the assurance, "It shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." Even if from the concurrence of the same natural causes the bow had been often seen before, from that time it was given a new significance and sanctified as a token of Divine mercy.

Nor is this all the teaching of Holy Scripture upon the subject. In much later days, when God's judgments had fallen heavily upon His chosen people, Ezekiel during his exile at Babylon was shown the rainbow as the expressive symbol of the Divine character. In his visions of Jehovah's glory, the fiery and amber-like majesty which surrounded His throne was tempered with "the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain"; and this is identified with "the appearance of a man above it," thus

anticipating the future manifestations of the Son of God in human nature.

Still more clearly was the same truth revealed to St. John at Patmos, when round the Throne in heaven he beheld a rainbow "in sight like unto an emerald."

Very precious are the thoughts thus suggested to our minds. We learn from God's Word, His works, His providence, as well as from our own conscience, that He is powerful and wise, just and holy, merciful and gracious, and that He possesses each of these qualities in an infinite degree; and we are apt to think of these as if they had a separate existence and may be even opposed to each other. But these attributes represent only the partial views of His character, which with our present limited understandings we are able to form of it, and not that character itself. We read in the Scriptures that God is holy, but never that He is holiness; that He is just, but never that He is justice; that He is merciful, but never that He is mercy.

On the other hand, we are told in one short and most expressive sentence that "God is love." Love is not an attribute of His nature, but that nature itself. So, too, St. John declares that "God is light." This latter statement beautifully illustrates the former. The rays of which light is composed—the red, the green, the blue, and all the intermediate hues—are seen displayed against this black cloud by the prismatic raindrops. They are the essential parts of the solar spectrum, and, although distinct from each other, they are blended in exquisite harmony on the celestial arch.

So it is that the inflexible justice and stainless purity of Jehovah are as essential to His perfection as His boundless grace and mercy. To our finite minds these views of God seem inconsistent with each other, and not until our visions shall be completely purged in the clear light of eternity shall we no longer see "through a glass darkly," but behold face to face the King in all His perfect beauty.

Meanwhile, amidst the dark mysteries of His providence and the apparent confusion and disorder of this lower world, there is a meeting-place between the All-holy and the unholy. We must go in faith to Calvary; and whilst we gaze upon the Divine and sinless Sufferer, and listen to the piercing cry that rends the air and breaks His heart as well, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" we learn at least in measure what He must be whose justice required such a satisfaction, and whose tender mercy could provide such a Saviour.

Athwart the appalling gloom which enshrouds that Cross we descry the mellow radiance of a rainbow, whose arch spans the highest heavens, and yet rests peacefully on earth. In its sweet harmony we see "mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissing each other."

"Where is our love, and where our hearts,
We who have seen Thy Son,
Have tried Thy Spirit's winning arts,
And yet we are not won?

"The Son of God in radiance beamed,
Too bright for us to scan;
But we may face the rays that streamed
From the mild Son of Man,

"God by His love vouchsafes to write
His truth in Heaven above;
As every lovely hue is light,
So every grace is love." *

But the rainbow is a seal of God's covenant as well as an emblem of His character. Every time that the cærulean arch appears spanning the darkened sky and shedding its soft radiance over the face of nature, we see the good Creator's pledge of the continuance of the present order of things. Vast and complicated as are the movements of the heavenly bodies, variable and uncertain though the influences appear which regulate the seasons, the "wheel of nature" (as St. James so beautifully calls it) ever revolves with undeviating constancy. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." The covenant made in ancient days with mankind through Noah has been faithfully observed to the present hour. Equally sure is that still more sacred covenant made with us in Christ, whose issues will reach through the ceaseless cycles of eternity. Faith can discern a mystic rainbow encircling the Cross on earth and the Throne in heaven, and it hears a voice from the excellent Majesty proclaiming that "This is the will of God, that everyone that seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life."

Looking back we behold on the Cross the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and looking upwards to His Throne we see the same risen and exalted Saviour ever living to make intercession for us.

Thus in both heaven and earth we have an unfailing assurance that God is love. Jehovah must cease to be Himself, and His Word must prove to be a fable, ere justice can touch a hair of the head of one accepted in Christ, or a drop from the vials of His righteous indignation against sin can fall on any of those who have indeed taken hold of the covenant and fled from self, sin, and the world, to the protection of the Saviour. And even when clouds of trial, temptation, and sorrow roll up and overshadow our path, the bow shall be seen in the cloud and shine the brighter in contrast to its darkness. It is a bow without arrows, not turned downwards to earth, but pointed upwards to heaven, as the pledge of mercy, not of wrath. "God's judgments," it has been well said, "have ever a twofold aspect—of terror and love—the cloud and the bow on it; yet the darkness is often so heavy that the part of the bow which we see, though very bright, is very small. The thunder and lightning and rain are upon us; the hope is for the time to come."

Still, at times even this material rainbow has proved a source of comfort. A remarkable instance of this kind occurs in the missionary annals of Madagascar. During the early days of Christianity in that island, a violent persecution broke out, and many of the native Christians were tortured and put to death in the most cruel manner. On one occasion four of them were being led to the stake to be burnt alive, whilst triumphantly singing the Saviour's praises. Just at this terrible moment a bright rainbow shone forth, which appeared to rest upon the very spot

* Keble.

where they were to suffer. This was surely no mere coincidence, and we can well imagine how their hearts must have been reassured as they fixed their dying gaze on that visible sign of their Heavenly Father's faithfulness. So it was at the battle of Magdala, fought on a Good Friday, under a violent storm, for the deliverance of the Abyssinian captives. Greatly must our brave soldiers have been cheered in their desperate struggle for a righteous cause when the bright bow of peace was seen smiling over the dark scene of conflict.

Such instances are indeed rare; nor may we rely too much upon them. The invisible rainbow and the promises of the everlasting covenant made to us in Christ are the valid and unfailing ground of consolation. To it the child of God may look under all the trials which he is called to undergo, and as he sees the Father's love inscribed upon them all he can thank God and take courage.

"This," saith the Lord, "is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee."

THE STATION-MASTER AT HELTON.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. BY MARY BRADFORD WHITING

CHAPTER I.

THE station clock had not long struck four, and the sun was pouring down upon the little platform at Helton with a blaze that was more powerful than pleasant. The two porters had found refuge on the shady side of a shed while they took their tea, but the station-master walked quickly up and down the platform, only pausing now and then to give a keen glance up the line, where the signals for the London train might soon be expected.

"Queer fellow, ain't he?" said one of the porters, nodding in the station-master's direction.

His mate was just lifting his can of cold tea to his lips, and he took a long draught before he replied. "Ah!" he said, with a grunt, as he set it down empty. "Queer he is, and no mistake. My missis is as knowing a woman as ever stepped, and she says to me the other day as Mrs. Willmott says——"

At this point the clock chimed out the half-hour, and the men rose from their shady seat to go back to work, leaving the interesting tale unfinished. Although the station-master at Helton had only two porters under him, he was determined to have everything as regular and punctual as though he had been the manager of a great London terminus. The men feared him more than they respected him, for there was something about him that they could not understand, and which made them feel that he was not altogether a man to be trusted. "Hard-hearted and close-fisted" was the general opinion in Helton on the character of the station-master.

But there was one person in Helton who did not share the general opinion, and that was the station-master's wife. She was as bright as he was stern, and her sweet smile formed a striking contrast to his gloomy expression. But Alice Rayner seemed quite contented with her lot, and the quarrels that the neighbours prophesied did not come to pass.

Once, however, their peace was endangered.

Rayner had one sister and two brothers, all younger than himself. Mary had soon left the old home to marry a London shopkeeper; James was a farmer in a neighbouring parish, and Jack a clerk in the service of the railway company at a town not far distant. Their father had died young, and both James and Jack had been taught to look up to their elder brother. James was a quiet, somewhat heavy man, who had settled down on his little farm, with never a thought beyond; but Jack was of a different temperament. Bright and quick from his boyhood, he had many a hope and plan at work in his mind. He was not going to be a clerk always: he would study and learn and work, and make a career for himself; all his spare time was spent over his books, for deep down in his heart was a longing to invent some machine or make some discovery that should be of service to his fellow-men.

All these thoughts, and many more, he confided to his brother's wife. She sympathised with all his future schemes, and with his love for Nelly Moore, the chemist's daughter. Mr. Moore had often helped him in his experiments, and his daughter's love was the prize that Jack hoped to win when his prospects were a little more assured.

There had never been much sympathy between Jack and his eldest brother. Rayner looked coldly upon his plans, and thought him an unsatisfactory young fellow altogether; but still, no one had reason to suspect the two of being otherwise than friends. But though Alice did her best to draw them together, the fire was smouldering, and at last it broke out into open flame. What it was all about no one exactly knew, but at any rate there was no doubt that the strife was bitter between them; and no one was surprised that, when Jack was soon after dismissed from his place on an accusation of carelessness, his brother refused to say a word in his favour. In vain Alice entreated her husband to use his influence with the company; if it were only put before the authorities, they would see that it was nothing but thoughtlessness on Jack's part, and that the charge had been greatly

exaggerated. Nothing would move Rayner; for the first time since they had been married, he spoke sharply, and even cruelly, to his wife, and she dared not say another word, for fear of making matters worse.

So Jack was thrown out of employment, and though he tried hard to get something to do in the same neighbourhood, he was always unsuccessful; something stood in his way—he could not tell what, for he had many friends who were anxious to get him into a fresh post—but it was clear that people had lost confidence in him. There was nothing for it but to try a new field, and so, with many regrets, he packed up his possessions and set off for London.

Once again Alice ventured to plead with her husband, but without success. "Why don't you ask him yourself, Jack?" she said, when he came to bid her good-bye.

"Never!" said Jack firmly.

"Don't say that," said Alice. "Robert means well by you, I know, only he's put out at your losing your place like this. I daresay he's been a bit hard with you, Jack, but you must forgive and forget."

Jack looked at her gravely. "Alice dear," he said, "you've been a good sister to me, and for your sake I'd do anything I could; but you don't understand, and I don't want as you should. So now, good-bye, and look after Nelly for me till I come back again."

His words made Alice feel uncomfortable for a moment; but she could not believe anything against her husband: it would break her heart to do that. No wonder Jack felt vexed and unhappy after all that had passed; but he would make his way in London, and see in time that all had been for the best.

But Jack did not get on in London. He was a stranger to its ways, and he found that there was a crowd of young men like himself, with plenty of hope, but without any other capital. He struggled on for a time, but at last he wrote to Alice to say he could struggle no longer, and was going out to Australia, and after that they heard no more about him.

Now and then Alice and Nelly met, but, though they were both fond of Jack, there was no real friendship between them. Nelly felt that he had been badly treated by his brother, and as Alice could not allow that Rayner had been to blame, there was always a difference of opinion.

But if Alice could not see her husband's faults, they were not invisible to the rest of the world. Rayner seemed to grow more sullen day by day, while there was a fitful excitement in his manner at times that was difficult to account for.

All sorts of rumours were set afloat in the place, but Alice steadfastly shut her ears to them. She knew her husband was not perfect, but she loved him, and she made herself happy with her lot in life.

Rayner's house was close to the station, and as soon as Alice heard the London train rush in, she put by her needlework and began to get the tea, for she knew that he would come before long. Her window looked out into the station-yard, and when she had put everything ready, she took her knitting and went to watch for him. A carriage was just driving off with some of the squire's family, and one of the porters was piling the little luggage-cart with boxes; two or three farmers were standing about, exchanging their last comments on the day's market before they got into their traps; and the old carrier from the next village was waiting for his afternoon's bundle of letters and papers.

Alice stood and watched it all with quiet interest, although she had seen it a hundred times before. There is a pleasure to country people in seeing the same thing happen again and again that townsfolk only find in novelty. She knew just how the old carrier would climb up into his seat and give the reins a jerk to start his ancient horse; she knew how the porters would stand in the doorway staring after the farmers' carts as they rolled rapidly away; and she knew just how her husband's little fox-terrier would run out and back again a dozen times, barking with joy because tea-time had come at last.

It all happened just as she expected; and when Spot had fairly started on his road home she saw her husband come out of the station and walk slowly towards the house, with two or three letters in one hand and a newspaper in the other, which he unfolded as he walked.

She ran back to the kitchen to fetch the tea-pot from the hob, and looked with some pride at the table as she set it down. It was her baking afternoon, and she had made a little hot cake for tea, and boiled some eggs that James's wife had sent down from the farm. It was a tempting-looking meal, and a smile crossed her face as she listened for her husband's step at the door.

But several minutes passed, and Rayner did not come, and at last she went to the door to look for him. He was standing with his back to her, and she called to him to come in.

He did not seem to hear her at first, but when she spoke again he turned.

"I don't want any tea," he said.

"Don't want any tea?" exclaimed Alice. "Are you ill? What is the matter?"

Robert pushed past her without speaking, and she followed him with a feeling of dread. Had he had bad news? But she could see that his letters were unopened, and it was not likely that there was anything in the newspaper to upset him. She went up to him and put her hand on his arm.

"Come and have your tea," she said. "You are tired this hot afternoon."

Rayner flung her hand from his arm roughly.

"Can't you let me alone?" he said. "Women never know when to leave off bothering;" and so saying, he turned on his heel and walked out of the house.

Alice was thunderstruck. She watched him go across the yard, while Spot stood on the doorstep, looking first at his master and then back to the tea-table. The poor little dog felt pangs of hunger, but love was stronger still, and with one whine of disappointment he trotted back into the yard, and slipped in at the door of his master's little office just before it was shut with a resounding bang.

"That is more than I should dare to do," thought Alice bitterly, as she set about clearing away the untasted meal.

CHAPTER II.

THE station-master sat long in his office that night after his work was done. The scowl that knit his brow showed that his thoughts were not pleasant, and his head rested on his hand in an attitude that was almost despairing. A trouble had fallen upon him that threatened him with ruin.

A year or two ago he had been induced by a friend to stake some money on a horse, and, unhappily for himself, he had won. He had never felt inclined to gamble before, but the flush of success was so delicious that he could not resist the temptation of trying his luck again. Again he succeeded, and he felt that he had never known before what pleasure meant. From that time onward he had found his chief interest in betting. Sometimes he gained and sometimes he lost. The sums he staked were not large, for he was too anxious to keep his proceedings secret to be otherwise than cautious. He had qualms of conscience now and then, but he quieted them with the gambler's favourite excuse: that, take his gains and losses together, he was much the same at the end of the year. But he did not see that though his purse might be in the same state, he himself was changing rapidly.

He was soon unable to control his fatal passion, and at last the day came when, having incurred debts that he could not meet, he falsified his returns, and appropriated some of the company's money.

No sooner had he done it than an agony of terror seized him. If he was found out he would lose his place and his character, and be a marked man for life. He had taken every precaution against discovery, but something that his brother Jack let fall made him fear that he had a suspicion of the truth, and he resolved to leave no stone unturned in getting rid of him. Since that time he had been eager to pay back the money he had taken, and believing that he had reliable information about a horse which was to run in an ensuing race, he backed it heavily, with the result that to-day's paper told him that he had lost the whole £400 that he had staked!

It was a terrible dilemma, and at present he could see no way out of it. He had nothing laid by, for every halfpenny that he could spare had been gambled away, and he knew that his associates on the turf would give him no quarter. To pay would mean leaving other claims unsettled, and so lead to bankruptcy, and bankruptcy would mean a public inquiry, that would bring to light his late dishonest transaction. There seemed to be no hope anywhere.

Hour after hour he sat there, unheeding the flight of time, and conscious only of his own misery; but at last he rose from his chair with a sigh. There was no use in staying there any longer; the books and ledgers around him only reminded him of the fate that was hanging over his head.

As he rose to go, however, his eye fell on the letters that he had thrown down when he entered. He had quite forgotten them, but he took them up now, that he might open them before he went back to the house. He tore open the first, but flung it down again as though it burnt his fingers. It was from a creditor whose bill had been sent in again and again, and who now threatened legal proceedings unless he were satisfied at once. Rayner had allowed his bills to accumulate during the last year or two, and he knew that any hint of the state of his affairs would bring an avalanche upon his head. Probably the other was something of the same kind; but as he read it a look of amazement overspread his face. It was from a London lawyer, to say that an old uncle of theirs was dead, and had left a thousand pounds to be divided between his brother's children.

Rayner's first feeling was one of intense relief. The legacy itself was no surprise to him, but it seemed to have come just in the nick of time, and with its help he would be able to make everything straight. But these thoughts were soon interrupted by some that were less pleasant. If he had not been so unlucky on the turf, he should have been a rich man to-night, for his winnings would have paid off all his debts, including the sum he had "borrowed" of the company, and he would have had £250 to start again with. But as it was, he seemed to be scarcely better off than before. It was not likely that he would be excused from paying the whole £400 at once; and by what possible means could he raise it?

He threw himself down in his chair again, and stared moodily at the opposite wall, where the dingy whitewash was only relieved by a time-table or two and a few hanging files of bills. It seemed almost too tantalising that the help should have come in such an inadequate form.

Suddenly he seemed to hear a voice that said in his ear—"You are the eldest: you ought to have had the most."

He started and looked round, expecting to see he knew not what; but there was no one there, and he laughed at his own fancy. But presently the words came again, and this time with more persistency, and instead of starting, he listened to them and pondered over them. Of course he ought to have the most. In the ordinary course of things he would have been his uncle's heir; why should the younger children be put on an equality with him? He took up the lawyer's letter and read it again: "To be divided in equal sums of £250, between Robert Rayner; Mary, wife of Thomas Mason, Grocer, in the parish of Camberwell; James Rayner, and John Rayner."

He read slowly until he came to the last name, and there he paused awhile. Where was John Rayner? Nobody knew. It was more than two years now since they had heard from him; even the Moores had ceased to get letters from him. John Rayner was somewhere in the Australian bush when they last heard from him. In all probability he was dead; and if so, who was his heir?

Robert breathed a little quicker as the last question rose up in his mind, and his eyes glittered with a strange light. Five hundred pounds would almost put him on his feet again. He could pay off his gambling debts and a few pressing bills besides, and it would give him a chance of righting himself before anything was discovered.

Five hundred pounds! The more he thought of it, the more tempting it seemed to become. He must secure it somehow, *no matter how*. Yes, this was the

"'Come and have your tea,' she said."—*p.* 855.

final conclusion of his long mental conflict. *No matter how*, the money must be his! But his plans must be laid with caution, or he would defeat his own ends; if he claimed his brother's share outright, the lawyer might insist on its being equally divided between the three survivors. He must merely state the fact of Jack's disappearance, and promise to hold the money in safe keeping until his return. When it was once in his own hands he could play his game as he pleased.

Having arrived at this resolution, he locked up his papers and went back to the house, where, late as it was, he found his wife awake, with pale and anxious looks, that at another time would have troubled him greatly, but which on the present occasion he pretended not to notice.

He lost no time next day in putting his plan into action; and a reply was soon received from the lawyer, who, having made inquiries and found that Rayner was a respectable man, holding a responsible post, had no scruple in putting his absent brother's share into his keeping. Robert anticipated no further difficulties; Mary and her husband had, of course, nothing to do with the matter, beyond receiving their own share of the legacy; and as to James, he would believe whatever he was told.

"I've got some good news for you, Alice," he said, going into the kitchen. "You mustn't be cross with me because I've been a bit bothered lately. I've had some things on my mind that I couldn't trouble you about, but it's all come right at last. Uncle Joseph has left me some money that'll put me straight. There's something for us all, so you'd better ask James and his wife to come in to supper to-night and talk it over."

Alice was overjoyed. She might have known that Robert had only been so gloomy because he was in trouble, and, like a good wife, she reproached herself for having been so unkind. She went cheerfully about her work all day, and welcomed James and Susan with a bright smile when they appeared.

"Robert's got some good news for you, James," she said, as they came in.

"Yes, that I have!" said Robert cordially. "I

know you farmers are hard put to it sometimes for cash, so it 'll be good news to you to hear that you 've got a sum in hand."

James was a man slow of speech, and he made but little answer to the announcement, listening in solemn silence while his brother explained the matter to him.

When he did speak, moreover, his words were not exactly what Robert had expected.

"And what 's to be done with Jack's share?" he asked.

"Why, that I shall lay by. You don't mean as you want to take it, James?" said Robert, in a reproving tone.

James flushed up.

"No, I don't!" he said. "You 've no right to say a thing like that. I never wished the poor lad no harm, and I 'll never act otherwise than honest by him."

"That 's all right, then," said Robert; "so we 'll say no more about it."

James looked as though he would have liked to say a good deal more, if he had known how to express it; but Alice, afraid of a collision between the brothers, made haste to bring in the supper, and Robert turned the conversation so effectually by asking him his opinion on the state of the crops that the subject was not resumed.

CHAPTER III.

It was evening, and the shadows were beginning to fall rapidly over the little Bush township of Sinclair. In another few minutes it would be quite dark, and the only light to guide the passers-by would be the gleams from the unshuttered windows of the wooden houses. The clatter of a horse's hoofs could be heard in the distance along the straight white road; and just as the last streaks of daylight faded, a burnt and bearded bushman rode rapidly up to the store.

It was Jack Rayner, altered so that his best friends would hardly have known him. The slight, delicate-looking youth of a few years ago was changed into a broad-shouldered man, with bronzed face and labour-hardened hands. For the last three years he had been trying to lay by enough money to enable him to go back to England, but he seemed to be little nearer the goal now than when he began the struggle. He was working at an up-country farm, and though he had plenty to eat and drink, he found it impossible to lay by much out of the scanty money-wage that he received. It was a hard life and a distasteful one, for his heart was in his favourite studies, and not in cattle-rearing or tree-cutting. Almost his only recreation was to ride now and then to the distant township of Sinclair, to try to pick up a little news of the outer world.

Jack Rayner was a man who commanded respect wherever he went. His nature was as simple as a child's, and his steady truthfulness and honesty attracted the admiration of men who made no attempt to cultivate those virtues. He was a great favourite with Barton, the storekeeper, and with his wife and children, and whenever he came to the township he spent the night at their house. He had discovered a distant likeness to Nelly in the eldest girl, and now and again he unburdened his heart to Jessie Barton, and told her of the hope that cheered him on amid all his troubles.

He felt greatly in need of comfort on the evening in question. Life had seemed more than usually dreary to him lately, and he began to think that he should never make a way for himself out of the difficulties that surrounded him.

"Hullo, Jack!" cried Barton, as he stopped his weary steed at the door. "I thought we were never going to see you again. Take your horse round and feed him, and supper 'll be ready by that time."

Jack was glad enough to obey. The storekeeper's rough cabin was the most homelike place to him in Australia, and he looked forward to the cheery welcome that awaited him there with a longing like that of a schoolboy going home for the holidays.

"And how have you been getting on?" asked Mrs. Barton, as they sat down to the supper-table.

"Worse than ever," said Jack, with a sigh. "I don't know what 'll be the end of it."

"Better luck will come some day," said Barton. "Don't get too down-hearted, that 's all."

Jack had heard the same promise a hundred times, and had ceased to believe in it. He whistled a moody tune as he stood by the door when supper was over, and looked so sad that his friends thought he must have some fresh trouble on his mind.

"Have you had bad news?" asked Jessie softly, as she followed him to the door.

Jack started.

"Bad news, Jessie?" he said. "No; what makes you think so?"

"Because you look so sad to-night."

"I didn't mean to let you see it," said Jack remorsefully. "You are all so good to me, it 's a shame to bring black looks here. But you see, Jessie, a man does get tired of it sometimes: when his heart 's somewhere else there seems to be no life in things at all."

His words were rather involved, but Jessie understood him.

"I know," she said kindly: "it is hard for you never getting a word from home. When did you write last, Jack?"

"I can't write," said Jack, a little impatiently. "I made up my mind that I wouldn't until I could tell them something worth hearing."

"I think that 's a mistake," said Jessie; but before Jack had time to reply their talk was interrupted by a summons from Barton.

"Come in here," he said. "I had a paper given me to-day. Jack shall read it to us."

English people imagine that they have read the newspaper when they have skimmed the leading articles and glanced over the "latest intelligence," but to understand the matter properly they should go to an up-country station in Australia. The eager groups who surround the reader demand no less than a commencement at the top line of the first page, and are not satisfied until they reach the bottom line of the last.

Jack had not read far, however, when he came to a dead stop. A familiar name met his eye: "On the 7th of July, at 19, Norton Street, London, John Rayner, aged 79."

"Why, that 's your name," said one of the children.

"It 's my uncle," said Jack gravely.

He could not be expected to feel much sorrow at the death of a relative whom he had never seen, but he knew that the fact meant help for him in his troubles. He remembered well how Robert had gone up to see his uncle after his father's death, and how the old man had told him that he should not make him his heir, as he had once intended, but should divide his thousand pounds between the four children.

The Bartons would not intrude upon his silence by questions, but he had no wish to hide the matter from them, and as soon as he had recovered his first surprise he told them what had happened.

"I shall go home at once," he said. "Two hundred and fifty pounds is enough to give me a start, and I 'll get on then, never fear."

"Two hundred and fifty pounds won't go far," said Barton.

Jack looked a little hurt.

"Don't discourage me just as I feel hopeful," he said.

"I don't want to discourage you," said Barton. "I want to help you. Look here, Jack : I 've been thinking that you and me might join partnership. This is a good business, as you know, for the township 's a rising one ; but I 'm not a scholar, and Billy there won't be good for much for another ten years. So if you like to put your money into it, you 'll have a fair chance of turning it over, and going home a rich man."

"You 're a friend in need," said Jack ; "but I must think it over ; so give me till to-morrow morning."

The more Jack thought of the proposal, the more he liked it. He knew that his share of the legacy would be little enough to start on in England, whereas if he put it into an increasing business he might make a good sum in a few years' time. So the bargain was struck between them, and Jack wrote to his brother Robert to send him his money at once, and poured out his heart to Nelly in a long and happy letter.

If Jack's vision could have pierced to the other side of the world, he would not have been so happy as he was during the weeks that followed.

Robert Rayner had carried out his plans only too well. With the help of an unscrupulous lawyer, whose acquaintance he had made on the turf, he used his brother's money under pretence of an investment, and got rid of his most pressing liabilities.

No sooner had he done so, however, than a fit of alarm seized upon him. He knew well what would overtake him if his doings came to light, and now that it was too late he wished that he had never touched what was not his own. The gloom that he had lost returned in double measure, and Alice had many an anxious moment as she watched him. His restlessness increased as the days went on, and at last he made a painful resolve : he would give up betting altogether, and save what he could out of his salary to pay back the money that he had taken from the company.

This vow seemed to relieve him somewhat ; he missed the excitement of gambling, but he found a kind of pleasure in the sense of virtuous achievement.

He persuaded himself that he was an honest man again, and tried to forget all about the past.

Alice felt the change in her husband like recovered sunshine, and believed that all the old happiness was coming back to her life. She was walking briskly one day through the streets of the market town, when she felt a touch on her arm, and looking round, she saw Nelly Moore behind her.

"Oh ! Mrs. Rayner !" she said, "I was wanting to see you so badly. I had a letter yesterday from Jack !"

"From Jack ?" cried Alice, her face lighting up. "Why, I thought the poor boy must be dead. How glad Robert will be ! What did he say ?"

"He says that he 's got a chance of getting into a good business," said Nelly ; "and he wants his money that his uncle left him sent out to him. He hopes he 's going to get on at last—and then——" Nelly said no more, but her radiant face said the rest for her, and Alice fully sympathised in her joy.

She could hardly wait till she got home to tell her news, and the moment her husband entered the house she ran to meet him.

"Oh, Robert ! there 's such good news !" she said. "Nelly Moore 's had a letter from Jack."

"I know," said Robert curtly ; "I have heard from him myself."

"Robert ! Have you really had a letter ? Why did you not tell me ?"

Robert had not intended to tell his wife at all, but now that Nelly had heard, there was no use in concealing it. "I 'll show it you some time," he said ; "I 've been so busy."

"And now you will send his money," said Alice.

"I 'll see to that," said Robert ; and his wife was satisfied.

But week after week passed by, and still Jack had no money from England. Robert had formed a plan in his own mind : he would wait until Jack's requests became urgent, and then he would tell him that the money must have been lost upon the way. But by an unexpected move, Jack upset the whole scheme. After waiting what seemed to him a reasonable time, he wrote to his father's old lawyer, Mr. Melville, and asked him to find out the cause of the delay.

The first that Robert knew of it was a letter from Mr. Melville, and as soon as he saw it he knew that he had overreached himself. What should he do ? There were only two courses open to him—to brave it out or to fly. To fly would mean ruin : he must try the former plan first ; and this resolve made, he set himself, with knitted brow and heavy heart, to work out a plan for his own deliverance.

CHAPTER IV.

Alice Rayner was getting the dinner ready one day, a week or two after the arrival of Mr. Melville's letter. She looked up with a smile as Robert entered, but he said nothing, and only threw himself down in his chair, with the frown that was becoming habitual to him.

"There 's someone coming up to the door," said Alice.

"Tell them they must wait," said Robert, drawing his chair up to the table.

"Is Mr. Rayner in?" asked one of the two men who stood at the door.

"Yes; but he 's busy now," said Alice.

"We can't help that," said the man, coming in as he spoke, and pushing open the kitchen door.

"Now then, my man; walk out!" said Robert. "What do you want here?"

"We want *you*," said the man quietly, and drawing a paper from his pocket, he began to read a warrant for the arrest of Robert Rayner, station-master at Helton, on the suit of the railway company by whom he was employed.

Robert started; he had not expected this; and yet he had dreaded all the time that inquiry of any kind would bring the whole of his evil deeds to light. For a moment a wild idea of escape darted through his mind; then, drawing himself up, he looked at the men with some dignity. "Here I am, at your service," he said.

"We don't want to make it more unpleasant for you than we can help," said one of the men.

"There is only one thing I have to ask," said Robert: "and that is that you will make as little fuss at the station as you can."

Alice, all this time, had been standing in the doorway, unable to move. She seemed suddenly to have lost all her strength, but when her husband rose from his seat she clung to his arm, crying in agonised tones, "Robert, Robert! say it 's not true."

"Come, come," said one of the men, in a rough but good-natured tone, "don't you go asking him questions like that. He 's only going as far as Lydden today, and I daresay you 'll be allowed to see him again."

His words were lost upon Alice, however; as soon as she moved, a great darkness seemed to come over her, and she fell fainting to the ground.

"'Hullo, Jack! What's the matter?' cried Barton"—*p.* 861.

"Just lift her on the sofa, and then we must be going," said the man.

"I can't leave her like this," said Robert.

They would have been in some difficulty if a neighbour had not at that moment made her appearance.

"Oh! you've got company, Mr. Rayner," she said, drawing back.

"No, no," said Robert hastily; "come in. My wife 's been taken ill, and I have to go out."

His composure was perfect, but inwardly a storm was raging. All his plans had failed, and he had no hope that he should ever be able to hold up his head again. It was all his "bad luck," he said to himself over and over again, shutting his eyes to the fact that a man's life is built up of his own thoughts and words and deeds. He had sought no aid to guard him in the hour of temptation; he had fallen, and now he was reaping the reward of his own evil doings.

Jack Rayner had just come to take up his abode at Sinclair when he got a letter from Nelly telling him the news of his brother's arrest, and the revelations of his dishonesty. It was a crushing blow. Just when success seemed within his grasp it was once more snatched away from him; but it was not Jack's personal disappointment that weighed upon him the most heavily. Robert's uneasy conscience had made him believe that Jack suspected him, but in fact he had never had any such idea. He thought his brother harsh and overbearing, and he resolved to be beholden to him for nothing; but to have accused him of stealing would never have entered his mind. It cut him to the quick only to think of it.

But there was something else in the letter. Nelly told him that Alice was thought to be dying; she had failed ever since her husband was taken away, and now there seemed to be no hope for her. Jack's eyes grew misty as he read. There was a very warm corner in his heart for Alice, and he knew just how this sorrow would weigh upon her.

"Hullo! Jack! What's the matter?" cried Barton, as he came into the store, and saw the big bushman rubbing his hand across his eyes.

Jack told him; for though the story was a terrible one, he could not bear it alone, and he knew that he could trust his friend. "So now I'll have to pack up my traps and be off," he said, as he finished. "I've nothing now to put into the business, but I've got the little I've saved, and I'll go home, for it will kill Alice when they put him on his trial; and I should like to see her again, poor girl."

"Stop a bit!" said Barton; "there's two words to that bargain. Money ain't everything, and if you'll give me the use of your brains I'll give you a share in the business all the same, and we'll work the store together."

"It's too much; I can't take it," said Jack huskily.

"Nonsense!" said Barton. "I trust you, for I know you'll act fair and square. And look here, mate: I'm not a man as says much, but we're all the better for your being here. This is a queer, rough place, as you know, and somehow when you're in it we don't seem to get so far away from all that's good. There's no school here, and no one to teach the little 'uns what some of us learnt at our mothers' knees; and so I say if you'll stay here I'll be glad to have you."

His sincerity was so evident that Jack could hold back no longer.

"I'll come," he said; "and I'll show you by deeds how I thank you. But there's one thing to be done first: I must go home, and when I've done what I can for Alice I'll bring Nelly back with me, if she'll come."

So the matter was settled, and Jack set out on his homeward journey.

The excitement in the neighbourhood of Helton was unbounded when it was known that Rayner was arrested. All the suspicions and rumours that had been whispered for so long were discussed with ever-increasing fervour. But Alice was happily unconscious of all that was being said. She lay stricken down with fever, and James and his wife, to whose house she had been carried, believed that she would never leave her bed again. But, contrary to their fears, she rallied at last, and by the time Robert's trial came on she was able to creep down-stairs and sit by the fire, looking very white and weak, and caring to speak to no one but little Spot, who sat with his head against her knee, as though he fully realised her trouble and shared it all.

Nelly Moore set out one winter's afternoon on a visit to the farm. She was feeling depressed; for it was a sad task that lay before her, and the fact that it was now a long time since she had heard from Jack added its weight to her heart. The sky was cloudy, everything looked very gloomy, and she was hurrying along to try and escape from her sad thoughts, when suddenly she stopped and her heart beat violently. A tall figure was coming along the cross-road that led from Helton, and something in the walk reminded her of Jack Rayner. She felt sure that she was mistaken, for the broad shoulders and bushy brown beard were totally unlike the figure of her remembrance; and yet she had not the strength to go on, but leant upon the gate that led into a neighbouring field.

She was not kept long in suspense, however. In another moment she heard a voice that she would have known among a thousand! It was Jack himself, and her troubles seemed to vanish into thin air. He had had no time to announce his coming, for his letter would have arrived no quicker than he had done, and he had come on to Helton directly he had landed. There he had been told that Alice was at his brother's farm, and he had set off at once to find her.

"Oh! I am so glad you have come!" said Nelly. "I don't know how I should have gone to her alone. Robert has just been sentenced to five years' imprisonment, and he wants her to go and see him before he's taken away."

"Five years!" cried Jack; "that's a hard sentence!"

"Yes, it does seem so," said Nelly; "but they say it's a bad case." And as they walked on through the lanes she gave him an outline of Robert's sad history, and he listened in mournful silence.

Nelly had feared that Jack's unexpected appearance would excite Alice, but she was too much absorbed in the thought of seeing Robert again to take much notice of anything else. The day came at last, and, in company with her two brothers-in-law, Alice entered the gaol. She trembled so that she could scarcely walk, but she would not allow them to enter the cell with her, and they could not go against her wish.

"Oh, Robert!" she said, as she tottered forward and threw herself into his arms.

Robert said nothing. He could not repulse her, but he sat cold and silent, as though he scarcely felt her presence.

"Oh, Robert!" she said again, "it has broken my heart."

"Yes," he said, in a hollow tone, "I know. You have cast me off, like all the rest of the world!"

"Cast you off? It is because I love you that it crushes me! My husband—my dearest——" She could say no more, but as her hot tears fell they

seemed to melt Robert's heart; he turned towards her and clasped her in his arms.

What passed during that interview she never told to anyone; but her despair was changed to a calm resignation that shone through the sadness of her face.

"I can't think how she will get through these weary years," said Nelly that night.

"But I know," said Jack; "she will come out with you and me, Nelly; and I will take care of her till Robert comes for her."

"But can you manage it?" said Nelly. "You know she has not a penny; you would have to keep her entirely. I would like to have her, as you know; but would she not be more comfortable with James?"

"I cannot let her stay in a place where everything would remind her of her troubles," said Jack. "No one will know anything about it out there, and she will be as happy as she could be anywhere. I want to do it, Nelly. Robert knows he has injured me, and if I take care of Alice he will know that I have forgiven him."

Nelly said no more to dissuade him; she loved him all the better for his generosity, and she promised to do all in her power to help him.

So it was settled, and directly after their marriage they started for their distant home, taking with them Alice and the faithful little dog, who had never left her side since his master had gone.

Australian townships do not take long to grow, and when Jack returned to Sinclair he found the place so changed during his short absence that he hardly knew it. There was plenty of work waiting for him, and he threw himself into it with a will, making no lamentation over the hopes that had been so often disappointed.

His long-dreamt-of invention was still a dream; but he had honest work to do, a faithful heart to love him, and plenty of people at hand who needed his help, and he felt that he had been blessed beyond his deserts.

As soon as Alice had recovered her strength a little, she asked leave to open a school for the children; and Jack, who was always anxious to gratify her slightest wish, hired a room for her and sent for books and slates. Her gentle ways and words soon won the hearts of the little rough station children, and a brighter look dawned upon her face as she waited patiently for her husband's coming.

Robert had thought bitterly that his disgrace would turn everyone's hand against him, but his wife's unfailing love and trust softened his heart and turned his remorse into repentance. It was true that the past could never be wiped out; but its shame and pain brought forth their fruit in due season, and when the term of his imprisonment had at last worn itself away, he set out, a wiser and a better man, to begin a new life in the New World.

"LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE."

BY THE REV. FREDERICK HASTINGS, ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

"LET sleeping dogs lie." Better! If you kick one it may only wake up to bite you. Surly men and annoying acts are better unnoticed. Let them alone. Go on your way. Don't expect your path will never be crossed by a dog.

"This is a world of worry. Everyone has something or other, great or small, to trouble him. Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." If a thing is evil and irritating, let it go. If we attempt to check it, we may only be as foolish as a man at a place near to the spot where I am writing. He nearly trod on a snake as it was passing to its hole. It went in. He seized it by the tail and suddenly jerked it out. It turned backwards and stung him. He dropped it and speedily took out his big knife. He put the enfanged finger on a block of wood and chopped it off. He then hastened to the house of a friend of mine to have the bleeding member dressed. Better have let the snake go, as he had no stick with which to scotch it. Many thus take troubles by the tail, and find fangs piercing the soul.

It is always best not to worry. The greatest troubles often come from ourselves. Our blunders, our ignorance, our obstinacy, often cause more fret than anything others outside can do. Still, it is no use troubling. No one should carelessly let fall the goblet of joy because there are a few drops of evil in the mixture. No one should make himself miserable on Monday because he may have to go out in the rain on Tuesday or Wednesday. We are not to be "over-anxious" about the morrow. The evil of one day is sufficient for that day.

It is the glory of man to be able to think, to forecast, to calculate. Without this, business would cease and the world would stagnate. Without it, no building would go up, no ship cross an ocean, no harvests be gathered, no commodities be exchanged, no trees be planted, no roads be made, no wells be sunk, or suffering be softened.

Man is not to be a mere animal, living in present joys, careless of the future. He is not to neglect his eternal prospects. He is not to leave everything to chance. He is not to give way to a natural indolence. He is not to emulate an author who confesses that his schoolmaster said that he had "never known a boy do less work in more time." Man is not to neglect to provide for himself or for his own. He is not to be worse than an infidel because a Christian. He is not to be

indifferent to the welfare of his neighbours, the prosperity of the State, or the advance of religion. He may think, work—even strive, agonise; but he is not to be over-anxious. He is ever to hear sounding behind him the warning, "Don't worry!"

A man can become, by over-care, quite *distrait*. This is a high-pressure age. Many drop by the wayside of life, killed by over-anxiety. They have struggled to pass each other, and have overstrained their natures. They yield to the harass and fret of the times. They imbibe the spirit of discontent. They have ever been hankering after something beyond them. They have flung away the peace of to-day in the effort to reach a fancied joy on the morrow. They have pressed forward under burdens too great to bear, and as useless as they have been heavy.

Life, after all, is more than the flavour of a joint. The physical frame is of more importance than that which covers it. Character, calmness of soul, moral power, are more than so much work done. To speak the truth is great; to think truth is higher; to be true is the highest. This we can be in the present. Consciousness of sincerity of motive and simplicity of life brings the certainty of God's smile. The man rests in the power of the Highest—to help him upwards in moral purity, to condone and to blot out the results of any past perversity. If God forgives and conscience no longer condemns, then a man need not worry.

How useless it is to try to carry two heavy burdens at once! An engine might drag twenty trucks up an incline, but fail to stir thirty. Nay, the thirty might drag the engine backwards. Spite of all brake-power, they might plunge the engine and the whole train over the embankment.

"Yes, but," some will say, "you must be anxious about the development of things; you cannot help thinking of the burdens which may come." Let them come. All efforts to put them aside may be unavailing. Ofttimes, however, when they come they are not half so overwhelming as they threatened to be. Often, also, we find that the future is very different from what we expected. Each day comes with a changed complexion. Things tha. at night sometimes wear a sombre hue, in the morning may not only smile, but be brilliant in the sunlight. In a half-waking state at night we often see difficulties like trackless mountains before us; in the morning they are like low hills, easily crossed, terraced with vineyards and dotted with homesteads. How useless, therefore, is over-anxiety! Worry will hinder us from doing our proper work effectually. An evil habit of fretting will tantalise us. We should live unruffled by slights, unmoved by difficulties, and untouched by mere worldly allurements. We should thus be more fitted to accomplish any good aim in life. If we allow the mind to be fretted with anxiety as to our work, we shall be like a man who has been spending his strength in sharpening his scythe, and has left little to mow with. That makes it very dangerous for the legs of others when he tries to cut his swathe.

When people delight in brooding over some past trouble or coming sorrow, it is certain that they find a sort of comfort in the brooding. The pain is gone. Life would be dull but for the supposed reason for brooding. Alas! however, many, when they brood, make others gruesome. No man should burden others. It has been truly said that many people "not only meet, but make, their troubles." Perhaps we have been among the number. It is quite true that "troubles are like healthy babies—the better they are nursed, the bigger they grow." They will seem by-and-bye to be the largest infants in the world. Yet we may be only ourselves big babies, because we have not learned the great lesson that our Divine Master would teach us when He told us to "take no anxious thoughts for the morrow."

If a man should meet with some great trouble, he should not give up despairingly. There is always a Cape of Good Hope to be doubled, but fretting is a leak that may sink the vessel. A man should always go on confidently and hopefully.

Because we may have tripped, it is not necessary we should tumble. If we have trouble, it is probably just our proper proportion. Joy and sorrow are more evenly distributed than we think. If something stings us, don't let us fight the whole hive of bees, but pluck out the sting. If we can pluck it out, let us take "every prick as easily as a pincushion."

Oh! we need not be weaklings, and lack persistency and trust in God; because our star of hope has been hidden or the sun of our aspirations sunk behind the hills. Because people get over-anxious about some approaching trouble, they foster evil, they destroy good, they pass by benefits, they omit duties, they leave persons, they frustrate plans, and they depress hearts.

The prospect before us is glowing in the sunlight. Meadows are intensely green. Fields of grain glitter in yellow wealth. Bluish hills are in the distance. Enchanting are the outlines and tints. The torrent makes music as it tumbles over the wedged rocks in the valley. Cattle browse. Children's voices rise from play. The happy ringing sounds are borne to us on the one side by the evening breeze; on the other come waftings of bell-music from the old ivy-mantled church tower. Amid all this we allow some thought of care to enter our brains. It creeps up before us, rises, and stands out so strongly that it blots out the scene. The opaqueness of the trouble is dense. and its persistency is detestable. We say, "It will rain to-morrow." We say, "A storm is gathering." We say, "The cattle are out." We say, "The children are not home. Damage will be done. Everything will go wrong." We have hastened to meet trouble. We saw the gloomy-faced enemy approaching, and we hastened to welcome him. What folly!

At the approach of some old worrying nuisance, say, "Stop there. Don't enter this house. Stop!" If the trouble is persistent, shut the door. Don't wake up sleeping dogs even by the bang. Many a worry would lie still unless we trampled upon it. Don't touch a hair of its tail. Step over it. But even should some trouble wake up, should some carking care come elbowing its way to us, should it come as a friend, a pretended friend, turn from it. Don't know it. Treat it coldly. Turn and

hold converse with some cheering advantage. Control imagination. Exercise will. Resolve to leave things to God. Avoid becoming wretched in the present because we may have some trial in the future.

Determine in a Divine strength to bear up boldly against waves of worry. See that the sails are set and the helm steady. Look to the chart and compass: the good old Book. Gain an assurance of a Divine love towards you. Believe that God overrules evil for our good. Gaze on Him Who went about ever peaceful, conscious of His Father's smile. Imitate Him Who did always those things that pleased His Father. Learn to submit the will to God. We need not be fatalists. We need not think the arrows of the Almighty are fixed against us. We need not imagine that bolts out of the sky must ever fall on us. Find joy in the present—a heaven in to-day. Though overclouded the day, let not the thought of the morrow make lurid the present. Keep a thankful heart, and worry will vanish.

A great divine once said to a beggar, "God give you a good day, my friend."

"Thank you, sir; but I never had an evil day."

"God give you a happy life, then."

"Thanks; but I am never unhappy."

"How is that? Tell me what you mean. What is the secret of your constant happiness?"

"Willingly I'll tell you. I am cold, or freeze, or hunger. I thank God because it will soon be over. If I am ill-treated, I thank Him because I know He will balance it. I am never unhappy, because resigned to God's will; I am always joyous, because thankful for every mercy."

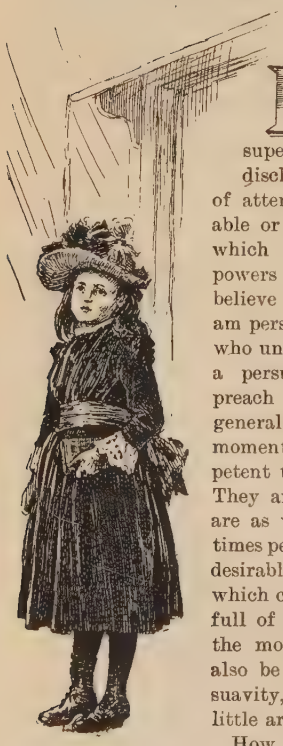
In short, the true secret of being free from trouble is to leave all to God.

Even in doing spiritual work we are to be zealous, but not worried. There should be a quiet moral earnestness, and not a fretting fussiness. We have no need to fear that God will not accomplish His work in the world. He will rear His temple; He will gather His scattered hosts; He will destroy all evil. We are to do what we can to help forward that grand aim, but even as Christian workers we are never to be over-anxious.

MY EXPERIENCES AS A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

BY A VETERAN.

III.—MY FIRST DAY AS SUPERINTENDENT.



"There is Mary Jones always an early arrival."

FEW people, I suppose, really covet the office of Sunday-school superintendent. For its proper discharge it needs a regularity of attendance which all are not able or ready to give, a patience which all do not possess, and powers of command which few believe themselves to enjoy. I am persuaded that many persons, who under pressure might admit a persuasion that they could preach better sermons than they generally hear, would not for a moment profess themselves competent to direct a Sunday-school. They are aware that the duties are as varied as they are sometimes perplexing. It is not merely desirable to have the strong head which can keep a room, or rooms, full of boys and girls, in order; the model superintendent must also be able to deal with tact, suavity, and firmness with the little army of teachers.

How it came about that I was made superintendent need not here be explained. Let us pass at once to the day when, with a very high sense of my position and many inward quakings, I entered on the work.

The first rule I had made for myself was that I would always be early, and, if possible, the first arrival at the school. This resolution was born of some experiences which many teachers have no doubt encountered in their time. It is not pleasant on a rainy Sunday to find the school-room door locked, because the superintendent (still wanting) has made a law that the doors are not to be opened until he arrives. We have had some of us, under circumstances such as these, to find temporary cover in the school doorway, very perturbed in spirit. Reasons for dissatisfaction abound. There is Mary Jones—always an early arrival—in the gorgeous raiment which a doting mother loves to place upon her child every Sunday. Mary, with the carelessness you have so often observed within the school, is standing just at a corner where the rain drips steadily on to her hat. The ruin of that impressive head-piece will be put down by Mrs. Jones to the discredit of Sunday-schools in general, and on the next wet day Mary's place will be vacant. Then there are the two Thompsons, who are also early on the scene. The elder is of a roving disposition, and the younger is a mere slave to execute his brother's will. You are perfectly confident that if the sound of trumpet or drum should be heard in the distance, or if there appear so much as the sign of a quarrel between two men or women in the street, the Thompsons will elude your vigilance and be off in pursuit of the gratuitous entertainment provided for them. It was the recollection of such scenes as these that induced me to resolve on being first at the school.

But in my anxiety I could not rely upon the

"I found a youth of tender years burlesquing my little exhortation."

clocks, and therefore reached my destination quite ten minutes before attendance was at all needful.

"Why, sir, you be early!" said the caretaker, around whose lips there still lingered some traces of the mid-day repast in which she may have been disturbed.

But, after all, the early arrival was not a mistake. There was time to get everything settled comfortably before other people came. I had my hymns selected, the opening services all arranged, my notices made, and everything in order before I was much interrupted by incoming children. This enabled me to welcome at my ease the teachers as they arrived, to keep an eye upon classes for a time without their shepherds, and to deal with some matters of detail as they arose without the harassing thought of other preparations unmade.

"Take my advice," said an oldster to me, when he learned what work had fallen to my lot: "pervade the school."

I knew what he meant. There are superintendents who contrive with great success to efface themselves. The scholars rarely feel their presence, and the teachers come, perhaps unconsciously, to regard Mr. —— as a mere figurehead. There are others who believe in the maxim that it is the duty of leaders to lead. They keep well in touch with the teachers; welcome them to school Sunday by Sunday, reprove (with discretion and sympathy) the late-comers, and cause it to be known that they observe the conduct of each class. They make the children know who is master in the school, and let them see that they are under control supplementary to that of their teachers. It was the latter type of superintendent which had been recommended to me as a model.

So I also sought warily, though still effectually, to "pervade the school." Of course there were obvious dangers. One might be thought officious, a jack-in-office, a martinet, or a new broom sweeping most amazingly clean at its first employment. But it was worth while risking these perils if one could only give the teaching body a little more cohesion, a little more enthusiasm, a little higher estimate of their work.

My greatest difficulty lay then, and on many other Sundays, with the classes whose teachers came late, or, without giving any notice to the contrary, did not come at all. I paid these classes frequent visits; I gave them to understand that they must, under the circumstances, be on their best behaviour; but the results were not always consoling. One assembly of big lads had a small room to itself. Their teacher was late, and the sounds of mirth which came through the door suggested that the boys were having an exceedingly merry time. I went in, and exhorted them in a style which combined, I hoped, dignity, gentleness, and resolution. Two minutes later there was a recrudescence of tumult, and looking in I found a youth of tender years burlesquing my little exhortation, to the extreme delight of his fellows. If teachers who could be early but come late only knew how much soreness of heart their dilatoriness gives to their superintendent, they would more often be there to welcome their scholars, instead of hurrying in when the class, left to meet under no proper supervision, had got well into a disorderly frame of mind.

When the moment for beginning school arrived, a new difficulty presented itself. The Sunday-school superintendent cannot enforce the complete discipline of the day-school. With what measure of order, then, may he wisely be content?

"Don't be finicking about quiet, and don't try to ignore disorder."

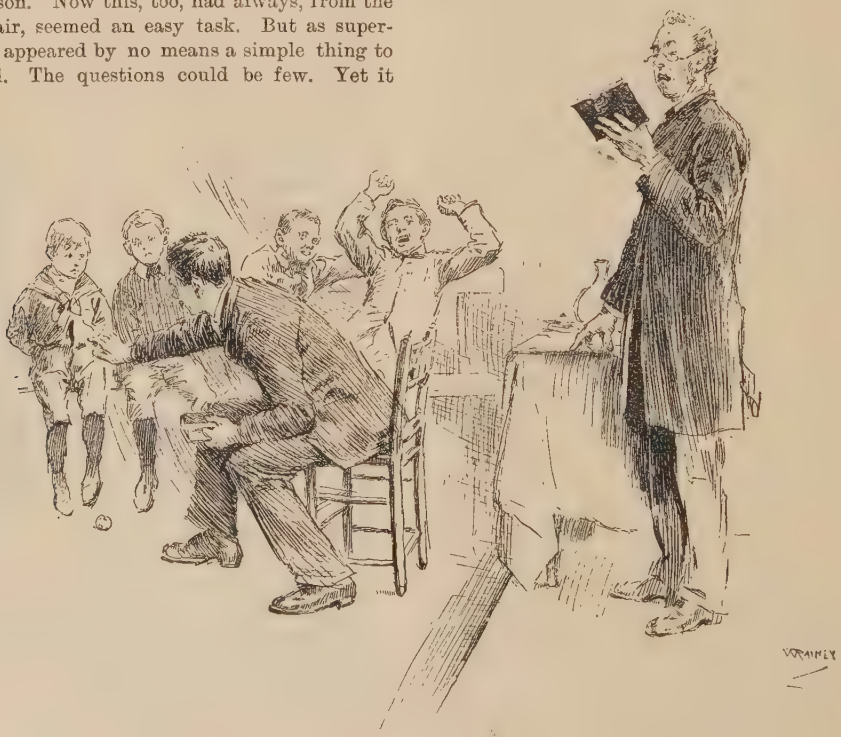
That was the advice of my mentor; and experience as a teacher had shown me it was well founded. I knew a superintendent who was always striving to get absolute silence. But he rarely got it, despite many exhortations and much tedious waiting, which were no better than waste of time. There would be a stillness such as was in reality good enough for any school, but it would be broken by a cough, or by the shuffle of some careless boy's feet. So X. waited a little longer, only to find the uneasiness of the school increase, until teachers and boys both lost patience. Then at last we began; probably under worse conditions than might have been obtained three minutes before. Y. had quite another policy. "We mustn't be too sharp-sighted," used to be his motto, and he would therefore open the school when classes were in disorder and his own voice was not easily distinguishable above the general hum.

As a teacher I had noticed both these defects; but things do not always look the same from the teacher's chair as from the superintendent's desk. Certainly I did not find it quite so simple a matter as I had supposed to cut in exactly at the right moment, neither exacting too rigorous a silence nor ignoring too obvious disorder. Once it had seemed as if a sufficiently resolute tone would always command attention; now it was not at all so certain. But this was one of the things in which practice did much. The new superintendent learned to know just what he could get, and the children to give more readily just what he wanted.

When the class-teaching was over, it had been usual for the superintendent to question the school briefly upon the lesson. Now this, too, had always, from the teacher's chair, seemed an easy task. But as superintendent it appeared by no means a simple thing to do this well. The questions could be few. Yet it was on all points desirable that they should test the teaching given, and test it fairly. It was soon apparent that a question or two framed upon the spur of the moment met the necessities of the case but poorly. In other words, to examine you must know, and to put four or five searching questions about the lesson, it was needful to know what the lesson had been. But this examination, however brief, had its uses. The good teachers liked it, for it tested their work and afforded an opportunity of proving that it had been well done. The indifferent teachers were in some degree stimulated by it, for they did not wish their classes to sit in gloomy silence whilst others around them answered. The children liked it, for they welcome any variety after forty-five minutes of instruction even from the best of teachers.

One reform and one only did I initiate on my first day of office. The singing of the school had been neglected. Time had been deemed of small account, shouting encouraged. So I set myself to seek improvement. It was not a hard task, for many children will attend to directions of this kind who are not conspicuous for zeal over their lessons; and shouting—despite the evil habits of the day-school—can be corrected with patience and care. We began our change from that day, and soon improved ourselves out of knowledge. Our hymns were no longer a deafening terror to visitors, but a sweet melody pleasant to the ear.

Experience has taught me much more since that day; but some at least of the lessons then learnt and the resolutions then made have stood by me until now.



"He would open the school when classes were in disorder."

"OUR FATHER."

BY THE REV. DAVID BURNS, GLASGOW.

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven."—ST. MATTHEW vi. 9.

E have great need to pray, and times come when we cannot help praying. While we are busy and things are going well with us, we easily forget our need; but when a pause comes, and our thoughts brood on the mystery in our own breast, and then fly on through time to the edge of eternity, we find our heart awed and eager to pray. Are we alone and helpless in this vast universe, and with those ages coming and ever to come? We cry out for One to stand by us through it all.

Even to the most thoughtless there come circumstances which almost force the heart to pray. Health or fortune has failed, friends are dead or estranged; our life is no longer full, and the future is dark; we have lost our old self-sufficiency, and yearn for a Friend who can bless us in spite of disaster.

One trouble—the worst to bear, but the best to have—is especially urgent in driving us to prayer: it is the shame, and burden, and fear, which we call a sense of sin. No human sympathy eases that smart; no regret and no restitution satisfies our conscience. We must tell our penitence to One who is pure, and Who has the right and the heart to put away sin.

At such times our heart asserts itself, and will pray. And is there anyone to hear? Is there One greater than we, more loving, more pitiful—a Father to us children? Or can it be that all those cries of human pain, and trust, and hope are but breath, which for a moment makes a mist in the air and fades? No ear to welcome them, no heart to care, no hand to shield and lift.

Surely the prayer is itself the proof of One to hear it. How comes this heart of mine to long for a Father, and ever, in spite of itself, to turn to heaven, if He who made it has Himself no heart? But our Maker has left us in no doubt. He gave many a token of His existence and of His nature, and at last He sent a Messenger from His bosom. He bids us kneel, and puts our hands together and says, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father." This name which Jesus puts into our lips is not new, but He speaks it with a new accent. He utters it tenderly, as bearing my own love, and trust, and loyalty up to Him, who regards me the while as a dear child of His. In the Old Testament the ideas expressed by it are rather those of creation and protection than this of close and warm affection. God was the Sovereign, and men were His subjects; His laws and His providences were thought of as meant for the kingdom, and only indirectly for the individual. The Christ reserved it for Himself to reveal God's personal love to us, one by one, as children in His own family.

Not once, but in every word and act of His life, was Jesus teaching us and authorising us to call God "Our Father." He, in truth, was Immanuel—God with us. Not merely was He a prophet, the last of the line, to complete their revelations, but He was Himself Divine. The Father dwelt in Him, and made His whole spirit and conduct a true image of the Invisible and Eternal One. Therefore did He say, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works; I and the Father are one." At last God was manifest in the flesh! The infinite glory of goodness and love shone softly on us through a human life. We can read the heart of our God as we read the heart of our fellow. We follow Jesus, step by step, as He goes about doing good, and all the while has His face set towards Calvary. We look and listen, and so learn what God's real feeling towards us is.

There He is, with a little band of common folk about Him. He is speaking to them in their own homely words, and with all His heart given up to their interests. Mothers begin gently to push their children forward to His knee, and are sure that, if He do but bless them, they shall be blessed indeed. He outreaches His hands, and the little ones nestle to His bosom. That is God! He truly is our Father; His heart is one of lowly and tender love.

Again, Jesus is passing in view of Jerusalem. Lying away before Him is the city, its streets thronged with sinners, and its very temple a den of thieves. Soon the world's worst crime is to be enacted there. Later, the fiercest judgment is to hem the walls around, and leave a blood-drenched smoking pile. His eyes saw all that as He stood and beheld the city, and "He wept over it." Those tears over human impenitence and a doom that cannot be stayed are the tears of God. They well up from a heart of infinite pity.

As we thus travel on with Jesus from place to place, we learn ever more of the Father. We see how He holds aloof from no one, but frankly joins the company of the sinful and of the poor. We mark how ready He is to use His almightiness to heal some sick woman or to cleanse a forlorn leper. His doings are all for the aid of others, and never for His own safety or glory.

And, all through, His bearing is lowly and simple. He wears no aspect of condescension, and He never marvels as if His great deeds and grand sayings

were a surprise to Himself. His heart of Divine meekness but follows its own prompting, and does the familiar things of the Father in heaven.

But a yet deeper knowledge of God awaits us as we go on with Jesus to see the end of this strange career. A crowd surges around a wavering judge and an innocent prisoner. The hoarse cry of the multitude is, "Away with this Man: crucify Him!" They hurry Him beyond the gates and nail Him to a cross. Mocked, scourged, spat upon, He is now left hanging there to die. How did He curse His murderers? He said, "Father, forgive them." In direst agony He did not lift a wistful eye to bring down the legions of heaven to His aid. He died willingly, that there might be forgiveness to those jeering men around the cross and to us. He gave Himself a sacrifice for sin. Such is God! He—the Holy One, the offended Judge—is so eager not to punish, but to pardon, that He makes the sinner's cause His own. Of a truth He is our Father, and fain would save His children from that which makes them bad and wretched.

When once we have learned that name for God, we wonder why there should ever have been any doubt of it. We hear it whispered all about us; we see it written on everything: the whole world witnesses to it.

He, who made this place and its people, must have been guided by His own heart in what He did. All the beauty, and comfort, and provision of our home here are, therefore, tokens to us of our Father's forethought. He pleased Himself with creating pleasure for us. And we ourselves are His work. In the very fact that He made us with minds to understand His, and with hearts to give love for love, we have a revelation of His Fatherhood, and its yearning to have us for children. He reflected His own glories of character and of will in the human soul, that it might be His fellow. Now, alas, man is but the ruin of what God made; but traces of the Divine remain.

Through this marred image of God we get glimpses of the Great Original. The child, so far, lets us see the Father. We look upon our fellows, and when they are at their noblest we say they are nearest their true selves. As they show a pure, self-denying love in aiding a brother, or in benefiting the race, then we call them men indeed. Therein we declare that the Author of humanity is Himself such, but with no stint and no change. The mother's homely and sacrificing tenderness, the husband's protection and care, the brother's trust and helpfulness, all our sweet human love, is a stream from the fountain of God's heart. Our very admiration of the strong and the good, as they join hands with the weak and degraded, is a witness in our own breast that our Father feels just so, and Himself does, perfectly, the things which He delights to see in us. Wherever, then, we behold true manhood or womanhood, we have a window into the secret of the Divine nature. We learn the heart which designed the human heart, and in the joy of it, made it. We worship the Creator, who must be still more glorious than His creation. Our Father, God, must be infinitely better than the best which our race can show.

This very name of Father, lofty and tender as it is, can do no more than give a poor *earthly* picture of the heavenly goodness. God is grander and sweeter and truer than any father we know or can imagine. Whatever care and patience and forgiveness we may dream of as the full perfection of fatherhood, we must exalt it much more, and know that, after all, it comes short of the glory of our Father in heaven. Especially does the name fail to tell us the *disinterestedness* of the Divine love. All our love is asked from us, and drawn forth by something without. It is never self-lit and self-fed. And, all along, even at its best, it is to some extent but the love of ourselves. We love our own and those whom it is a pleasure to love. God's love, however, is for the sake of the loved one; and in our case, it was sought from God by no attractiveness and no desert. We were disobedient and defiant; we held away from Him, and fain would have banished every thought of Him; we wished neither His love nor His help. And our Father, out of His own pity and eagerness to do us good, was Father to us still.

It is the force and warmth of that love which makes Him a consuming fire to all evil. Sin sunders him from His children; sin debases them, and drags them down to misery; sin would bury them in hell, instead of making them at home in heaven. Sin, therefore, is the thing which He hates and will not suffer. His curse, His hand is against it, now and ever. Hence, in the very fury of His judgments, and in the dread certainty with which each broken law inflicts the penalty, we read the fatherly heart of our God.

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father." It is a word for each of us to say, and for us all to say together. It gives God to me, and it gives me to all my brethren. We say it, and are one family, with one love over us, and one home awaiting us. Whether we say it or not, it is God's true name, and to all eternity He cannot change, and it cannot pass. "Our Father" He is and ever shall be. In love He made us, in love He deals with us day by day, in love He will fix our destiny. Our hereafter, be it bliss or be it woe, shall be the best which we have left Him the opportunity to award. We can refuse to be children towards Him, but He cannot cease to have a father's heart to us.

If any of us, therefore, are not at one with Him, the reason is in ourselves; we need to change towards Him. We must arise and go to our Father; and we shall find Him on the way hastening to us, and breaking in on our prayer with His kiss of pardon and welcome. As we are, hungry and in rags, and with the shame of our sin on us, we must go. We have the one sufficient reason for going—that we are away. We have the one sufficient claim—that He is

our Father. He Himself, at an infinite cost, has set open the way which our sin closed. Nothing hinders but our reluctant heart.

Sad would it be if even one of us should read this Name and leave it here a dead word, buried in the book. Let the Blessed Spirit have His way, as now He woos you to warm it with your love, and to quicken it with your trust. Wing it forth into the ear of God, and link yourself to Him for evermore. Come into the one family circle, which never shall be broken. Begin the home-life which is peace and progress everlasting.

A Father—and I not to seek Him! Home—and I never to enter it! Love all around me—and I to carry a cold heart in my bosom! I go away into the fretting troubles and great sorrows of life—away to the dread loneliness of dying, and on to the more awful loneliness at the judgment-bar. Alone! alone with my sin, and my doom, and my starved heart! an orphan—and I in the House of my Father!

THE SMOKE KEY.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," "THE VANISHING OPAL," ETC. ETC.

PART II.

TO many—to most along the country-side—the death of little Phil Mahoney was only a nine days' wonder, just as your death, good reader, would be, even supposing that you could hang, draw, and quarter yourself for high treason, or for no reason at all. Don't flatter yourself that people would keep long talking of you, even if you could, and would, and did come to such a melancholy end. Something else would be down in a day or two on the heels of your hanging, drawing, and quartering, and then something else; and so it would come to pass that you might just as well have let yourself alone, and spared yourself so much unnecessary trouble.

Thus was it with the death of little Phil, and the mystery which surrounded it. There was no one to give evidence about it, no one to throw any light

"'And why did ye die—why did ye die?'"—*p.* 870.

upon it, and by degrees it began to be forgotten; and, no doubt, it would not have continued fresh in the minds of the people even as long as it did, had it not been for that unaccountable blue mark upon poor little Phil's shoulder. Some thought the "good people" (the fairies) had drowned Phil in the bog-hole, for near that spot was a place where they danced at night; and maybe Phil had trampled upon it or picked the bog flowers out of it; or maybe they wanted him to be one of themselves, and had taken him out of the world in this mysterious way; for, as everybody knew, he couldn't be one of the "good people" while he was in flesh and blood. Wasn't it dressed in a blue silk gown that Thaddy O'Rourke saw their queen dancin' there one moonlight night? And maybe 't was just her mark she put upon the child; and mightn't Phil perhaps be seen dancing there himself some moonlight night? or maybe 't is feasting he 'd be on the top of a mushroom, "and he dressed in goold and silver, and wid a blue sash across his heart." But whatever folks' thoughts might be, the business, and the politics, and the courtings, and the fairs, and the dances, and the funerals, had all to go on; so Phil might be said in a general way to have departed entirely from the scene.

But when we are thus dead to a hurrying, trampling, whirling world, we sometimes still live in the quiet places of the heart of those who knew and loved, aye, and of those who hated us in life. So was it with little Phil. He had several abiding places. He lived in old Mrs. Moran's, for the short time that she herself survived; and in the blacksmith's family, of course—in old Bridget's mind and heart, and the blacksmith's, and in Nigra Mahoney's mind, at any rate. Moreover, the boy lived in Daft Crunaghane's mind and cogitations, and in the thoughts, such as they were, of Jimmy, the idiot boy, who, though he couldn't speak, by reason of a wide gap in his palate, could yet make signs, and could think in his own way, and remember too. Valentine Moran was sorry the boy his mother had been so fond of was dead, but he didn't think much more of the matter. He had never seen much of Phil, or been much at the forge; but Pierce appeared to take a much greater interest in the affair altogether, and was always putting all sorts of questions to everyone about it.

There were two theories amongst the superstitious portion of the community. One was that of the fairies already mentioned, and the other—one of a very opposite description—that there was a "divil" in the bog, and that he came once every hundred years for a child or gossoon—anything under twenty-one; and no doubt this was the year, and he had made off with Phil's spirit, leaving that blue mark on his shoulder to let people know that it was in an out-of-the-way manner that the boy had come by his death.

During the short time, however, that Phil was remembered by the general public, there were some things which were the talk of all the parishes around.

It was observed very much that whereas Pat Mahoney was quite an altered man, and spent more time leaning upon his sledge than wielding it, his wife was not at all affected as she ought to have been. She seemed more concerned in showing off her mourning (which was as good as a lady's) than anything else. To judge by her singing as she went about, the sound of the ulican (funeral cry) had no echo in her heart; and her husband and she, who never seemed to "cotton" together as they ought, appeared now to be more and more apart. Indeed, Phil Mahoney told her he did not want her about the forge.

The blacksmith's mother's grief was, on the other hand, not to be moderated. The gossips from all around came to help in the comforting, but she refused to be comforted, and as soon as they had "put the daisy quilt" over the boy's grave (turfed it), she went and sat by it for more or less time every day. "And why did ye die, and why did ye die?" old Mrs. Mahoney used to sing-song to herself, as she crooned to and fro. "And 't is over yer grave I 'll tell ye what ye ought to have known in this world; but maybe 't will rache ye somehow. Av there 's any holy angel around and listenin', maybe he 'll tell ye. Shure he 'd hear it, if 't was only in a whisper." And then the old woman would put her mouth to the ground and mutter something hard to be understood; and then she 'd kneel down and say some prayers before she went away.

There was another remarkable thing. There was a Banshee in the Moran family. The Banshee, as the reader probably knows, is a woman in white, believed by the Irish to appear, and frequently to cry, immediately before the death of a member of the family in which the Banshee is. You may be very respectable, you may be descended from the highest in the land, and not be honoured with a Banshee. On the other hand, you may not belong even to the "quality" (gentry) at all, and yet you may have the proud privilege of being summoned out of the world by a Banshee's cry.

Now, it was the talk of the country-side that the night before little Phil Mahoney was drowned the Moran Banshee was seen and heard. No one doubted that it was quite right, if one of the family died, that the Banshee should come and do her duty; but what in the world did she come for when no one did die then? No doubt Mrs. Moran did die some considerable time after, but what business had the Banshee coming on the terrace at Moran's Cross now?

The solution of the matter was twofold. Some said that it was the big white owl that had come down from the old tower where he generally resided; but others said it was the Banshee herself, and that she came to do honour to Mistress Moran's love for the blacksmith's child. "Shure she counted him like a Moran, though he was only a Mahoney; 't was the night before little Phil was found drowned that she cried; and, may be, her coming would be a good lesson to some people who wouldn't speak to those beneath them, but carried their heads entirely too high."

It was an extraordinary thing that, though he was so young (for he was only Phil's age), these various stories and surmises should take such hold of Pierce Moran's mind. He was always wanting to hear about them, always putting questions about them, and yet always more and more terrified by them. As to the blacksmith, he felt proud that little Phil should be

honoured by a Banshee all to himself, for none of the family had been so honoured before. And wasn't the little lad worthy of a Banshee? "'T is more than *she'll* ever have," said the blacksmith to himself, as he looked at his wife; but the view that that wife took of the lady in white was just to curse her between her teeth, and to say that she might scream like Mistress Moran's peacock if she liked, but "she'd pay no heed to her if she screamed until she was 'dry.'"

Old Mrs. Mahoney, however, treated the Banshee quite differently. "'T isn't all the world knows everything," said Mrs. Mahoney the elder. "Maybe the Banshee had better rason for screaming than ye think;" but this she said to herself; and to her daughter-in-law, above all others, she said it not.

From the trouble about little Phil old Mrs. Mahoney was really destined never to recover; and although she did not die immediately, yet there was very little doubt that this catastrophe was finally the cause of her death. After Mrs. Moran was gone, the old woman began, as she expressed it, "to make her sowl:" that is, to attend with peculiar strictness to her religious duties, and get herself ready, as she thought, for another world. To this end she went through many fastings and self-imposed penances; she almost wore out her beads with "telling" them so often; and she made many confessions to the priest, and got many absolutions from him. She did not, however, in her confessions, tell him quite all. All but one thing; but that she intended to tell before she left the world, only she was keeping it for the last. She'd have notice, she thought, before she was going, and then she'd make a clean breast of all she knew; and maybe it didn't matter so much now, after all; for what was done was done, and could not be undone. There was another cause for old Mrs. Mahoney's holding her tongue for the present. She lived even in bodily fear of her daughter-in-law. Little communication, it was true, passed between them, and what there was wasn't of the pleasantest kind; but if Nigra Mahoney was angered—and she *could* be angered, and in one way especially—there was no knowing what violence she might resort to, and—more than violence—what secret mischief. "She'd as soon poison a person as look about her," said the old woman to herself; "and, by the same token, didn't she show her hand at this when little Phil's hen died? Didn't I switch the cratur," said the old woman, "for not layin' as big an egg as the other fowls; and when she came to her sinses and bate all the rest of them, so that 't was a'most turkey eggs she'd lay, didn't she die off in an unnatural way, kickin' out for the life of her as if she were playin' football? and all, two hours after I seed Mistress Nigra givin' her food. 'T was little black balls I seed her throwin' to the cratur; and didn't I see her goin' away laughing? And, save us all! I'd a'most rather see the nearest and the dearest to me cry than to see her laugh: 't wouldn't be so onpleasant a sight, and it wouldn't give me the shivers and the shakes, that make me a'most fall down in pieces on the floor. Av there is anyone in the wide world that 'll counter-spell that woman, wherever she came from, and by whatever manes she put the 'come-hither' on my Pat, shure an' 't is Daft Dan; and maybe 't is people who haven't as much sinse as Dan that's callin' him 'daft.' People think too much of themselves sometimes whin they put themselves alongside of other people, and Father Moriarty spoke agin him three times from the altar; but that's because Dan doesn't believe all that Father Moriarty believes; but he worships God and the blessed Son, and all the rest I must lave. It isn't for the like of me to settle Dan's religion; but I'll just protect myself from any evil that may be about, by tellin' me beads as I go along."

It is but natural that the reader should wish to know who Dan Crunaghane was before he makes a decided appearance on the scene.

In body Dan was short and stout, and his age was some fifty-six or thereabouts. He wore a long coat which came down to his heels, and knee-breeches and long stockings. When abroad in the bog gathering herbs which he knew of there, he was often seen with a sou'-wester, which he trusted to for protection in that variable climate. Indoors he wore a black cap, fitting tight to his head, and allowing his grey hair to appear all round. Mr. Crunaghane's resources, wherever they came from, were enough for his needs. He could pay one of the boys for looking after his potatoes, and one of the girls for bringing him the drop of milk every day; and as he always paid good money, he was beholden to no one.

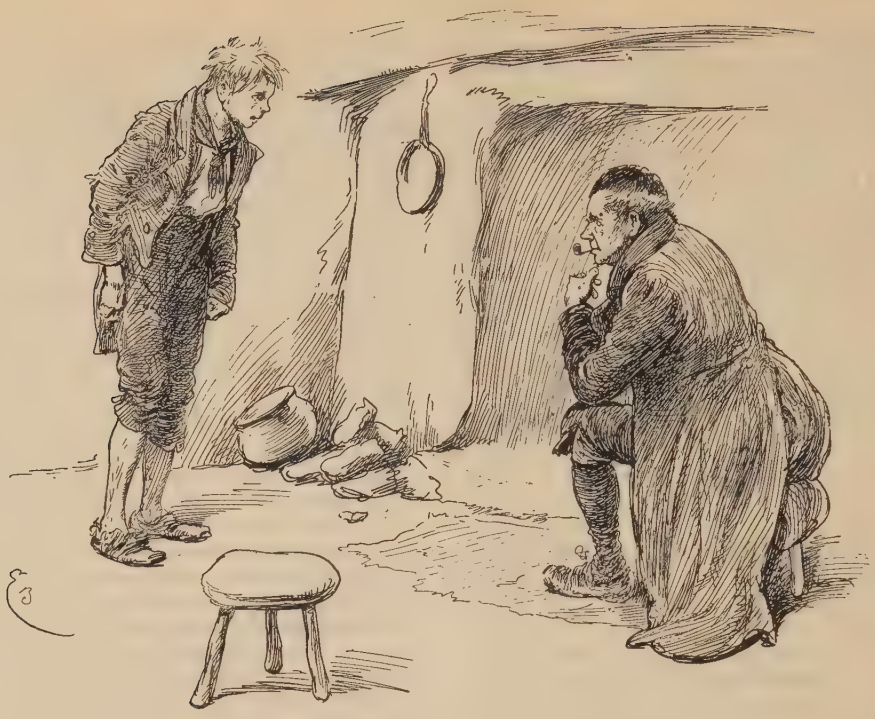
Mr. Crunaghane had his potato-garden in common with all the country round, but he had another garden too, which no one had the like of—at least, so far as regards what was in it. There he grew his herbs, which he attended to himself—transplanting some fresh ones into it continually from the neighbouring bog, and from hedgerows farther off. A black cat was his only companion, if we except the fowls, which were all black too, every one of them; and there was a story in the country that when once a white chicken was hatched out, the black ones would not suffer it to live, but pecked it to death before it got any chance in life at all.

Once a week Mr. Crunaghane disappeared for the whole day, on which occasions he used to go to a town about seven miles off, always visiting the post-office, the coach office, and the bank, and thence he used to return with such things as he should require until he made this expedition again.

Father Moriarty often warned his people against Dan and his secret ways. He threw suspicion on the fowls; and the black cat he threw an absolute shadow of terror around, as in all probability a "familiar."

But, do his best, Father Moriarty could not snuff Dan Crunaghane out of existence, or even out of the neighbourhood; and there was a reason why. If Dan were in some points rather dafty, in others he was sensible and 'cute. He knew more of herbs than any old woman in all the country about—aye, and than the doctor himself; and by means of these he cured many a suffering man, woman, and child in the barony round. Mr. Crunaghane was always trying the effects of new herbs upon himself, and—I must say it—upon the black cat herself also; and on more than one occasion he had beaten the doctor out and out.

By reason of this, Dan Crunaghane was left



MR. CRUNAGHANE AND THE IDIOT.—*p.* 874.

unmolested, no matter what Father Moriarty might say; and no matter what murdering, or anything else of the kind, might be going on, his life was safe.

The daft side of daft Dan—or, as he was often called, "bothered Dan"—was also a help to his quiet settlement near Moran's Cross. Dan was a man of charms and spells. He believed in them fully. In the matter of sickness, whenever he gave a charm he always gave a medicine with it. Generally, in the simple ailments of the district, the charm under these circumstances worked right, but in all cases when it did not, Dan sorrowfully owned that there must be some other charm working against his. He owned that he was only a poor human creature, and that mortal man must be "bate sometimes, seein' what evil spirits were about, and how they wouldn't mind their own business, if they had any"—Dan never thinking that this was the very thing they *were* doing when they troubled mankind in any way they could. Dan Crunaghane had written spells, and herbal spells, and even animal spells, all of which he believed in, unless, being countercharged, they were in that particular instance made of no avail. 'T was said that Dan Crunaghane knew more of the real love affairs of the barony than any living man, not even barring the priests themselves; and that you couldn't count on your ten fingers—no, nor on your ten toes, in addition—the wonderful matches he had brought about. There was one obstinate unbeliever. It was Phelim O'Rourke, who wouldn't throw an eye at all over the hedge where Molly Collins lived with her old father, although Molly was "afther him mornin', noon, and night." But Molly got a charm from Mr. Crunaghane, and just then her father died, and she came into the whole of the little farm; and Phelim said that "'t was no use houldin' out any longer. Shure an' he 'd give in at onst; an' 't was comfortin' Molly would be wantin' now her father was gone; an' shure 't would be only a Christian-like kind of act to take the orphan under his protection." So Phelim went, not eyes only, but legs and arms and all, over the fence; and there he stayed; and when he heard that Molly had got a charm to get him in, he said, with a wink first of one eye and then of the other, "Och, shure! an' 't is one charm brought me in, but the dickins a bit of ten charms would get me out." And to do Molly justice, she was content with the one, and never tried the ten. Phelim O'Rourke hung up his cothamore (great coat) in Molly Collins' house; and all the neighbourhood said they had been made for each other, only Phelim was like a young puppy that hadn't its eyes open; "but betther late than niver; they were marcifully opened when Molly's father died, and as soon as the will was read," and Dan Crunaghane rose twenty per cent. in the eyes of all the girls around. Bothered Dan was a full believer in his own charms, and it was a source of great wonder and mortification to him when they did not work.

I am not master enough of the occult sciences to put up for defending Dan's character as a charmer, but in the matter of medicine I am ready to take up the cudgels for him; and when I tell you that Dan's business at the coach office was to send away to Dublin bottles of embrocations, and lotions, and powdered herbs, for which he got orders on the bank, which he also visited, you 'll say I 'm warranted in

standing up for Dan as a medicine-man, though I can't as a charmer.

There was one person in the barony for whom in these love matters Dan Crunaghane could make no spell. That person had a hungry, hollow heart, but it had never met with that which would fill it. There were plenty of red-cheeked, slim-waisted, neat-ankled, hazel-eyed girls around; there were many whose manners were good, and whose voices were sweet; but Dan could not make this man look at one of them, though his soul was hungry and thirsty for human love. Dan was not amongst the "quality" (gentry); and amongst them, educated and refined, could he alone look for what *he* desired; for Dan himself was this hungry-souled man, and he could work no charm which could get him what he craved. If only once he could clasp such a being to his heart, once feel that his heart beat close to her heart, that would satisfy the longing of his being; then there would be one on whom he could spend his savings of many years, one for whom he might feel that he had worked and lived, and not for himself. How, when, where, he should meet with such a one, he did not know, but he had a half-defined belief that some day he should; and for her, whoever she might be, he diligently saved all that he did not absolutely require for his daily needs. Dan Crunaghane had made a charm for this very purpose. It was a long time working; it might be much longer yet; but there it was, and he would wait upon it. He had waited long; there was no reason why he should not wait longer still.

Dan Crunaghane was thinking somewhat sadly upon this very subject, when there was a knock at his door. "The knock of a woman's knuckles," said Dan to himself; and on Dan's calling to the visitor to come in, Mrs. Mahoney the elder presented herself before him. The Irish, who mix up much real religious and reverent feeling with their superstitions, almost always say "God save all here!" when they enter a stranger's house; and Mrs. Mahoney never forgot this act of religious politeness. Mrs. Mahoney junior did not trouble herself in this way, but no one who knew her would have expected it from her.

"A hundred thousand welcomes!" responded Mr. Crunaghane. "How is every tether's length of ye, Mrs. Mahoney? Come and sit down by the fire;" and Dan gathered the sods together, and blew them into a blaze.

"Without offence, Mr. Crunaghane, may I be askin' you to call away this cratur?" signifying the black cat, which had begun to rub itself up against her. "It's uncommon weak I am on the nerves now, Mr. Crunaghane. 'T is no use telling them to be aisy; they don't mind onything that I say. 'T is thrimble, thrimble, thrimble from mornin' till night, except when they start and jump, pullin' and lettin' go of me on a sudden all day long."

"Maybe you have something on your mind, Mistress Mahoney. The mind works the nerves, and sometimes makes people mad."

"Save us, Mr. Crunaghane, but 't is in my five senses I 'd like to die. That cat 's lookin' at me," said Mrs. Mahoney. "Maybe it has ears to hear too much. 'Twouldn't be askin' too much, would it, to put it outside?"

"By all manner of means," said Mr. Crunaghane; and he opened the door. The cat, being told to go out, did as it was bid; but as it passed Mrs. Mahoney it gave her a switch with its tail, which to her was as bad as a severe electric shock, and which prevented her from becoming herself for some time.

Then, by a very circuitous path, she approached the subject of her daughter-in-law; and by degrees she became more and more communicative.

"There has been neither luck nor grace," said Mrs. Mahoney, "at the forge since that woman came upon the place. She 's a dreadful woman, that can do the wrong herself; and, worse still, she can make others do it too;" and Mrs. Mahoney looked hard at Mr. Crunaghane.

"No one can make others do wrong unless they are willing," said Dan Crunaghane.

"I don't know that, Mr. Crunaghane. Many a poor creature has been overborne by the will of another, though he wasn't willing himself. There 's people that have spells in their eyes and their words—aye, in their very presence, even if they never had a charm at all—and that woman is one of them."

"Where did she come from?" asked Dan Crunaghane.

"'T is a wise man that could tell that. Perhaps even her husband doesn't know."

"She looks almost as if she were a gipsy."

"And perhaps she was, worse luck! She 's come from among the haythen somewhere. Shure she 's almost as black as a coal, to say nothing of turf, which is dacent and respectable alongside of her."

"But did your own son never tell his mother where he got his wife from when he brought her home to live with her?"

"Niver a word passed his lips on the subject," answered the blacksmith's mother. "He 's too ashamed; and 't isn't for me to be bringing the blood up into his cheeks. All that I know is, that he went away to do some work on the locks in a ship at Drumcah—you know my boy is the best hand at locks and chains in all the country round—and he brought *her* back with him. Maybe he had a dhrop too much—for he used to be given that way, just in good-fellowship, like—and they took advantage of him; but wherever he got her, 't is little he 's had to do with her since she darkened our doors; and 't is agin her I 'm come to you to-day. I 'm makin' my sowl, Mr. Crunaghane, and I want you to give me a charm that 'll stop all her charms, whatever they may be, or I don't know what may happen to me at the last. There were sixteen girls after Pat," said Mrs. Mahoney, with a kind of hysterical hiccup, "and he 'd have soon been wantin' to put a railin' round him to keep them off—and there 's no one could have made a nater one, for he can do anything in iron—when home he comes with this blackamoor, and you 'd think you 'd have to wash the soot off of ye afther she 's been looking at you. Worse luck, worse luck entirely! and to think that his father's son should come to this—to marry a blackamoor, as I might say. Is that cat outside, Mr. Crunaghane, or can it look in at the window? 'T is blackness enough I have with that faymale at home, widout havin' a black cat, and no knowing what 's inside her, lookin' at me."

"The cat 's gone," said Mr. Crunaghane; "and now I know what you want, I 'll see if I can't make a charm for you that 'll keep you from harm, at any rate so far as Mrs. Nigra is concerned;" and Mr. Crunaghane might have said more, but that there came a thunderous knocking at the door, which put an end to his conversation with his visitor.

"Save us! is it the cat?" said Mrs. Mahoney, looking terrified over her shoulder at the door.

"No throuble," said Crunaghane; "'t is only Jimmy. That 's the way he always knocks. He 's always in a hurry, even if he 's not going anywhere.—Come in, Jimmy."

"'T isn't that way he used always to be," said Mrs. Mahoney. "He used to sit with little Phil, watchin' the sparks from the forge for ever so long, and then he used to come in and take pot-luck with us, though Mrs. Nigra never liked him; and if she liked him little before, she likes him less now; but that doesn't matter much, for 't is seldom the craythur comes near us now; and he a poor nat'ral that no one would begrudge a bit or a sup to."

And in truth, from the time of little Phil's death the idiot had deserted the forge, and had become to a great extent changed in his habits and manners; and now he did not seem altogether at ease in Mrs. Mahoney's presence. So the latter took herself off after a moment's further conversation with Mr. Crunaghane.

Leaving the idiot inside, Mrs. Mahoney whispered in Dan's ear, "'T is makin' me sowl as I am, as I tould ye, Mr. Crunaghane, and it can't be done complate widout what 's on this bit of a paper being known; but I can't make it known *now*. I 'm keepin' it for the last; but in case I 'm taken suddin—save us all! but we might go like a shot out of a gun—I 'm lavin' this bit of a paper in yer keepin'; and 't is in your own judgment to do with it as you think right. You 're a sinsible man;" and Mrs. Mahoney put into Dan Crunaghane's hand an old tinder-box, which had been one of little Phil's playthings, in which was deposited a piece of not over-clean paper, tied across with a piece of string, and sealed down in front and back.

"Put it where the cat can't get at it," said the old woman, "and keep it safe; and if I 'm taken on a suddin, 't is wid yourself to do with it as ye think well. . . .

"Shure and 'the earth 's heavy wid me,'" said Mrs. Mahoney, as she went down the boreen (lane), on her way home, "but 't is a great lightening to have done that much."

Left alone with the idiot—if, indeed, idiot in the fullest sense he ought to be called—Mr. Crunaghane gathered the turf-sods together, and told Jimmy to sit down.

"And how were 'the good people' when last you saw them?" asked he of his visitor; "and how long were you with them last time, Jimmy? and did they give you the *deoch an doris* [parting cup] when you came away? There 's lashins [abundance] with them, and they 're not like us poor creatures, who have often to count up what we eat and drink."

Now, you must know that, utterly bad as was Jimmy's speech—and as to part of it quite incomprehensible under any circumstances—there were parts of it which could be made out, some few words by all, but others only by anyone who saw much of him, and chose to take the trouble to make out what he meant. Eked out with signs, Jimmy could thus, in a fragmentary kind of way, make himself partly understood.

"And how is the queen of the 'good people'?" asked Mr. Crunaghane; "and had she on her blue silk gown when you saw her last?"

What turn Jimmy's conversation would have taken, if this had not been said, I cannot tell; but these words threw the idiot boy into a state of great excitement. In that excitement he made all sorts of noises. It was plain he wanted to get out something, and couldn't manage it at all. At last he took to a performance which he had indulged in two or three times before, but the meaning of which Mr. Crunaghane, with all his spells, could not come to the bottom of. The idiot boy tore off his jacket and waistcoat and threw off his shirt, and, tilting up one shoulder, kept pointing to it and hitting it; and then he proceeded a step further than he had ever done before in this way, for, rushing to a big stick in the corner of the room, he laid it across Mr. Crunaghane's shoulder and pressed upon it with all his might. Indeed, the boy seemed to be possessed of almost supernatural strength, for he pressed so hard that the man was forced down upon his knees, and finally upon the floor. And the idiot boy went farther than this, for when Mr. Crunaghane tried to get up, and had indeed got up so far as to kneel, the lad put the stick across his shoulder again, and thrust him down to the ground once more.

"I wish I could make a charm to unloose your tongue, me poor boy," said Mr. Crunaghane. "Maybe 't is some bad secret you 'd be after telling us. 'T is in ye, perhaps, poor soul, and you can't get it out of you; and if you could, who 'd mind you? for they 'd be saying, 'T was only what an idiot boy was dreaming about.' Even if you have something to tell, now—a murder, or the like—who 'd hang a sensible man on the witness of an unsensible idiot? . . .

"And was she dressed this time in blue?" asked Mr. Crunaghane, for want of something better to say; and indeed not quite knowing what he said; but the moment he uttered the word "blue" Jimmy's excitement recommenced, and his eyes wandered in the direction of the stick again.

But Mr. Crunaghane did not want a repetition of the recent performance, so he turned the subject to Jimmy's personal interests and necessities in the way of food, in the middle of the partaking of which the boy gave a great whoop, and jumping up, took himself off, running down the boreen as hard as he could. "He 'll most likely stop as suddenly as he started," said Mr. Crunaghane to himself, "and then where he 'll run to —north, south, east, or west—who can tell? But I 'll sit down and consider if I can make anything out of this last strange way of the boy's. Those nathrals often know more than sensible people, if only they could talk;" and so Mr. Crunaghane put the turf together, and began to ponder as he looked into it.

"'T is remarkable, now," said the spell-maker, after

much time spent in deliberation and speculation, "that he was aisy enough until he heard me talk of what was blue; 't is that word that excited him and made him so queer. And why should it trouble him if the queen of the good people had a blue dress any more than yellow, or green, or white, or any other colour? Shure, and blue is a holy colour. Isn't it the colour of the heavens above us, and of the forget-me-not, and of some of the girls' eyes, and——"

But Mr. Crunaghane did not go on; a thought suddenly crossed his mind. "And blue might be an ugly colour too; 't is the colour of bruises and blows, and 't is the colour that was upon poor Phil Mahoney's shoulder when they took him out of the bog-hole, and not the crowner and the twelve men that were with him, and the doctor, and Phil's own people, could make out how that blue mark came upon him; and all the rest of the body as white as if it had been cut out of a snowball. Wasn't little Phil the idiot boy's great friend? Didn't he share with him every toothsome bit that Mrs. Moran used to give him? Didn't they hunt the sparks together as Pat Mahoney struck them from the iron? And usen't they try to shut them up in that very tinder-box that Mrs. Mahoney left here a few minutes ago? 'T would be quare, now, if Jimmy knew anything about that mark, and he not able to tell it. And, by the same token," thought Mr. Crunaghane, pondering still further, "'t is ever since poor Phil's death that Jimmy 's twice as queer as he was before. He 's that oneasy in himself that he 'll never be sitting down as he used to do; and he 's the plague of Master Pierce's life, and Mistress Nigra says he ought to be took up. If she was took up, anywhere but up to heaven—for she 'd have no business there—'t would be a good thing; and these parts of the country would be all the better for her absence. But he 'll get into trouble, poor gossoon, if he doesn't give up his strange ways with Master Pierce. One would think that Master Pierce was a snipe, and he a setter, by the way that he points at him. And he 's always hanging about the house at Moran's Cross, and followin' Master Pierce, and that 's not mannerly towards any young gentleman, or what myself, or anyone else, whether he were of 'the quality' or not, would like. And what he wants to be so near him for, I don't know; for Master Pierce is a'most as black as Mistress Nigra; it can't be for beauty's sake that he follows him about. And if it's out of malice—and these nathrals are sometimes not very friendly to some people, and take a dislike to them—then there 's no love lost between them, for more than one has seen Master Pierce stoning Jimmy. 'T is hard to get him to understand, but I wish I could keep the poor fellow off of Master Pierce. Either he or Mistress Nigra will be the death of him, I 'm afraid, some day."

"And what did he mean by that stick? Murdher alive!" said Mr. Crunaghane, "if we put two and two together it is murdher they make; did the nathral mean that that blue mark came upon Phil Mahoney's shoulder from a stick, from a blow? and if it did, and anyone wanted to do the boy a harm, shure it isn't on the shoulder, but on the head he 'd be hittin' him. Shure and 't is well used to hittin' people on the head we are in these parts; and there isn't a boy in the barony that would mistake a shoulder for a head. By the powers, but this is something to be thinking about; and 't was the very same shoulder that was marked on Phil that he put the stick on on myself. Thunder and turf!" said Mr. Crunaghane, "I 'd give what money I have in the bank to be able to make Jimmy talk like a rational creature for jist ten minutes, and answer the questions I 'd put to him. There 's something in that boy's knowledge that would clear up a great deal if we could get it out; but maybe we never will.

(To be concluded.)

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES ON CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

"HE NEVER TOLD A LIE."

THIS was the epitaph lately placed over the grave of a boy aged fourteen years. His father said that he never remembered him to have been guilty of a single mean or cruel act, and he was quite certain that he never told a lie. The death of such a child is a terrible blow to his parents, especially if he be an only one; but it should be a consolation to think that he is taken from evil that would have come.

HIS MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta, mentions in his account of his interviews with Bellingham, the notorious assassin, that nothing he could say appeared to make any impression until he spoke of his mother, and then the prisoner burst into a flood of tears. If the thought of "mother" has such an influence upon even bad men, how great must have been the power of their mothers in building up the characters of the good. The "judicious" Hooker said that, if for no other reason, he would have tried to be religious for the sake of his mother.

FROM ONE WORLD TO ANOTHER.

To compare great things with small, it enables one to realise the wonderful change that is in store for us when we leave this world and pass into another, to travel as quickly as possible from the fogs of London to the blue sky of Mentone. You arrive late at night

and get to bed. Next morning you awake early and look out of your window. You rub your eyes and wonder where you are. No fog, no rain, no gloom. Blue sky is reflected in the Mediterranean lying below you. There is a semicircle of hills so richly and variously coloured that if you saw them in a picture you would think that the artist had exaggerated. You think of the children's game of "oranges and lemons," for both are everywhere to be seen, and the bright clear atmosphere is scented with innumerable flowers.

SWAN AND SHADOW

In "Yarrow Unvisited," Wordsworth tells us that—

> "The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
> Floats double, swan and shadow!"

In our illustration there are five of these double figures—five swans and as many shadows. There is quiet dignity in their bearing, but no pride. Indeed, none of us could be proud if we saw ourselves as others see us, and as these swans see themselves in their shadows. They are constantly looking into a mirror, and that, according to Socrates, is a good thing for young men at least to do (he said nothing about swans or even geese), in order that, if they were handsome, they might be worthy of their beauty, and if they were ugly, they might conceal their unsightly appearance by their accomplishments. The shadow of self, it has been said, makes us all miserable; but this means not simply seeing ourselves as we are, but cultivating morbid introspection, which ends in gross selfishness or even lunacy. So well dressed are swans that we scarcely notice how they are dressed. They have no peacock vanity in them, and if, when making their toilet, they look in the watery mirror, this is only because they desire their plumage to be neatly arranged and spotlessly clean. Geese may think such things of trifling importance, but evidently swans do not.

THE LAST YEAR OF LIFE.

If we only knew, a year before our friends die, the exact date of their departure, how differently we should treat them! It is terribly sad to think, when a loved friend has been taken from us, of the many things we would have done or left undone if we had been informed by some infallible authority that the last year he was with us was to be the last year of his life, what allowances we would have made for his apparent stupidity and irritability which we may have attributed to other causes, but which were really due to weakness. Perhaps, however, this knowledge would not have made us act very differently. There are people who know that they themselves cannot live more than one or at most two years, and yet the knowledge makes very little difference in their lives.

WYCLIFFE'S CHURCH.

So far back as January, 1885, we gave a view in THE QUIVER of the old church of Wycliffe, in North Yorkshire. There is good reason for believing that John Wycliffe, "the Day-star of the Reformation," and his family were connected with this parish and worshipped in the church. We are interested to learn that a proposal is on foot to restore this thirteenth-century building, and we wish the movement every success—as all good Protestants and lovers of the English Bible, for which Wycliffe did so much, must do.

WHAT IS THE GOOD OF IT?

People who acquire money late in life and with difficulty are in danger of acquiring along with it the habit of avarice. They continue to hoard and to save from force of habit, long after the necessity for it has passed away. Such people often stint their children and bring them up meanly, and then the children die, and they have no one to whom they can leave their money. Some of it may go

"There is quiet dignity in their bearing."

MARKENER CHILDREN.

self-directed to the poor, but how much better it would have been to have directed it rightly themselves before they died! What is the value of money or of anything else when not used?

MARKENER CHILDREN.

Look at this group of children in their old-fashioned dresses. What should make them so contented and happy? They live on an island intersected by canals and dykes, and below the level of the sea. There are no hills to break the extreme monotony of the landscape, no trees or shrubs to gladden the eyes, no horses, no cattle. Parks and gardens there are none; there are no fireworks on the 5th of November, there is no Lord Mayor's Show, there are no brass bands —there is not even a barrel-organ! Although they have scarcely any contact with the outer world, these little ones are bright and intelligent; each can read and write, and they have plenty to keep them employed. They are happy because they are contented; for true happiness does not consist in an abundance of this world's goods. "Be content with such things as ye have," says the good Book, and "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

A MESSAGE FROM THE WEST INDIES.

We have received the following letter from the Rev. A. R. E. Roe, Rector of Abaco, Bahamas, West Indies:—"DEAR SIR,—Will you kindly allow me space enough in your interesting magazine, THE QUIVER, to thank the unknown friend who occasionally sends a copy to my *late* predecessor, the Rev. H. Philpot? I should also like to ask that, if possible, a copy be sent *regularly*, as I always hand it on to the reading-room of the public library, where it is eagerly read. I am constrained to ask this, because several times lately I have been asked if THE QUIVER could not come regularly, my people not knowing it was a gift; but I am persuaded the sender will not mind my asking this further favour. Thanking you in anticipation for making my request known, believe me, yours faithfully, A. R. E. ROE." We hope one of our readers will be moved to comply with Mr. Roe's request.

FILTER YOUR LANGUAGE.

Recently visiting Billingsgate fish-market, a stranger noticed printed on a van from which coffee was sold a polite request that those who use the market would be good enough to "filter their language." We all ought to filter our language, not only from impious coarse words, but even from flippant thoughtless ones which do not edify or even innocently amuse.

A LIFE NOT WORTH LIVING.

When Prince Bismarck was a young man he held a Government appointment at Aix-la-Chapelle. The attractions of the place drew him into follies to which he refers in a letter to his wife, written some fifteen years later: "The day before yesterday I gazed with mingled sadness and the wisdom born of maturer years upon the scenes of former folly. I do not know how I endured those days. Were I to live now, as then, without God, without you, without children, it seems to me that life would be no better worth than to be cast off like a soiled garment; and yet the majority of my acquaintances are as I was, and continue to live so."

HOPEFUL SORROW.

Sorrow is of different kinds, according to the nature upon which it falls. Some are made more hard and rebellious by it. Others are softened and learn to trust God more and more. It is natural that when a great affliction comes upon us we should at first feel disposed to give up the battle of life as

a lost one; but there is always something for which to live—if not for happiness then for duty.

A RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS.

Writing of the near approach of his marriage Lord Byron said, "I must, of course, reform thoroughly; and, seriously, if I can contribute to her happiness, I shall secure my own." What a pity his Lordship did not put in practice this wise recipe, for surely there is no way in which we can so easily become happy as by charging ourselves with the happiness of others.

THE SCHOOL OF LOVE.

Steele said of a certain lady that to love her was a liberal education; and in the same spirit Leigh Hunt wrote of the lady he married, "My love has made me better and more desirous of improvement than I have been." No one should marry who cannot say this with some truth, for there is no true love where respect and a desire to excel for the sake of pleasing the loved one are absent.

LITERATURE FOR A DESERT.

Among some French literary men the question was asked one day, "If you had to spend years on a desert island, and were allowed to bring with you only one book, what one would you choose?" Though some of them were by no means religious men, they all agreed that the Bible, being the most varied book, being, indeed, a library rather than a book, would be the best to bring.

BRAVE THE PERILS OF RIDICULE.

"As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of a fool," and he is a poor invertebrate creature who allows himself to be laughed down when he attempts to stick to his principles and tries to do what he believes to be right. "Learn from the earliest days," says Sydney Smith, "to inure your principles against the perils of ridicule; you can no more exercise your reason, if you live in the constant dread of laughter, than you can enjoy your life if you are in constant terror of death." No coward is greater than he who dares not to be wise because fools will laugh at him.

"OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

Who does not envy people one sometimes, but rarely, sees, who, however age may creep on, are always young in heart—whom the world has not been able to spoil; who, in spite of life's many trials and disappointments, have not grown cynical or selfish or bitter, but who have preserved all the freshness, hopefulness, guilelessness, and elasticity of youth? In one sense they have put away childish things; in another they have not. They have put away the weakness, imperfection, and immaturity of childhood; they retain its open mind and heart. "In wit a man, simplicity a child."

THE EFFICACY OF A GREAT SORROW.

Many people owe much of what is best in life to the saving power of a great sorrow. Perhaps they were petty and frivolous, fussy and too energetic about trifles. The great sorrow showed them the relative proportion of things, and made them see the sacredness and seriousness of life. Or they were too self-reliant, and formed plans without thinking of God. The great bereavement or illness or loss of fortune came, and they learned afterwards to remember that, while man proposes, God disposes. People living together quarrel about imaginary evils, and a great sorrow borne together tends to unite them. They kiss over the little grave, it may be, and are friends. Yes, the softened, submissive spirits of some people which make them calmly happy are due to the visitation of a great sorrow. For a trial like this swallows up smaller ones as the rod of Moses swallowed up the rods of the Egyptian magicians.

JESUS ONLY.

Outside a church at San Remo, on the top of the door, is a figure of Joseph, and under it the words *Ite ad Joseph*—"Go to Joseph." These poor people first put the Virgin Mary in the place of the Saviour, and now they have put Joseph in her place. Why is it that so many of us will persist in trying to substitute persons and things for Him who is the One and only Saviour? We must not go to Joseph or to ourselves (our own righteousness) but to the only real Friend of sinners—Jesus Christ.

A SHORT LESSON.

The Talmud says that when a man once asked Shammai to teach him the law in one lesson, Shammai drove him away in anger. He then went to Hillel with the same request. Hillel said, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. This is the whole law, the rest merely comemntaries upon it."

POLISHED RACKS.

In the Musée de Cluny, in Paris, there is to be seen a beautifully carved and polished rack on which no doubt many poor victims were tortured, many of them for doing nothing wrong, but because they had chosen to die rather than lie. We are hurt by no such persecution, and yet even now there are such things as polished racks. We may wound others by a gracefully turned phrase or a polished epigram. A sensitive person may have his feelings racked in ways that are quite compatible with what are considered good manners.

SANTA CLAUS IN EARNEST.

Santa Claus suggests Christmas-time, but the Santa Claus Society is one of the good things we have always with us. Instead of a mythical

personage associated with mysterious gifts dropped into little people's stockings on Christmas morning, we have a living organisation full of good works all the year round. The society began in 1885, and seems to be growing steadily in usefulness. Its one aim is to help the sick poor. For their benefit it collects hospital and Convalescent Home "letters," taking care that they go to really necessitous and deserving cases. For the inmates of the hospitals it organises gifts of fruit, flowers, and vegetables, of clothes and of other things useful to men and women, of dolls, toys, and scrap-books to delight the hearts of children. Furthermore it has now opened a Convalescent Home for children. This alone would be quite enough to entitle the society to the sympathy of all who care for the poor, since it but too often happens that the benefit gained under hospital treatment is lost from the need of that "change" which it is, without external assistance, impossible to give them. The Home was only opened in March, 1891, but already seems to have done excellent service.

"I DRANK YESTERDAY."

When in the Soudan, General Gordon once offered a native a drink of water. The man politely refused, saying that he had drunk the day before. He thought that water, in that country being very precious, ought not to be used every day. I wish we had all learned as well the business of doing without. We pray in the Lord's Prayer for daily bread, implying that we can do without luxuries and superfluities. There are, however, but too many persons who cannot content themselves without daily plum-cake. They are unable to appreciate "the exquisite taste of common dry bread," and do not know, having never tried them, how much more productive of happiness are plain living and high thinking than their opposites.

A WEDDING AT EPHESUS.

Those of us who have seen wedding ceremonies at Cairo or some other place in the East know that they are now very much as we read of them in old books. The most important part of them was and is the removal of the bride from her father's house to that of the bridegroom. The bridegroom, in the bullock-car or chariot, is resplendent in festive dress, and has on his head a nuptial crown or garland. (Cant. iii., 11). He is "perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant." The robes of the bride are white embroidered with gold thread. Late in the evening was and is the time in Eastern countries for marriage. On his way to the bride's house the bridegroom is attended by his groomsmen, preceded by musicians and accompanied by torch-bearers. Returning back, the happy couple are joined by a party of maidens who have been waiting to join the procession as it passed. The door of the house is adorned with garlands and flowers. Through it the bride is carried, and the guests who are invited to the wedding feast follow her. Just now the people who are looking on in the street are not shouting "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," but they are talking loudly in praise of the beauty of the bride.

A WEDDING AT EPHESUS.

THE PRETENCE OF ENJOYMENT.

Passing in the streets two boys who were smoking cigarettes, I heard one say to the other, "Isn't it grand; isn't it lovely?" Their faces, however,

contradicted their words, for they looked as if they were getting anything but enjoyment out of their first smoke. In the same way there are grown-up children who pretend that they enjoy certain worldly amusements which have long ceased to please. We say, "Isn't it grand; isn't it lovely?" though we feel that it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. With Christ alone is the recipe for rest and contentment, and we shall have neither until we go to Him for it. The make-believe of happiness is a miserable sham.

"HE DIED LEARNING."

Wandering about the cemetery at Mentone a recent visitor found a headstone on which was written, "Here lies John Richard Green, Historian of the English People. He died learning." What a rebuke these simple words are to those who are young and strong but who do not use their abundance of life to learn the lessons of truth and beauty that God put us into the world to learn! We talk of "finishing our education"; but as we may learn valuable lessons from every person and thing, education should not cease until death. Until death, do we say? No, not even then, for death itself will be a successful teacher, and will usher us into a world where we shall learn in an instant more than we could in this world in a thousand years.

"SURFACE CHRISTIANITY."

Horace Walpole said that Dr. Johnson "was good-natured at bottom, but ill-natured at top." Of course, such a character is infinitely better than the reverse; but it is a pity when people are not good-natured on the top as well. Benevolence in little things or good manners have been well called "surface Christianity."

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from June 27th, 1892, up to and including July 26th, 1892. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver" Waifs Fund:* A Reader of *The Quiver*, Notting Hill, 10s. 6d.; Sunflower, Kilburn, 5s.; J. J. E., Govan (57th donation), 5s.; A Glasgow Mother (27th donation), 2s.; A. B, Wallingham, 10s. 6d.

For *The Hospital Sunday Fund:* An Afflicted One, 5s.; R, Haslemere, 5s.; A Well-wisher, Richmond, 3s.; Gwen, Aberystwith, 5s.; J. Moore, Ashbourne, 1s.

Dr. Barnardo asks us to acknowledge the receipt of the following towards the funds of his Homes: Epworth, 10s.; S., Leamington, 7s. 6d.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

121. What was one of the most striking effects of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles?

122. What special mark of friendship did our blessed Lord show to Judas Iscariot at the Last Supper?

123. In what way did St. Paul become acquainted with the manner of the institution of the Lord's Supper?

124. What was known as the "Cup of Blessing" to which St. Paul refers in his Epistle to the Corinthians?

125. Near what city was the scene of St. Paul's conversion?

126. Is anything known of the street called "Straight"?

127. In what way did Jesus make Himself known to St. Paul at the time of his conversion?

128. Who first speaks of the Christians by the title of "saints"?

129. What two great miracles did St. Peter perform during his first apostolic journey?

130. What is known of Joppa?

131. What is specially noted in connection with the life of Dorcas?

132. What is mentioned in the account given of St. Peter's miracles which shows he did not claim any power therein for himself?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 799.

109. Gamaliel. (Acts v. 34—38.)

110. That we ought at all times to obey God rather than man. (Acts v. 29.)

111. Gamaliel was the grandson of Hillel, a famous Jewish teacher, and was himself the instructor of St. Paul. (Acts v. 34; xxii. 3.)

112. Not more than forty. (Acts v. 40; Deut. xxv. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 24.)

113. To take charge of the administration of relief to the poor Christians, and perform other similar work. (Acts vi. 2—3.)

114. Though being tried before the Sanhedrim, the High Priest allowed the mob to drag Stephen from the Council Chamber outside the city, where he was stoned. (Acts vi. 12; vii. 58—59.)

115. Philip the Deacon. (Acts viii. 5.)

116. Simon Magus. (Acts viii. 9; 18—20.)

117. They went to visit the Christians who had been converted by the preaching of Philip the Deacon. (Acts viii. 14—17.)

118. She was the Queen of Meroe, a district of Abyssinia, south of Egypt. (Acts viii. 27.)

119. The Treasurer of Queen Candace, who was converted by Philip. (Acts viii. 27; 36—39.)

120. About twenty miles from Gaza. (Acts viii. 40; 1 Sam. v. 1.)

[*From a Drawing by* ROBERT BARNES, R.W.S.]

MOTHER'S SONGS.

See p. 907.

WINIFRED'S ENGAGEMENT.

BY ETHEL L. SALMON.

I AM standing listlessly at the drawing-room window, gazing out at the rain that falls pitilessly down upon the budding crocuses and snowdrops. An hour ago all was fair and beautiful: the scent of spring flowers filled the air, the sad lowing of cattle sounded from the distance. Now all is changed: a sudden thunderstorm has come up, the rain pours down with savage fury, the flowers lie drenched and drooping, and I stand disconsolately looking out at the garden, watching the rain making for itself little canals down the soft gravel paths. "My dear," says mother from the sofa, "can't you find a book or something to occupy you? You certainly will not be able to go out to-day."

"I hate books!" I answer crossly: "at least, I do to-day. Oh, mother! Charles was going to bring 'Black Bess' for me this morning; it is too bad: the very first time he agreed that I should ride her, too!"

"My dear, I think it quite providential this storm has come, then. 'Black Bess' is much too wild for a lady to ride. I wonder at Charles giving in to you."

I turn away impatiently, and begin drumming on the window; mother is always so absurdly nervous.

The prospect from our house is pleasant enough when the weather is fine. Our cottage lies far back from the road, in the midst of an old-fashioned garden—a garden that in summer is a perfect paradise of beauty: full of roses, sweet peas, and mignonette. There are sweet shady walks that lead to secluded spots, and pleasant arbours, bowered in climbing rose-trees, clematis, and honeysuckle. The house is small and somewhat inconvenient, but our garden is the envy of all around. However, to-day it looks dreary enough, and I find no pleasure in its contemplation.

"Mother," I say, coming away from the window, "do you know that Noel Trent is returning from abroad next week? I wonder what he is like, and what he will think of me? Do you know, I feel a wee bit afraid of him? Charles says he is so solemn and grave; and then, mother, he is so old: he is thirty-eight."

"I take out my handkerchief, and, dipping it in the clear cold water, lay it upon the poor bruised forehead."—*p.* 885.

I rattle on, mother listening lovingly and patiently as she always does, to me—her only child.

"Charles says he wrote him such a nice letter when he heard of our engagement. I tried to get him to read it to me, but he was so mean, he would only read me a line or two: something about 'wishing him every happiness in his engagement, and that the young lady might prove a lifelong blessing, as well as a joy to him.' You know, mother dear," I add, "it sounded so strange to hear those words. Charles and I love one another dearly, but we never look upon it in that sort of way."

"Winnie dear," says mother kindly, but anxiously, "you are quite sure you love Charles Trent?"

"Quite, mother!" I answer laughingly. "Why, I am miserable when he stays away a day; you know I am. Oh yes, I love him better than anybody in the whole world, excepting you, mother—quite better."

"I can never quite understand you," sighs mother; "you always hide your deepest feelings, but I do hope, child, you are making no mistake."

I say nothing to this last speech, but go over again to the window. The rain is falling less heavily now: the sky is showing here and there a blue patch amongst its dark and lowering grey. It is clearing up: actually clearing; but, alas! I know Charles will not bring the horses round to-day: the ground will be quite unfit. However, I shall be able to take a run on the cliffs; it is clearing so nicely, and dries so soon there.

I am deeply and passionately fond of the sea. I love it at all times: in winter—when the waters heave, and rush, and tremble in one wild confusion: when the night-winds wail over it, and the mighty waves dash themselves against the rocks; and also in summer, when it lies peacefully at rest in the bright sunshine: when on the seaweed-covered rocks I see the white-winged sea-gulls, and listen to their sweet though plaintive cries.

When, shortly afterwards, the rain altogether ceases, I wrap up well, and going down through the garden, reach a little door, which lets me out at once high upon the cliff.

I am no sooner out than a young man comes laughingly up to me. It is Charles Trent—my future husband. He is tall and dark, with handsome, aristocratic features, and a soft, winning manner that is very pleasant to me, for I am the very reverse of gentle myself. As he comes towards me, dressed in a blue serge boating-suit, a close-fitting cap but half concealing his curly dark hair, I think my lover is one to be proud of.

"I knew you would come out," he says laughingly. "Given a really wet day and a strong enough wind, and Miss Winifred Glanville arrives on the scene."

"Why, it is a beautiful day," I say sturdily. "Look at the blue sky, and the sea, and the nice fresh air."

"I can't very well look at the air, but the sky does look a little less black in one corner," answers Charles, looking rapturously upward.

"Do be sensible Charlie," I urge. "I want to talk with you seriously. Mother has been in an uncomfortable mood; she is afraid I do not love you enough. It is a curious thing, Charles, but I have often noticed it, that if lovers are too demonstrative people shake their heads and say it is too strong, too absorbing to last—that a reaction must follow; and then, if a couple be sensible and love one another in a strong, lasting kind of way, they question if there is any love at all. I do think people are so inconsistent!"

"So they are, dear: confoundedly inconsistent. Don't you bother your head about them, Winnie; you and I are satisfied: that is surely enough."

"I didn't mean that mother was inconsistent," I say hastily. "Mother is all that is right and proper; you understand, Charles?"

"Of course I do," he answers soberly. "Your mother is the sweetest woman in the world, excepting yourself."

I am mollified, and give Charles a smile. "You do say the nicest things, Charlie," I say admiringly: "the very nicest things. Now, I can never make pretty speeches like you. I blurt out things that offend people oftener than not, and when I feel a really pretty speech in my heart, it refuses to come out; nothing will induce it to come out, Charles," I add plaintively.

"What a queer girl you are, Winnie!" he says, looking down on me from his height of six feet: "not a bit like other girls."

"Would you like me to be like other girls?" I ask impatiently. "Would you wish me to be like Miss Grenfell, and Amy Carew, and Jean Sinclair?"

"Heaven forbid!" he answers earnestly. "Be yourself, and I am satisfied."

"Charles," I ask suddenly, "had you ever any other lovers before me?"

He flushes somewhat, and laughs a little. "What a question, Winnie! I am six-and-twenty, and have only known you nine months. Of course I had a few flirtations, but never anything serious like this, dear."

I answer nothing. Of course it is only natural he should have cared for other girls in all those years: I am only eighteen, and Charles is my first love; but with him it is so different.

We are quiet for a minute or two, and go onward along the narrow cliff path, where, far below, we can see the water tossing and gleaming in the bright spring sunshine. The air is sweet and fresh from the late storm; the grass glitters with the weight of a thousand raindrops; I feel it is good to be alive to-day, all nature is so fair, and bright, and beautiful.

"Oh, Charles!" I say presently, breaking the silence, "it is so nice to be alive. I feel as happy as a lark to-day—no, perhaps not as a lark," I add meditatively. "Did you ever notice, Charles, how a lark sings? It seems as if it is so full of joy and rapture that it cannot tell it all: such a joy, Charles, that it must needs go up as near heaven's gate as possible, and sing it out there. I do love skylarks."

"I thought you never made pretty speeches, Winnie," remarks Charles meanly. "The only pity is your rhapsodies of expression always relate to anything and everything except your humble servant."

"That is quite different," I retort haughtily: "you might see that."

"Yes, I do," he answers moodily: "I see that you love anything and everybody excepting me."

"It is not true," I say earnestly; "you know it is not true. I do love you."

"Never mind, Win," says Charles, in his own quick, changeful way. "When Noel comes back we must take him round a little and show him the place; he has never seen Beach Towers; and by-the-bye, we will have some rattling good picnics as soon as the weather gets a little warmer. I know some jolly girls over at Limetown; the new vicar's daughters. I don't think you have met them."

"No, never," I answer; "but will your brother care for that sort of thing, Charles? I thought he was so old and grave."

Charles laughs. "For the matter of that, Winnie, he is thirty-eight: quite old to you, I confess; but I promise you that he can still walk with the aid of a stick, and that he has a few grey hairs left on his head."

"You are so childish," I remark loftily—"so very childish for your age. When will you grow a man, Charlie?"

"I have done a good deal in that way already, I think, Winnie, considering my six feet of height."

"You are too tall, Charlie—much too tall," I retort, looking up at him. "You pride yourself on it, too, I know."

Charles marches on with his erect carriage, and I know my aim does not carry: who says a man is not vain? The hour goes past, and our walk is over, and I go in, to find mother watching for me.

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Noel Trent has arrived, and as yet I have not seen him. Charles brought him to call upon us the day before yesterday, but unfortunately I had gone to visit a poor woman, living a mile or two away from our village.

Mother says he is very grave and quiet, and not nearly as handsome as Charles, also rather brusque in manner. I am sorry I missed him, but no doubt I shall satisfy my curiosity before long.

It is one of spring's loveliest days. The song of a thousand birds fills the air, and there is the feeling, so beautiful, so indescribable, of new life struggling to be free, of the bursting forth of living green, where so lately no life was visible. I go down the winding paths of the garden, and out through the little door upon the cliffs.

Far below me the sands look very tempting to-day, so I stumble down the rough, steep path that is so much the shorter, quicker way to take. It is seldom used excepting by myself, and sometimes by Charles when he is with me, though he grumbles and growls the whole way about my leading him such a path: he is much too fine a gentleman to care for scrambling.

Halfway down the steep I come to a log of wood that for long has lain dangerously across the narrow path. I determine to send it on a journey to the sands beneath. It is early in the day: no one is to be seen; so I give it one strong push, and set it rolling. I watch it till out of sight, and then follow it down the steep pathway. As I near the bottom of the cliff, to my surprise and horror I see a gentleman lying back, white as death, upon the sands; near him is the log of wood that I had set rolling from above. Can it have fallen upon him? I gasp for breath, and look around me. There is not a soul in sight. I must go to him, and see what is the matter. I creep down upon the sands and approach the still figure, lying so white and silent. He is not dead. It is only a faint; I know that at once; but on one side of his forehead is an awful bruise that I shudder to see, for I know my log has done it. "Oh, that I had some water!" I say sorrowfully. "He looks dreadfully ill; and oh! supposing he should die out here alone, and all through my wicked carelessness?" Then a thought strikes me; not far up the cliff is a little spring of fresh water. I will go to it and get some. A hard felt hat lies on the beach; I pick it up. It is my victim's, but I do not hesitate to take it. I hurriedly retrace my steps till I come to the spring. How I bless its fresh coolness as I fill the hat and carry it carefully down again. I take out my handkerchief, and dipping it in the clear cold water, lay it upon the poor bruised forehead. The effect is immediate. He opens his eyes, and seeing me, attempts to rise. "Lie still," I say hastily; "please lie still. You are badly hurt, I fear. Let me bathe your forehead again."

"I fainted, I believe," he answers weakly. "Something fell from the cliff and knocked me over. I shall be better presently."

"It was I who did it," I say sadly. "I was disgracefully wicked and careless; I never thought of anybody being on the beach. I am bitterly sorry to have injured you so." He answers me nothing: just now, I think he cannot, for faintness again seems overcoming him. "What can I do?" I moan; "he looks almost dying. I must leave him, and go for help." I bend over him, and speak in his ear. "I am going for help; I will not be long." He nods his head in reply, and I go off rapidly up the cliffs again—such a long way it seems to me, the winding paths to the top. At last I gain the summit, and in a few minutes I am at our door. I rush down the long garden, and into the house. "Mother," I burst out, "I want a doctor; and you must come, and Sykes and Rogers; I have nearly killed a man!"

I am trembling all over, and my words are incoherent and mixed. Mother makes me sit down a minute, and by degrees she gets from me the real facts of the case. She sends off the housemaid at once for the doctor; and then she and the gardener, and his son, go down to the sands. I help mother down the steep, rugged path: she would not take this way, only time is precious. However, she manages pretty well, and presently we stand by the side of the victim of my carelessness. How ghastly he looks, lying there in the light of the morning sun! I can almost fancy him dead. I stand back a little, while mother and the gardener raise his head to give him some cordial. He gives an exclamation of pain, and I hear Rogers whisper that his arm is broken. It is too much: I sit down upon the sands, and sob as if my heart will break. I am but young; and I almost fear he will die—die through an act of mine. He opens his eyes and looks at me—only one look, and then shuts them wearily again. The doctor arrives before long, and then comes the moving. Our house

is the nearest, so to it they carry him: not up the steep cliff path—that is, of course, impossible—but up along the broader, longer way. At the agony of being moved he has fainted again; but when, an hour after, he lies comfortably in bed, with his arm set and his forehead bound up, the doctor says he will do very well. I am relieved beyond measure. As I sit sadly in the drawing-room, mother comes down-stairs and tells me he is better, and adds: "And now, Winnie, who do you think he is? He is Noel Trent. He does not know our name yet, but the doctor asked him his, and promised to send and tell his friends of his accident."

"How remarkable!" I exclaim; "to think that I have nearly killed Charlie's brother; and just on his arrival, too. What will he think of me?"

In a few minutes Charles comes rushing in. "So, Winnie, you have nearly done for poor old Noel; you have given him a warmer welcome than you intended, I expect."

"Don't, Charles," I say crossly. "It was wickedly careless of me. I cannot forgive myself. Oh! he looked so white and awful out there on the beach. I thought at first he was dead." I am still nervous and unstrung, and my voice trembles, but Charles does not seem to notice.

"Look here, Winnie: they say pity is akin to love. I can't have you falling in love with my poor mutilated brother."

"How dare you speak in that way, Charles?" I burst out angrily. "How dare you joke about such things? You don't know what suffering I have caused your brother." I rush from the room, too tired and nervous to trust myself further, and shut myself in my own bedroom until I feel myself again.

* * * * * *

It is a week after, and Noel Trent is able to come down, and sit in an easy-chair in the drawing-room window. It is the first time I have seen him since the accident, and I have to tell him how deeply I regret the cause of it.

I go up to him with beating heart, and begin: "Mr. Trent, I cannot forgive myself for being the cause of all your pain and injury, and it seems too much to ask you."

He holds out his uninjured arm to me, and takes my hand in his strong, firm grasp.

"From my heart I forgive you," he says simply; "and I think I had not a monopoly of suffering that day on the beach."

I blush; for I know he recalls my passion of tears when I heard the extent of his injuries. "I would gladly have borne it for you," I say earnestly: "oh, so gladly! To see anyone suffer, and to know you are the cause of it, is dreadful indeed."

A light shines in the strong grey eyes bent upon me; for a moment it lingers, and then they look cold and grave as before.

"Think no more of it," he says lightly. "It was an accident; you will be more careful in the future."

"Indeed I will," I answer gravely, and then we say no more.

I take out my work, and as I stitch solemnly on I am conscious of Noel Trent's eyes fixed upon me.

"So you are the young lady my brother Charles is going to marry?" he says suddenly, in his quick, abrupt way. "You are very young."

"I am eighteen," I answer with dignity. "Quite a woman, though you may not suppose it."

He smiles scornfully. "A mere child! And so you think you are in love, do you? Are ready to give up all your bright young freedom to tie yourself down to the whims and caprices of one man, and so grow old before your time?"

I flush hotly. "Charles and I are not going to marry for many years; he and I are quite happy as we are."

"Good heavens!" says Noel, half rising to gaze at me. "And is Charles as content to postpone the happy day as you are?"

"I daresay," I answer carelessly. "Charles considers my happiness first, I hope."

Noel gives a half-laugh, and settles back in his chair again. What a disagreeable fellow this brother of Charlie's is! I cannot understand him at all. I do not deign to say another word, but go on haughtily with my sewing; yet all the time I am conscious of a pair of stern grey eyes bent upon me as if to read my very soul.

The picnics we had planned and arranged for do not come off, after all. Noel's accident put a stop to them just at first; and afterwards Charles did not seem as eager to have them as before. For the first few days after the accident I do not see much of Charles. He has made some new friends over at Limetown—the new vicar and his family—and rides over there very often. Mother is occupied with Noel, and consequently I have as much as I can attend to looking after the house, and helping the two servants in many little ways. But when, at the end of the week, Noel is well enough to come down-stairs, and mother takes up her old duties again, I begin to long for Charles. He comes in one afternoon, and asks me to ride over with him to Limetown to see his friends the Leonards.

We are soon on our way, cantering along the lanes and over the common towards the pretty little village. It is one of spring's loveliest days: the trees and shrubs are bursting into living green. The birds are filling the air with their song. I feel a joy in life to-day—a happiness in the very breath of the sweet spring sunshine; and it is so good to be with Charles again.

We have been riding too fast for much conversation, but now I draw up a little, ready for a little talk.

"Charles, what sort of people are these Leonards? and how many sons and daughters are there?"

"I will give you a full list," says Charles obediently. "First of all, there are Mr. and Mrs. Leonard. After them comes Kate, a capable, decided sort of young woman; age I should guess to be about twenty-nine. Then comes Edward—he is a curate in London; then Roger, who is a lawyer somewhere. Helen comes next—she must be nearly twenty-three; then Agnes, the youngest, about nineteen or twenty."

"All older than I am," I remark. "What are they like? Are they pretty?"

"Oh, very pretty!" he answers soberly; "especially papa Leonard."

"Don't be foolish, Charles. I mean the girls, of course."

"Not nearly as pretty as you are, dear," says Charles, in the courteous, winning manner he knows so well how to use.

However, I do not much like the answer. I know I am not really pretty. Good-looking I may be called, but as to real beauty, I have none.

"Charles," I say, flushing a little, "do you think that I want compliments of that sort? I know I am not pretty—not nearly as nice-looking as many girls I have met. You must not think I mind hearing other girls praised. I know you love me better than anyone else, so why should I mind?"

Charles says nothing, and we go on our way. We soon reach Limetown. It is a pretty village, and the large, old-fashioned Rectory looks very picturesque lying back a little from the road. Close to it is the church, and the graveyard runs almost into the Rectory garden. We leave our horses in charge of a man outside, and I, gathering up my habit, follow Charles up the garden path. Charles is no mere acquaintance here, at any rate. He nods to the servant who lets us in, and enters the drawing-room as if quite at home in the house. I follow rather shyly. I never did care for new faces.

It is a long, low room that we enter—such a comfortable-looking place. An elderly lady sits by the fire working, and a slim young girl, delicate-looking and pretty, is reading near her. I just glance at them as I enter, but my whole gaze is centred upon one object. She is bending over some flowers on the table, arranging them in vases around her. Such a calm, beautiful face, that one would think she had come to earth by some strange mistake, and would ere long take her departure. Oh! that face, with its pure, lofty expression, its sweet true eyes, and firm tender mouth! I can see it still as I saw it that day. Sweet Helen! I loved you well!

Mrs. Leonard welcomes me kindly.

"You are Mr. Trent's cousin, my dear? He has often told us of you and your dear mother, and we have many times asked him to bring you out to see us."

"Yes, we are cousins," I say. "At least, second-cousins once removed, or something of that sort.—I believe that is correct, isn't it, Charles?"

He laughs and flushes a little, and turns the conversation to something else. How strange it is of Charles to mention our very distant cousinship! He has never done so before.

It is not long before I find my way over to the flower-strewn table. The tall fair girl there has a wondrous fascination for me: so strong, so powerful, that my heart beats a little faster even to be near her.

From that moment began a friendship that was to hold pain and sorrow, as well as joy and gladness—a friendship pure, and warm, and strong.

Charles says but little to Helen or me to-day. He talks and laughs with pretty Agnes a good deal. None of the girls in any way allude to our engagement. Perhaps Charlie has not told them of it yet. He does not care much for its being made public property.

As we ride home, I ask Charles why he has not taken me before to see the Leonards. He has known them nearly three months, and they are the nicest people I have ever met.

"Agnes says that they often asked you to bring me out," I say; "and she wondered at my not coming."

"Agnes is a chatterbox," he answers, rather shortly. "You must not listen to all she says; and besides, I did not think you cared for strangers."

"No, I don't usually," I reply; "but oh! Charles, Helen is the loveliest girl I have ever met. She and I are going to be friends: I know we are."

"You live too far apart to be great friends," Charles answers. "Nine miles are no joke."

"Yes, it is a pity; but I shall ask her to stay with me when Noel is gone."

"Noel is coming home to-morrow, Winnie. He told me so this morning. And indeed, it is about time, sponging upon your mother all this while."

"Why, it isn't a fortnight yet," I answer indignantly. "You are too bad, Charles."

However, Noel really did leave us next day. He seemed well, and nearly as strong as ever.

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Then comes a time when I see less and less of Charles. I know he goes constantly to Limetown. Sometimes I meet him there. It is dawning on me gradually that Charles is growing tired of me, or else he cannot resist the spell of Helen Leonard's fascinations. To me, with whom to see her was to fall in love with her, it is hardly surprising that Charles should do so too. Yet, after all, Charlie might still love me best at heart. I would not worry or complain, but just go on quietly.

The more I see of Helen Leonard, the more I love her. She is nearly five years my senior, and I look up to her with a blind, worshipping love that is often peculiar to youth. She, too, returns my affection in her own calm, quiet way, and it is not long before we are fast and firm friends.

I do not know how it was, or how to account for it, but something drew me to Helen from the very first—a strange, sweet drawing that was to prove strong and lasting. As I felt one love slipping away from me, this other love drew nearer, enfolding me with its pure, sweet influence.

Strange to say, I had never told Helen of my engagement to Charles. Just at first I did not care to, preferring to leave it to him. Then afterwards I noticed something that made me decide never to disclose it.

One morning I have driven over to Limetown to spend the day with Helen. We spend the morning in the garden—she loves the fresh air as much as I do. We are sitting together in the arbour when we hear a sound of footsteps coming up the path, and in a minute Noel and Charles Trent stand before us.

"You here, Winnie?" says Charles; and I notice a slight cloud on his face. "I have brought Noel to introduce to our kind friends.—Miss Helen, this is my brother Noel."

She comes forward with her accustomed grace of manner, and holds out her hand with a smile. Noel, grave and brusque as he is, seems to gather something of her courteousness of manner as he greets her; but

it is Charles I chiefly notice at this moment. His eyes are fixed upon her with such a look of suppressed, passionate love, that it tells me his secret at once and for ever. He loves Helen Leonard as he has never loved me, nor ever could love me. A chill goes to my heart—a feeling as of pain and loss. Thank God, no feeling of disloyalty to Helen enters my mind! How could he help loving her—my own dear friend? To blame him would be like blaming her for being so sweetly attractive. Then Charles turns to me, chatting in his old, pleasant manner, but the light has died out from his face, the radiance from his smile. Poor Charles! oh, poor Charles! did he fear I would not give him up? Not give him up, when he loved another better than he loved me! Why, Charlie, I would give you up, even if it broke my heart!

I try to chat and talk as usual, but find it hard to let no selfish thoughts cast their gloom upon me. It is hard to have grown accustomed to be first in someone's love, and suddenly know you will never hold that position any more. No word had told me Charlie's secret, and I was not naturally suspicious, but I had read it now unmistakably and postively. Did Helen love him? I knew not; her quiet, calm nature was hard to read, even by those who loved her best. We walk out in the sunlight, through the village, and round by the pretty gliding stream where the violets grow. Helen and Agnes go on in front, accompanied by Charles, while Noel and I follow on behind. I cannot be bright and talkative as usual, do what I will; and to add to my vexation, Noel seems to read my very soul. All the while, when seemingly engaged in conversation, he makes me feel that he understands my situation, and pities me.

"My whole gaze is centred upon one object."—p. 887.

I am glad when the day comes to an end, and Charles drives us back through the cool night air. The breeze freshens my aching head; and it is so nice to be quiet a little. I say "Good-bye" at my own door, and go in, to find mother asleep on the sofa—it is ten o'clock.

The next day I feel restless and unhappy. I must see Helen, and that speedily: her happiness, not only Charles's, rests on my seeing her at once. If she, meanwhile, should hear of the engagement between Charles and me she would give up all idea of happiness herself, and have nothing more to say with Charles: and all in vain, for now nothing would induce me to marry him: how could I, knowing he loved another better? I will go to Helen, and on the strength of our great friendship get her to tell her secret to me. I could

coax it out from her, for she loves me very dearly. The very next day I drive over to Limetown, and drag Helen out into the garden for a talk. We wend our way to a favourite spot of hers, over where the churchyard joins the garden. Here we can talk quietly and alone, hidden by the young linden-trees.

Helen is graver than is her wont this morning. On her face is a pretty flush, and in her eyes a new light that adds a thousandfold to her beauty.

"How beautiful you are!" I break out impulsively. "Oh, Helen, what would I not give to be like you!"

She smiles a little at my words; I am so hot in my warm young love.

"No wonder everyone loves you so!" I add; "they could not help it."

"Who are everybody?" asks Helen laughingly. "You mean yourself, you dear old goose!"

"No, no," I answer, "I am only one; why, Helen! you must know how you are loved by others, by——" I look up at her: her fair face is crimson.

"Helen dear, do you love him?" I ask, putting my arms around her: "do you love him?"

I wait with beating heart for her answer, and it comes dreamily, half under her breath: "For time, and for eternity."

I drop my hands from around her neck, and look over to where the gravestones gleam clear and white in the summer sun. A fitting symbol, they, of my dead and buried hopes. For one moment I dare not speak, and then I am myself again.

I turn to Helen with warm words of love and sympathy. "He could not help loving you," I say, half wistfully; "oh! he could not help it. Helen dear, whatever new love comes into your life, keep a little for me."

My voice breaks, and Helen turns to look at me, "Why, you dear old stupid! jealous already? Do you think I could do without my Winnie? but remember, dear, he has not spoken yet."

She speaks in a voice of loving confidence and trust in the man she loves; no doubt is in her heart as to his speaking sooner or later.

I make my visit to Helen a short one to-day—not less loving than usual: that I thank God for; but my strength is too weak to bear what has come upon me. Carelessly trusting in Charlie's love, I had gone on, until now the knowledge was bitter and cruel that he loved another better.

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Down the orchard paths I walk, with beating heart and anxious fears. I have a duty before me—a duty painful and sad, but one I know is right to perform. I have sent for Charles, in order to tell him I release him from his engagement. No word of what I have discovered shall I say to him. Helen shall have no breath of blame attaching to her dear name.

I stand against an apple-tree loaded with its wealth of blossom, and look down the orchard for the figure I know so well. In a minute I see him—tall and handsome in the sunlight; and my heart beats a little faster at the sight. He comes up in his easy, graceful fashion.

"Well, Winnie, you see I am here; what secret have you to disclose, eh?"

I hold a little tighter to the friendly apple-tree, and begin—

"Charlie, I sent for you to tell you that I release you from your engagement to me."

I do not look at him as I speak; I cannot. He starts with surprise. "May I ask your reasons?" he says coldly.

"No, Charles. I cannot tell you them; it is a good thing so few know of our engagement; it will be pleasanter for us, won't it, Charlie?"

I look up at him then; he is angry and surprised, but on his face is no great pain or sorrow. I notice this with sadness.

"It *is* a good thing so few know of it," he says bitterly: "a very good thing; but this is absurd. I suppose you are jealous of one of the Leonard girls, or someone?"

"I am jealous of no one," I say sadly. "If I have a reason, Charles, it is this—that you do not love me. Do not think I blame you—you cannot help it."

I turn away, and walk slowly down the orchard towards the house. Charles comes quickly after me. "The fact is, Winnie, you do not love me: it is easy to blame others; but this being so, you are right to break off the engagement. Good-bye; we are cousins and friends always?"

"Yes," I answer chokingly, "always friends."

He goes off down the orchard and out through the road-gate, and then I see him no more.

"That is over for ever," I say sadly. "But he did not love me; he was never proud of his engagement, but kept it so quiet and secret. He loves Helen a thousand times better than he ever loved me."

For a month after the ending of our engagement I spend a dreary time, fighting against a feeling of disappointment and sadness. Charles has, of course, kept away from us altogether; his time is greatly spent in Limetown. I do not see Noel either for some time; but one day he suddenly comes up the garden path to me, as I sit sewing under the lilac-trees.

He looks graver and sterner than ever to-day, and in his usual abrupt manner blurts out his grievance. "Winnie, I hear your engagement with Charles is at an end; whose fault is this?"

I flush hotly. "The fault, if fault there be, is mine," I answer proudly.

He looks keenly at me, and walks rapidly up and down for a minute, then comes and stands before me.

"I want to know the truth," he says half-commandingly. "Tell me: has that brother of mine acted honourably in the matter?"

"Perfectly honourably," I answer shortly. "You should know him too well to ask." It is hard to keep up appearances longer, in face of my relentless questioner. My lips quiver, and tears fill my eyes, but I hope he does not see them as I stand proudly before him.

"I know your secret," he bursts out suddenly. "I know how you love him, and are giving him up for the sake of another girl. Oh, you do not deceive me."

I put up my hand to stop him; he shall not drag Helen's name into it. "He did not love me," I say brokenly. "Do you think I would marry him,

knowing that? Please go away and leave me; you know all now."

He turns away without a word, and I sink upon the ground, sobbing as if my heart will break.

Two days after I receive a little note from Helen, begging me to go to her, as she is unwell. I have not seen her for some weeks, and as I go into her room I start back with surprised sorrow at the change in her.

"Why, Helen! I never knew you had been ill," I exclaim. "Why did you not send and tell me sooner?"

"I have only been ill a day, Winnie, only a day; yet it seems to me a lifetime; but read this letter, dear."

I take the letter wonderingly, and see it is from Noel. It runs thus—

"DEAR MISS HELEN,—I think you cannot be aware that my brother Charles was engaged to be married to Miss Winifred Glanville until a month ago. She then herself set him free, for reasons you may be able to supply.—With kind regards, I am your sincere friend, "NOEL TRENT."

The red rushes in an overwhelming flood to my face. Indignation rises in my heart at Noel's behaviour. How dared he do it?

"He had no business to write," I say hotly. "Oh, Helen, do not heed it!"

"It is true, then," she says wearily; "true that all the time he was winning my love he was an engaged man, and, worst of all, engaged to my dearest friend. Oh, Winnie! I could hate him for daring to make me seem so dishonourable and false to you; and you repaid me by love, giving up all for me, dear child."

"He has told you of his love?" I ask questioningly.

The pale face flushes. "Yes, dear, he has told me. Oh, Winnie! what made you both keep silence as to your engagement? It was not right."

"Charles did not speak of it, Helen: he did not seem to wish it, and so I said nothing, either; but it is well as it is. He could not have loved me, and sooner or later I must have found it out."

"He has wronged you terribly, and me also," she murmured. "I will never look upon his face again. Did he deem me such another as himself, to think that I could act the traitor to my true and faithful friend? Winnie, by no single word or act did he show he was an engaged man; I never dreamed there was anything between you."

She speaks firmly, and with no sound of pity in her voice for him. I turn pleadingly towards her. "Oh, Helen! forgive him; he could not help loving you best. Forgive him, and be happy in his affection. He will be true to you, Helen; he must be true to you."

"I cannot forgive him, Winnie; oh, I cannot!"

"You will one day," I answer. "You will pardon the sin that was caused through love of you."

She shakes her head decisively, and I say no more.

For more than a year Helen kept her word, and would not see or speak to Charles Trent. He had begged and pleaded for an interview, but she would not hear of it. Those quiet, gentle natures are sometimes so relentlessly strong.

I had also begged and entreated her to be reconciled, but it was no use. She grew white and thin, and spiritless, and I feared she would droop and die. By this time I had outgrown my girlish sorrow for my lost lover. At eighteen our loves take slighter root than at later years. My greatest friend and comforter during the past year had been Noel, who won my deepest love by his constant, unwearying affection. "Helen will forgive Charles when I am happily married," I said to myself; "all will be well then."

It is one bright June day, as I stand among the roses, that he comes to me and asks me to be his. He is no different from what he has always been—grave, brusque, and silent; but I would not have him different for all the world.

"Winnie," he begins, in his usual abrupt manner, "do you know when first I began to love you? It is as far back as the day when you introduced yourself to me by throwing a log of wood at my head."

"Oh, Noel! so long!" I say wonderingly.

"Yes, so long! And now, can you love me a little in return?"

His grave face wears a look of tenderness I have never seen on any face before, and he holds out his arms towards me. I go to them without a word, and Noel and I know that we shall love each other faithfully and truly for evermore.

The following autumn sees two weddings: one is Charles's and Helen's: the other Noel's and mine.

THE MIGHTY CONFOUNDED BY THE WEAK.

BY THE REV. ALFRED J. BAMFORD, B.A.

WHEN St. Paul said that God had chosen the foolish and weak things of the world to confound the things that were wise and mighty, he said what to many must have sounded like an exaggeration or a meaningless flourish of rhetoric. Yet the history of Christianity furnishes successive illustrations of the truth and soberness of his words.

It would be too much to affirm that everyone sees this. We are all liable to take a short-sighted view of facts, to look only at what is within our personal and present experience, and to judge of success or failure, of satisfaction or disappointment, by a most immediate expectation. It were well for us to remind ourselves and each other occasionally that he that believeth shall not make haste, and to recall some of the passages of the thirty-seventh psalm, such, for instance, as this:

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

And again: "The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace"—words which anticipate the Beatitude spoken on the Mount: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

We can imagine men of little faith taking what we may call "the near view" of then current events, listening to this beatitude, undoubtedly gracious if true, but, to their minds, of very doubtful truth. They would look around them, would see "the meek," would see that they were certainly not then inheriting the earth, would fail to see any promise of their entering into possession. They would see them, on the contrary, despised and scorned, the victims of greed, ambition, and every form of injustice. They would see them sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, and the wolves as ready as in the fable to accuse them of muddying streams; they would see how, in the words of the psalmist, "the wicked plotteth against the just and gnasheth upon him with his teeth." Then they would study the life-course of the Teacher who uttered the words, and considering themselves wise in their judgment of His words by events, they would by-and-bye turn from Calvary, saying despairingly that they had hoped that this had been He who should have redeemed Israel, but His light had gone down at noonday in total eclipse—Himself crucified, His followers scattered, there was a sad and final end of all the large and new hopes awakened by His gracious deeds and words. The theory that the meek will inherit the earth would be to them very beautiful as a theory, but very far from likelihood of being realised in fact. In their observation of things actual they see weakness thrust aside by strength, righteousness and goodness crushed under the heel of selfishness, meekness and faith laughed to scorn, or hounded to death by a coarse and ribald brutality.

And throughout the history of the Church, in each successive generation, the man of the narrow vision sees the same thing. Our Lord is crucified as a friendless man among strangers and foes. His first disciples are persecuted and put to death; in following days persecution follows persecution; power and sovereignty determine to stamp out what they are pleased to regard as a malignant heresy. To the eye of any observer at any point of time, how hopeless appears the cause of truth, justice, right, despised and trodden under foot by falsehood, ambition, and greed! How hopeless to him appears the cause of the "called"—without wealth, without social influence, without rank, and exposed to the fierce hatred of the wise and the mighty in whose making are the laws, in whose hand is the sword. He is inclined to say, with Napoleon, that Providence seems to be on the side of the biggest battalions.

But the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. And to-day the principles of this despised sect, everywhere spoken against, are at least the nominal principles of the nations that belong to the most advanced civilisation in the world, and that now feel compelled to pay the homage of hypocrisy to the Christianity they have failed to destroy.

The men of the near view find history full of the individual instances of the weak and foolish being confounded by the mighty and wise; while men capable of taking a far view let their eye travel down the years, and find that, as a matter of observed fact, the words of St. Paul have been realised from his day down to ours: the foolish things have confounded the wise, and the weak things the mighty.

"Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 't is Truth alone is strong,
And albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong.

* * * * * *

Careless seems the Great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the great unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

Here, indeed, is the explanation of the whole, in this word God. Though in every individual instance it may seem that truth is on the scaffold and wrong upon the throne, yet nothing is more certain than that truth is ever triumphing, proving itself strong. In the words which another American poet puts into the mouth of one of his characters:

"Man is unjust, but God is just; and finally justice triumphs."

It is God, as St. Paul says, who has chosen the foolish and weak things to confound the wise and mighty It were idle to say that what is truly weak is stronger than what is mighty and can confound it. But the strength and glory are in God. The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt furnishes a striking illustration of this. The Israelites in their bondage, with all the material and mental disadvantages that belonged to their condition, could neither have devised nor carried out a scheme by which to emancipate themselves from their wiser and stronger oppressors. The success of that exodus demanded, would have been impossible without, and therefore proved, a Divine initiative and a continuous Divine protecting and leading. The very fact that they were out of Egypt ought to have been to every thoughtful Israelite a proof of the presence of God in the camp, for it was evidence that what would have been impossible without that presence had come to pass. Were the whole record of the journeyings lost and forgotten save for the fact that the people, to whom Moses was sent in Egypt, by-and-bye stood armed under Joshua before the walls of Jericho, that one fact would be a sure witness of Divine interposition.

And I do not much envy the man who can read the wonderful story of our own land without receiving the same testimony. When we think of the condition of the English people to-day, with our boasted civil

and religious liberty, and look back to earlier days, must we not exclaim: "What hath God wrought!" The peasants, who were little better than serfs, against whom the Statutes of Labourers were passed in the fourteenth century, and the Lollards, against whom the Statute of Heretics was passed by Henry IV. in the opening of the fifteenth, appeared possessed of no qualities which could justify any expectation of their success in contending against the power and the wealth of the kingdom. Nothing could seem more hopeless or suicidal than the challenging of such a struggle. Yet, though the course of that struggle is marked by cruel sufferings of the oppressed, it ended in their victory. Men laughed then at their claims and aspirations who, were they living to-day, would ridicule any attempt to reimpose the Acts directed against them. There can be no explanation of this triumph of weakness over strength on English soil other than that which is given of the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian bondage. God has led the people. He has judged the poor of the people. He has saved the children of the needy, and has broken in pieces the oppressor.

In the first stages of such a struggle the weak can do little but endure and suffer; God works for them when they cannot help themselves. But, as God's purpose receives the beginnings of its accomplishment, the stage is reached in which God is seen helping those who are enabled in part to help themselves; and, yet later, God is found calling the weak and the foolish and the despised, not simply to the helping of themselves, but, in His service, to the helping of others.

BEFRIENDING CHILD CRIPPLES.

BY G. HOLDEN PIKE.

OFF TO THE PARK.

ONLY those who have looked into the matter for themselves can be aware of the number of juveniles we have in our midst who have to be classed as cripples. Being thus permanently disabled from taking part in the customary diversions of childhood, life is to them a very different thing from what is commonly associated with the springtide of existence. Large numbers of these suffering children live in the poorest of homes; very many are confined in squalid rooms, and a proportion actually owe their affliction to neglect in infancy, or to something even worse than that. To see them is to have sympathy at once enlisted on their behalf; and it is a consolation to know that these little ones are not lost sight of by those who have learned to feel for them. The Ragged School Union has now a separate department, the business of which is to look after such needy and deserving subjects.

The chief agent in befriending these children, and who now acts for the Union, has been Mr. Boyer, who

THE CRIPPLED CHILD'S COMFORTER: ANNIE AND HER CAT.

landed in England from the United States about four years ago. Being a philanthropist by nature, and having been already engaged in Christian work, Mr. Boyer soon observed phases of child-life in London which affected him more than anything he had ever seen in America. He was struck with the number of boys and girls wandering about the streets for whom no one seemed to care, many being of the now so-called "Drift" class, who even escaped the vigilance of the School Board inspectors. Of course these were not cripples; but giving attention to them led to the discovery of the cripples in a greater number of homes than could have been suspected. The present day Drift children really belong to what used to be called the Arab class in the days when Lord Shaftesbury began to look into the condition of London on his own account. Mr. Boyer made an endeavour to persuade the juvenile wanderers to attend Sunday-school, and finding that his efforts were in some measure successful, further attempts were made to gain an influence over them. Because the poor little things had so little to lighten their lives, it was thought that they would enjoy a walk to Victoria Park, where they might enjoy the additional treat of a dinner of biscuits on the greensward. The desire of all the children who were able to walk to join in this excursion was very great; and it was while the tickets were being distributed that facts came to light such as are calculated to startle those who are interested in the cause of national education. In one court alone no less than sixty children were found who attended no school whatever save that of the streets; and the saddest part of the business seems to be that the parents encourage their unhappy offspring in regarding school teaching as a needless penance, and the Board officers as their natural enemies. When, however, Mr. Boyer volunteered to take them to the Park, he was at once viewed in a more favourable light; they listened to what he might have to say, they took to the singing exercises with enthusiasm, and returned to their poor homes as satisfied as soldiers from the field of triumph. Other large parties were taken out for picnics, and while a hold on the children's affections was secured, friendly feelings were awakened in the hearts of their elders. Hundreds were persuaded to attend Sunday-school; but it was then found that many held aloof because of their poor clothes. In the rooms in which they lived were also found many pale-faced boys and girls who were cripples past cure, although some of them might be able to get abroad with their crutches. Taken altogether, these children were seen to be a class by themselves; and in that case it seemed to be desirable to arrange separate meetings for their benefit, and on week-nights as well as on Sunday. At the first meeting twelve hundred were present, and now no less than twenty meetings are held every week. Special attention is given to the deformed and the crippled, and such as cannot come out are regularly visited in their own homes. Some who cannot get out at all even have lessons given to them, while toys and picture-books are plentifully provided for all. The influence thus gained over these young creatures is great, and it is found to extend from the children to the parents. In the course of two years a marked improvement is found to have taken place; and the home influence which the visitors are able to exercise is much valued. Rough as their exteriors

JESSIE, A BLIND VISITOR TO THE CRIPPLES.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR.

may seem to be, these cripples and Drift children have simple, trustful hearts, and soon recognise anyone who is in sympathy with them.

In proportion as their trials and wants have become known, the cripples have naturally found many friends, some of whom are able and willing to do much for them. For example, on one of the pleasantest days of last summer a cripples' garden party was given at one of the best houses in Chiswick. In charming grounds, such as might belong to a royal palace, a large party of child cripples were entertained, every one being as deserving an object of charity as could be found in London. Vans had to be hired to carry these poor little guests to their destination—many being sufferers; and it was affecting to see how they had to be lifted out of the vehicles to be placed down on the grass. There were one hundred and fifty of them, and as the party in vans travelled westward, with a banner which had for its inscription, "Home Cripples Band of the Ragged School Union," sympathetic people had no difficulty in seeing what kind of a party it was which was passing through their midst. The procession seemed to be a contrast to the life of the gay streets through which it slowly travelled; and the quiet demeanour of the young excursionists would strike people as being something different from the ordinary behaviour of such young children when out for a holiday. Of whatever age, suffering humanity is not disposed to be hilarious, and this accounted for the absence of laughing, joking, and cheering on the part of these excursionists.

When this strange party arrived at its destination at Chiswick, the lovely gardens had novel charms for them; but when anyone looked at individual faces there was no doubt about their being sufferers. There were some there who needed to be befriended in other ways than by a summer treat, by toys and picture-books; they needed to be supplied with surgical instruments to relieve them in various ways.

As regarded the entertainment in the garden, all possible things which could contribute to the pleasure of the strange little guests seemed to have been thought of, and the ladies who waited upon them appeared to enjoy their duty no less than the children themselves enjoyed the attention bestowed upon them. Roast lamb, with its accompaniments, without stint, was no mean feast under the circumstances; and after dinner, games were provided for such as could engage in them; while those who were unable to do that had to be content to try and be amused with Punch and Judy. With all its natural or inevitable drawbacks, this was a memorable and successful day, which would have its sunny memories. When it came to an end, the little child cripples were lifted one by one into the waggons, and on reaching London they had to be left one by one at their homes. It was a profitable day all round. A good influence was gained over the children; those who befriended them had their Christian sympathies drawn out, and their knowledge of the suffering world extended.

This party could only have come off in the summer; but it is in winter that children of this class need most to be befriended. We are even told that they derive more good from being sent to a Holiday Home during the winter than they would do in the summer, because it is during the severe weather that they chiefly feel the privations of the pinching poverty of their poor, and oftentimes squalid, homes. The plan of sending them into the country during winter has therefore been adopted; and the weakly little deformed creatures seem to like the change quite as much as it was expected they would do. In a Holiday Home they find themselves in light, clean, and airy rooms, with plenty of good food and sufficient warmth; and they get all this just at a time when want at home is most felt. A great and sudden rise in the price of fuel, for example, such as was experienced last winter, may really mean having to do without fire at all to the poorest of the poor.

It would not be possible to take to a Holiday Home all the child cripples met with, but a way of befriending them is still discovered. At one dinner-party alone, held at Jamaica Street, Mile End Road, about three hundred were entertained. What a vast unknown territory to a large number of ordinary people is the neighbourhood stretching away on either side of the Mile End Road! Why, myriads of people are hidden away in these streets without anybody knowing anything of their wants or woes. The company of three hundred cripples just mentioned, who dined together, were collected over a comparatively small area: a fact showing that the hidden woes of the town are greater than might appear on the surface.

This is their home, and here, from one end of the year to another, are they imprisoned in what may be called a desert, or otherwise a town which is too large to allow of people getting into the country if they cannot afford to pay a fare for riding.

The dining-room is an ordinary school-room in the poor, densely crowded neighbourhood just aside from that broadest of London thoroughfares, the Mile End Road; and the clergyman in charge is one who has not only spent the greater part of his life at the East End, but appears to prefer it to any other sphere. The children make up a very singular congregation, and one which suggests many painful thoughts. A large proportion are very young, very many seem to be of stunted growth, while all are pallid for want of the fresh air, as well as the generous diet necessary for their condition. All things seem to be against them; and as you look upon them, some will return your glance in a plaintive kind of manner which cannot fail to enlist your sympathy. Was ever such an assembly of pale-faced little mortals seen before? Many have not only to be carried to the school-room, but even to their places at the tables.

Three hundred children at such a feast as this might be expected to show more hilarity; but these poor little guests are not disposed to be very demonstrative. Nor are their appetites particularly strong; so that while the dinner may be to them of exceptional quality, they will hardly eat as much as one might desire to see them eat of the hot roast beef, with potatoes and plum-pudding. No; it is a very certain thing that these children have too many infirmities to allow of their generally resembling others of their own age. When the dinner is over, however, they appear to become more talkative, and they are able to enter with some zest into the entertainment provided for them. Although it has its sad side, one cannot walk away from such a scene as this without feeling glad at heart that such afflicted little ones have found someone to befriend them.

We suppose that no one can visit much among children of the class described without coming to the conclusion that many of these cripples are more than usually interesting characters. In the case of blind or deaf persons, being deprived of one sense seems sometimes to quicken others; and in most of these instances also it might almost appear that weakness or disability in one direction finds some compensation in extra capacity or strength in another. At all events, some of the most remarkable examples of humanity to be met with are among those whom we should call sorely afflicted persons.

So far as London is concerned, the cripples may be regarded as a class by themselves; and it should be a consolation to kind-hearted persons to know that they are looked after by that branch of the Ragged School Union which exists for the benefit of "Drift" children, or, otherwise, that wandering Arab class which formerly excited the sympathy of Lord Shaftesbury. There are pleading little faces among these juveniles which, being once seen, never go out of memory. It is a satisfaction to know that since the removal of the Union to its new offices, 37, Norfolk Street, Strand, Mr. John Kirk, the secretary, is devoting more attention to this deserving constituency.

A LINCOLNSHIRE LASS.

BY C. E. C. WEIGALL, AUTHOR OF "THE TEMPTATION OF DULCE CARRUTHERS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Everywhere the greater joy is ushered in by the greater pain."

LADY DUNFORD'S house in Lancaster Gate was looking bright with after-dinner gas-light, and cheerful with the sound of merry voices and music, when Aaron Davis was announced as waiting her ladyship's pleasure down-stairs. Lady Dunford, who had been dining with her two nieces and her artist cousin *en famille*, told the man-servant to show him up-stairs into the drawing-room.

She was a pleasant-faced, elderly woman, with a brisk manner and a bright smile, and her two nieces, plain-featured, good-tempered girls, did not take after her as regarded outward appearance, and had evidently "cast back" upon some rather hard-featured ma'e relation; but her cousin, Cecil Hume, who was seated astride on the music-stool, every now and then fingering the notes meditatively, as though some snatch of melody were running through his head, bore so strong a family resemblance to her, that he was far more like her own son than her first cousin; and perhaps that very fact made him so dear to Lady Dunford's heart; for "Cecil" was the acme of perfection at the house in Lancaster Gate, and no evening was complete that had not brought him to dinner, or at any rate to after-dinner chat and music.

Sir Samuel Dunford had been "something in the City," and had been long dead, leaving a large fortune behind him, and being the first and last baronet of his name.

After Cecil's visits to Dalton Court, he had convulsed Lady Dunford with accounts of his reception and of the people whom he had met there, and each member of the household, save one, was as well known to the inmates of No. 500 as are Sir Gorgius Midas and his relations to the readers of *Punch*; but that one exception, whose name had been hinted at rather than

spoken, was Nan Fawcett; for Hume could not trust himself to speak of her as of a casual acquaintance, and her character could not be discussed either favourably or unfavourably with strangers.

"Well, Mr. Davis," said Lady Dunford, with a pleasant smile, as the old man sat down on the very edge of his chair, and tried to look at ease in the presence of three ladies in full evening dress, "I hope you have come to tell me of some very fascinating bargain which has just come under your notice."

For Lady Dunford was a celebrated collector of everything in the shape of books and manuscripts, and her library was well known by every bibliophile in England as being full of most precious relics.

"It's aye and no," said Aaron quaintly. "For it's a bit of a bargain I want to drive with you, my lady, by way of a change, and if it's concluded I cannot tell which of us two will get the best of it—for some things, perhaps yourself."

"You make me very inquisitive," said Lady Dunford, laying down her work and clasping her hands so that the brilliance of a big diamond ring she wore on one of her fingers flashed in the gaslight, and dazzled the old bookseller's eyes for a moment.

"Her ladyship knows that black-letter Bible she has been wearying for these many months?"

"If you mean that rare edition that I have been trying to buy from you for its proper value, I do," said Lady Dunford calmly.

"Well, that's neither here nor there," answered Aaron cautiously. "The price I asked was a fair one, a very fair one; and you'll not buy such another copy a penny cheaper through the length and breadth of the land."

"Tut, tut, man! no doubt you are one of the marvels of the age; but get on with your story."

"It's just this," said Aaron, turning his hat round and round in his hands, and trying to appear perfectly collected: "that you may have the book at your own price if so be that you'll do me a bit of a favour."

"What sort of favour?" returned the canny Scotchwoman, scenting a bargain, but not wishing to pay too highly for it. The man might have social ambition for a sister or a daughter, and even for the sake of a treasured edition she could not go so far as to introduce Miss Davis to London society. But it was no selfish desire that was written so plainly on the old man's face, or which made the lines of his mouth so soft, and that Cecil Hume, student of human nature, could gather at once.

"It isn't much of a story when it's all told," the bookseller continued, fixing his eyes restlessly on the ceiling. "But the other day I took a boy—a born gentleman—who was seeking for work, into my shop, and he has a sister, with a face and a voice like an angel, who wants to find pupils for the guitar and the singing. She's a doctor's daughter, and as gracious a lady as any in the land."

Hume's face had taken a look of deeper intentness as the old man proceeded, and he drew nearer to his cousin, and laid his arm on the mantel-shelf, shading his eyes with his hand.

"Well, it's a common enough story," said Lady Dunford reflectively, "and, at any rate, I may see the young lady before I decide as to her capabilities. And what is her name?"

Hume's face twitched convulsively in the shadow, for he knew instinctively what was coming.

"Her name," said Aaron, slowly and distinctly, "is Miss Nan Fawcett."

"I know her, cousin Amabel," said Hume swiftly, leaning down towards his cousin and speaking in a low tone. "Grant him this favour for my sake, as well as for your reward. I will explain afterwards."

"My dear boy, how extraordinary!" said his cousin helplessly. "Of course I will do anything you like. I shall be very glad to see the young lady at any time that is convenient to her, Mr. Davis; and when may I have my book?"

The old man rose to go. "To-morrow morning, my lady," he said; "and thank you kindly."

"Who is this mysterious girl, my dear Cecil?" said Lady Dunford, with wide eyes of astonishment, when Aaron had departed.

"Nan Fawcett is the only girl I have ever loved, and I hope that some day she will be my wife," was the grave reply; and when Maude and Evelyn had gone to bed, he quietly laid the whole story before his cousin, certain of the sympathy which she readily bestowed upon him.

"May I be present at your interview with her to-morrow?" he said, as he lingered for a moment in the drawing-room after saying good-bye. "I should like to be in the background, to hear what she says to you, without her even suspecting my identity."

"Very well," laughed Lady Dunford, who dearly loved a romance, and with whom to be lovers and poor was to win her heart and enlist her sympathies at once.

And so it was arranged that Cecil Hume should take the rather unfair advantage of hearing Nan's opinion of her own accomplishments snugly ensconced and invisible behind the folding-doors of the inner drawing-room.

Nan sent a message to the effect that she would be at Lancaster Gate to be interviewed shortly before mid-day on the next morning, and she prepared for her expedition with considerable feelings of trepidation.

"How queer it feels, going to be looked at, like a bundle of clothes 'on approval'! I do hope that I shall not be 'returned, with thanks,' as too smart or too ignorant," she said laughingly to Mary, as she surveyed her face in the glass, and smoothed down an obstreperous piece of ribbon on her hat.

Nurse Allison accompanied her, and when they reached Lady Dunford's house and the footman ushered her up-stairs, she felt that she would gladly have changed places with the old servant waiting, comfortably seated in one of the hall chairs, instead of facing unknown difficulties in the upper regions.

She was shown into a pleasant, sunny room, where an elderly lady came forward to greet her with an outstretched hand and a smile of welcome.

"How good of you to come so punctually!" were her first words; and Nan, in blank astonishment at the friendly greeting, murmured a few words of thanks.

"Yes, do sit down here," went on Lady Dunford, putting her into an easy-chair that faced the window, and sitting opposite to her, in order to study better the lovely face before her, for she felt instinctively drawn to the girl so dear to her cousin's heart.

"Will you excuse me when I say that your dress hardly suggests a girl in need of work?" hesitated the elder lady, recollecting with an effort the part she had arranged to play.

Nan flushed slightly, and lowered her eyes. "No;

"'Good news, I am sure, by the look of your face.'"—*p.* 898.

The folding-doors of the inner drawing-room, draped with delicate hangings, were just behind Nan's chair, and they swayed to and fro occasionally as she spoke, with a curious motion suggestive of an open window.

"You are good enough to offer to teach the guitar to my nieces," said Lady Dunford, forgetting her *rôle* of employer for the moment.

"At least," said Nan, "I am very anxious to procure some pupils: and the goodness will be all on your side, Lady Dunford if you will employ me,"

but I think that I had better tell you my story, if you are going to be kind enough to give me work. My father and mother are dead, and we have no money, and my brothers and sisters came up to London to earn their living, while I went to live with an old lady who was rich and influential. I thought that I should be happy because I was rich, and I am sure she meant to be very kind to me in her way, but she tried to make me marry a man I did not love, and I refused, and left her at once, and returned to my own people, having

found that poverty with love is the happiest thing in the world. And of course I am anxious to earn my own living, and help my sister. Would you like to hear my voice, Lady Dunford?"

She rose from her chair quietly, and moved towards the piano.

"I think that you had better go and sing in the other room," said the elder lady, with a smile. "It is through those curtains."

Then she slipped out of the room, and was foolish enough to shed a few tears in the privacy of her boudoir, all for the sake of two happy young lovers, from whose eyes tears were very far removed.

"I think, my sweetest Nan," said Hume, when an interval of half an hour had elapsed, "that the happiest moment of my life was when you stepped through the curtains into this room, and found me standing here."

"I think you were horridly mean to be there at all!" said Nan, pouting deliciously, and trying to unclasp the hand that held her own so tightly. "And if it had not been for my astonishment, which gave you a mean advantage, sir, I should certainly have refused to make any absurd admission whatever. You may consider that I became engaged to you quite accidentally and against my will; and this sort of thing must not occur again!"

"It certainly never shall," said the happy lover; "and I rather fancy that, before many hours have passed, that Bond Street jeweller will have to furnish a diamond ring, after all."

"No, Cecil; not a diamond one, please," said Nan, suddenly grave. "I will have no diamonds in my engagement-ring, for I shall always hate that cold, horrid jewel for nearly causing me to be faithless to my own heart!"

"Very well, then; it shall be all pearls," said Hume brightly. "And now let us go and find poor cousin Amabel, who has been so unjustifiably turned out of her drawing-room."

"And poor old Allison," said Nan, with a little start of compunction. "Why, we must have been here for ages!"

"Yes, nearly an hour," said Hume, glancing at the Sèvres clock on the mantelpiece, which was ringing out half-past one.

Lady Dunford received them with open arms.

The bribe held out by old Aaron Davis faded into insignificance by the side of the blushing, happy girl whom her cousin introduced to her as his future wife, and she embraced pretty Nan with all the warmth of a mother, and kissed and blessed her with tears of joy in her kind eyes.

Nan insisted on returning to Back Street alone. She knew that in Mary's delicate state of health the communication of her unexpected engagement would be a shock; for the name of Hume had never crossed her lips in speaking to her sister of her Dalton Court life, save as the casual painter of her portrait. She preferred to tell her own news, for there was so much to confess: so much of love and vain ambition, that must be confided to Mary's ear alone, and that only in the privacy of her own room.

Mary was sitting over the fire, looking far more like her old self, with a glow of returning health on her cheeks. She was alone; and one of Wyndham's letters lay open on her lap, over which she had evidently been pleasantly meditating. The room was full of snowdrops and violets that he had sent her, and there was a general air of such unusual festivity pervading the whole atmosphere, that Nan felt that her communication would not be out of place.

"What has happened, Mary? Good news, I am sure, by the look of your face," she said, bending over her sister and kissing her affectionately. The Nan of old days would have burst out with her own news without waiting to hear her sister's; but the new Nan was learning unselfishness.

"Great joy, Nan darling! Basil has an unexpected holiday, and is coming up to London at once for a few days; and he has had some money left him by an old friend. Quite a little fortune: a hundred a year, he says."

"Dear me! how horribly wealthy he will be; no longer is he 'passing rich on forty pounds a year.' *I* call him a millionaire!" said Nan comically, but with delight in her face as she listened to her sister's news; and she helped her to plan out the best way of spending Wyndham's holiday, so as to waste not a single hour of the precious time.

But at last Mary woke from her dream with a feeling of reproach as she remembered that Nan must have some interesting news to tell her. "How selfish I am!" she cried. "Well, Nan, did Lady Dunford engage you?"

"No," said Nan demurely, though her eyes were dancing with mischief. "Someone else did, though."

"Dear me; how strange!" said Mary uneasily. "I hope she is nice, and will be good to you, dear Nan?"

"It isn't a 'she' at all," answered the girl, folding her hands primly.

"Oh, Nan!" gasped Mary, scandalised at the idea. "What can you possibly mean? What have you done?"

"There, little sister, don't worry yourself about nothing. I'm engaged to a 'he,' and he is coming to-night to see you, and to bring me a ring to wear on the third finger of my left hand. So, you see, my engagement has not got to do with guitars, but matrimony;" and Nan suddenly collapsed in a little sob, and laid her pretty head down on her sister's lap, and, between laughter and tears, told her the whole story.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE whole family, including Basil Wyndham, approved of Hume, and he, in his turn, quickly fell in love with them all.

When he was first admitted to intimate friendship with the little household in Back Street, he made up his mind that never before had he beheld so united and affectionate a family, and begged on the spot to become one of their "Mutual Admiration Society"—for that was how he termed their belief in and appreciation of each other's doings. He used to sit quietly surveying Nan as she flitted about her duties, looking after her sister, keeping the family alive with her

sallies of wit, and meeting every difficulty with a bright hopefulness which carried everything before it.

He could scarcely believe that here was the Nan of Dalton Court days, whose selfishness was as absolute as her beauty, and who would never stir a finger to do anything for those around her unless her own inclination prompted her thereto.

"What we shall do without you I can't imagine," said Mary dolefully, one day, surveying her sister over the top of a pile of stockings she was darning. "I feel quite inclined to quarrel with tiresome Cecil for wanting you at once. It would be quite dreadful, if it were not nice at the same time, to think that this day week you will be Mrs. Hume."

Nan glanced up calmly from her omelette-making, looking very sweet, with her rolled-up sleeves and big apron that covered her up to the very beginning of the soft outline of her white throat, and which was pinned coquettishly across her figure.

"I feel selfish to be leaving you, darling," she said; "but I know I am no use in earning money, and am really, whatever you say, only a burden. And after all, I am going to live very near at hand, and we shall meet every day. Besides, it won't be long before you follow my example, and marry your millionaire."

"I can't leave the dear boys just yet; and Basil thinks I am right," answered Mary quietly, repressing a sigh.

The wedding-day drew on apace, and although it was to be the quietest marriage that ever took place, yet there were several preparations to be made beforehand, which kept the whole Fawcett family exceedingly busy.

Mrs. Hughes had hurried back to town on purpose to be present at it, and Lady Dunford was the only other guest, beyond the brothers and sisters, and Basil Wyndham.

Nan had put on a quiet grey cashmere gown for the occasion, with a touch of white swansdown at the throat, and she made a beautiful bride, standing at the altar in the April sunlight, with Mary, Gloire, and the boys clustered round her.

It was a happy little wedding, in spite of the tears that would come at the thought of the father who would so dearly have loved to see that day.

The happy pair started for Devonshire in the midst of a whirl of congratulations and rice; and when they were gone, and the inevitable flatness fell upon the whole party, Lady Dunford originated the brilliant notion of taking them all back with her to Lancaster Gate, to complete the festivities there.

"I hate weddings, and I won't ever be married!" said Gloire, weeping salt tears into Nan's bridal bouquet as she was deposited in the brougham.

"Beloved sister," answered Cyril, pretending to weep copiously into his pocket-handkerchief, "I quite agree with you. Don't you think we could manage to strangle Basil between us? For it strikes me there will be another wedding in the Fawcett family ere long, unless its members exercise extreme caution."

"Strangle Basil!" cried Gloire indignantly, forgetting her tears and her grammar at the same moment. "I think you are the wickedest boy what I ever met, and a murderer too!"

And Lady Dunford's carriage drove off amidst peals of laughter from the pedestrians.

Aaron Davis had been among the spectators of the wedding. He had closed his shop for the day, as he flattered himself that he had been the great means of bringing the bride and bridegroom together. His present to Nan had been a rare folio edition of Shakespeare, and he said as he presented it—

"Marriage, my dear young lady, is no doubt in some cases a blessed institution, but you 'll have need of all the philosophy contained in the works of the greatest thinker England has ever known."

Which speech Cyril declared he had been learning by heart for weeks in the recesses of the back parlour; for never had Aaron been known to speak a dozen words so fluently before.

The great bargain between Lady Dunford and the bookseller had never come off, for the good lady was so delighted at her cousin's happiness that she insisted on paying the original price for the old Bible, and even in declaring, quite contrary to her usual custom, that it was marvellously cheap at the money. At which mental aberration on old Lady Dunford's part, Aaron Davis grew quite anxious, and made tender inquiries as to her health the very next time he was in the neighbourhood of Lancaster Gate.

After a very short honeymoon, the young couple returned to their modest little home in a pleasant part of Chelsea, not too far removed from their relations.

Hume was fast rising into fame, and although they lived very quietly, they were putting by money every day, in case of emergency, in the most careful and approved fashion.

Mary always declared that it did her good to spend her leisure evenings with them, for Nan had such pretty airs and graces as a matron, and showed off her dainty artistic rooms with such evident joy, that it was palpable to everyone that she never cast even one longing look back to the ambitious life of wealth she had once mapped out for herself. Her only sorrow was that Miss Dempster remained so obstinately indignant with her marriage; for the old lady, in her way, had been kind to her, and Nan would only too willingly have returned good for evil, and have gone to cheer her sometimes in her lonely home.

But Miss Dempster remained obdurate, and when she suddenly died, from a stroke of paralysis, no one grieved more heartily than Nan for the sadly wasted life.

But perhaps in her last days Miss Dempster had begun to think more of the things which are eternal, for when her will was opened, it was found that she had left a legacy of £5,000 to "Mrs. Cecil Hume, in token that I can both forget and forgive, as I hope she will forgive me."

The codicil was dated the very day before her death; and although the words of the bequest savoured of her old imperious nature, yet Nan hoped great things from the mere fact that she had thought forgiveness necessary from anyone, and least of all a poor companion.

When Reginald Dempster came back from abroad to take up his abode at Dalton Court, and to enter into

"The cake had been duly cut by the bride."—*p.* 903.

his inheritance, he returned with a rich American wife, who so hated the thought of living in the depths of the country, that she insisted on her husband selling the place and everything belonging to it, and dividing his time between London, Scotland, and Italy.

He was not exactly a happy man, and he and Sir Vernon Basset, who has never married, spend most of their time together at their London club, and never by any chance mention the name of Nan Hume or her husband.

Early one summer evening, soon after the Humes' return, Mary was walking home from her sister's house with a smile on her lips, as she thought of the happiness of her little family, and the calm after all the troubles through which they had passed. She was crossing the road carefully—for there was a good deal of traffic going on at the corner of the street where it joined the main thoroughfare—when she was startled by a shout from the driver of a hansom cab, and looking up, saw that the traffic was suddenly congested by an old man, who had been knocked down by the wheel of a passing brewer's dray, and who was either too stunned or too feeble to get out of the way.

Mary rushed to his assistance, and was the first to reach him where he lay motionless, with closed eyes.

He was helped on to his feet at last, and stood clasping the girl's arm nervously, slowly recovering his senses, which had been scattered by the fall.

"Oh, snakes and adders!" were his first coherent words. "What a welcome home! A quarter of a century in America, my dear, and then to be knocked flat by a brewer's dray! It ain't what I've been used to."

He began to brush his dusty coat with a nervous hand, and Mary, seeing that he was still much upset, suggested that he should hail a cab and drive home to his friends.

"Friends? there ain't man, woman, or child in this overpowering place that would care a red cent whether I lived or died!"

"Will you come home with me, and rest?" said Mary eagerly and impulsively, pitying the forlorn old man, whose white hair, honest brown eyes, and shabby overcoat had gone to her heart as savouring of lonely poverty. His voice, too, in spite of its slightly foreign accent and phrasing, was that of a gentleman.

"Thank you," said the stranger, with an old-fashioned bow, after one keen glance at his sweet-faced friend.

And Mary, hailing a passing cab, helped her *protégé* into it, and drove home to Back Street with a feeling of intense and comical wonder as to what the boys would say to her adventure.

"I must tell you my name," said the stranger, as they drew up at the door of the little house, "so that you may be assured that you are not entertaining a member of the swell mob or a Fenian. I am Edward Stanley, late of Norton, U.S.A."

"Edward Stanley!" said Mary, with a gasp of perplexed wonder, stopping short in the passage and facing her guest.

"I guess so," said Mr. Stanley; "and at present I am much occupied in searching for some near relatives—a few nephews and nieces, who, according to present accounts, must be in a bad way."

"Is their name Fawcett?" said Mary hurriedly.

"There, don't for gracious sake go to tell me that your name's Fawcett! I'm only mortal, after all; and I've had one shock more forcible than polite today already!"

"Perhaps this shock will be more polite than forcible," said Mary, smiling. "Our name is Fawcett, and mother was Mary Delamore Stanley, daughter of Mr. Stanley, rector of Heathfield, in Blankshire. Our father, who has been a year dead, was a Lincolnshire doctor, and we, having nothing to live on, came up to London to earn our daily bread."

"Sakes alive!" ejaculated Mr. Stanley, and sat himself suddenly and forcibly down on the stairs. "There, leave me to myself, like a good girl, for a moment," he continued, waving his hand. "I shall get over it in a minute."

Alec and Cyril, hearing an unwonted sound of talking, came running out of the sitting-room, to find out the cause of the commotion.

"Why, there 's another of 'em, two of 'em," said Mr. Stanley, opening one eye feebly; "and, lor bless me! there 's a third, the living image of my sister."

The boys, thinking that a lunatic was at present occupying the third step of their staircase, glanced anxiously at Mary; but her looks were reassuring.

After a moment's silence, during which the four young people stood round and gazed at him in solemn astonishment, Mr. Stanley roused himself, and burst into a ringing laugh.

"Well, I 'm blessed!" he said, slapping his leg with an air of hearty enjoyment most refreshing to see. "If this doesn't beat everything I ever heard of! Why, the whole lot of you are my nephews and nieces! Now, what have you got to say to welcome me? I know I 'm not much to look at, and as near seventy as anyone can well be, in spite of being your mother's brother."

There was not much hesitation about the Fawcetts, for they were all hanging about him in a moment, embracing and bidding him a thousand times welcome to their home; and between them, they escorted him up-stairs into their sitting-room, where Mary quickly got a cup of tea ready for him, and the boys helped him off with his coat and pushed him into an easy-chair.

"Well, I guess this is nice!" he said cheerily, after he had examined all the family relics, and described how he had traced the family doings through the birth and death columns of the *Times* which now and then reached his American home.

"I suppose you young people have been brought up to think the old uncle a bad old fellow; but there was a reason for my flight, which came out years after, when it was too late to do any good to me or the young fellow I ran away to help, for I hadn't the heart to say that my best friend—a poor consumptive sort of a chap—had helped himself to the best part of the till. It was easy enough to take the blame on myself when he came crying to me to help him, for the shame of it would kill his mother. Well, well! that page in my life is over and done with, and it 's no good crying over spilt milk. However, you don't seem to be over and above well off," he continued, looking round the room, and noting keenly the shabby furniture and the simpleness of the tea spread out on the little table. "I am afraid I shall be a burden to you if I come and stay here, for poverty shouldn't unite with poverty."

As he spoke he glanced swiftly at each of their faces in turn, with a searching expression of anxiety which was full of something like suspicion.

"Dear uncle Edward," said Mary earnestly, "so long as we have a penny in the world, we will share it with you, for it is delightful to think that we have a near and dear relation left to us."

Mr. Stanley looked curiously at the boys; but their faces expressed nothing save sympathy and welcome. He knew, and felt assured, that he was welcome to their home, and that no thought of good fortune had prompted their first greetings to him.

"We likes people a lot better when they are poor," said Gloire sententiously, sliding a warm, loving little hand into his.

Mr. Stanley dashed his hand across his eyes.

"I can't help being a fool," he said, "for your love unmans me; but I won't be a hypocrite a moment longer. Nephews and nieces, I've made my pile, and old Edward Stanley came home to old England to make the fortunes of his nephews and nieces; and, please God, we 'll all be happy before long in a home of our own, somewhere down in the country way, where we shall none of us ever want anything that money can give us; and where there 'll be no more poverty for any one of the party. Mary, my dear niece, give me your hand, and get a bit more colour back into those white cheeks, for there 's a good time coming for us all."

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was almost more than the Fawcetts could do to believe in the existence of this wonderful "fairy godmother" sort of uncle, who conjured up riches with one wave of his hand, and who swept away poverty with one light word; but when, next morning, he appeared at the breakfast-table, looking perfectly recovered from his fall, and both spruce and neat as to his attire, they began to think that their wonderful dream must be true.

"I suppose that you boys will be off to your business this morning, but you can give notice to leave at once," he remarked casually, as he took his seat. "You, Alec, will return to Edinburgh as soon as ever it pleases you to do so; and you, Cyril, may have your choice: either Sandhurst or Oxford, the Church or the Army."

Yes, he was positively in earnest, although the Fawcetts could hardly believe their ears, and went off to their work with steps as light as though they were walking on air.

Mr. Stanley was anxious to leave London as soon as possible; and it turned out that he had already taken a charming house in a Hampshire village, and intended to make his abode there with his nephews and nieces.

In the midst of their conversation in walked Nan, and was introduced to the new uncle with a face of blank astonishment. But when she heard the good news as to the bright future that lay before the family, she was enchanted.

"Oh, but, uncle Edward!" she said mischievously, "you won't be able to keep Mary long with you."

"And why not, pray? Do you think we shan't agree?"

"Nobody could disagree with Mary," continued Nan; "but there is a person called Basil Wyndham, who has been waiting for her for ages and ages, and she never would marry him because she had to take care of the family; but now that you have undertaken that

charitable work, she will have to fly away to another home."

"Oh, sakes!" was all uncle Edward found himself able to ejaculate. Then he said ruefully, "Oh, well, it's natural, I suppose; though I shall hate that young man like poison! I shall have to make up to Gloire, to get her to like me, and to come and live with me and keep my house, for I can't be left in solitude now; but I can tell you something, and that is, that Mary shall have the best wedding and trousseau that money can buy." With which laudable resolve Mr. Stanley turned his great mind towards the settling of the Fawcett affairs.

The whole party left London in three weeks' time for Mandover, for Nan and her husband had taken a brief holiday to go down and reconnoitre the marvellous new home, described in uncle Edward's glowing words as the most perfect spot for anyone with an artistic turn of mind.

Mary could not help a slight feeling of regret as they left Back Street, with all its memories, painful and pleasant, behind them; but they had carried off Nurse Allison to act as housekeeper, and Maria and Sam Holmes to take up their abode in the pretty house at the lodge gates—"to help to look after the place"—as Mr. Stanley told them.

So the greengrocery shop was closed for ever, and looked most melancholy as they turned the corner of the street, with a large posters flapping against the closed shutter.

Their last few days had been spent in going round to those who had befriended them, to thank them, and, in their turn, to lend a helping hand where it was possible.

Uncle Edward insisted on having the whole family photographed by Mr. Smith, and in buying up at a price far beyond their value all the pictures that Mary had decorated with such care, and which were still available.

Then Mr. Aaron Davis received a warm invitation to come down to Mandover whenever he felt inclined for country air, and also a large order for books to stock the whole of the new house, at which he was so gratified that he was left quite overcome, bowing like a mandarin at his shop door, and every now and then glancing with a bewildered eye at the gold watch, with the pleasant inscription upon it, that Cyril had slipped into his hand as he bade him farewell.

"Well, in all my born days!" were the first words he said when he recovered his speech, and began to put up his shutters for the day. "This *is* a rum go! No more work for me to-day; I shall have to think it over. What did I do for that boy to deserve such words or such presents?"

Alec's employer, Mr. Clark, could not, of course, receive any more tangible reward than gratitude and thanks; and those he received from Mr. Stanley: a little surprised, it is true, for he had only just begun to realise the fact of Alec's existence at all, and the boy had earned his salary very fairly by hard, steady work; and of course the merchant knew nothing of the stormy period of dissipation through which he had passed, and which had threatened so completely to wreck his young life

"There, that's over and done with!" said uncle Edward, as they steamed out of London, and left work and poverty behind them.

He looked round the saloon carriage, which he had insisted on reserving for the whole party, with a chuckle of pleasure, as he surveyed each happy face, from Sam Holmes' grin of half-incredulous delight in the background, to Mary's sweet shining eyes at his side.

"It's the best job I ever did in my life," he said emphatically; and no one cared to differ from him, for each and every one was exactly of the same opinion.

When Mary opened her eyes early next morning at Mandover, she lay still for a moment, surveying her strange room with a sensation of puzzled surprise. Half-awake as she was, she scarcely remembered their late arrival the night before, when the house was seen indistinctly in the twilight, and when they were all too tired to do more than go to bed at once; but at that moment there was a low knock at the door, and Gloire crept in on tip-toe to see if her sister were awake.

"Oh, Mary, it is too lovely!" she cried, as she drew up the blind to let in the sunlight, and threw the window wide open.

Mary slipped out of bed and into her dressing-gown, and came and stood beside her.

A long extent of green lawn that sloped upwards to a little belt of nut-trees lay before her eyes, bathed in fresh sunshine. On each side of the house, trim walks, bordered by trees, led away to a further part of the garden; and in the distance a line of hazy blue hills and a dark mass of forest suggested a country that is one of the gardens of this England of ours.

"Isn't it like the Promised Land?" said Gloire, in a tone of awe, as she listened to the birds round the house and the coo of the ring-doves, as they called to their mates, in the dark pine-trees. "Haven't we been rather like the Israelites journeying through the desert, only to come out at last into this lovely place?" she went on dreamily; and Mary stooped to kiss her upturned face.

"We have certainly seen a great deal of trouble, darling," she said: "and now I hope that we shall be able to bear our prosperity well; for do you remember the words of the Litany?—'In all time of our wealth, good Lord, deliver us.'"

"I am going to try and be very good," answered Gloire; "and I'm going to begin by trying not to be angry with Basil when he comes to take you away from us. You know, Mary, I would much rather go and live with you when you are married, but it would not be right for me to leave uncle Edward alone, would it?"

"No; that will be your work in life. You know that you have got to show that a Lincolnshire lass can give up her own will and do her duty; like dear Nan did."

"Like Nan!" cried Gloire indignantly; "like yourself, you mean!" and then giving her sister a loving hug, she ran off to her own room to finish dressing.

Mary sat and thought over Gloire's words with a thrill of pleasure. She had never expected to receive praise for the unselfish life that she had led ever since

her mother's death. She did not even realise that she had been unselfish; for she had grown so accustomed to giving up her own will, and, of two paths, choosing the one she liked the less, that self-sacrifice had become a part of her nature. But still, Gloire's words were very sweet to her in this hour of her happiness, for they showed her that at least she had won the love of her brothers and sisters, and had made them happy.

The old house, when viewed from the outside, was perfection itself, with its rambling ivy-covered front, and long French windows opening to the ground.

There was a great deal to be done, too, in planning the different rooms, and in fitting together the beautiful furniture with which the house was crowded. Cecil and Nan sat on the lawn outside, sketching and talking, while the rest of the party wandered through the conservatories, and planned improvements from attic to cellar.

Gloire declared, when she found a most lovely bedroom and schoolroom allotted to herself, that life was too perfect; but perhaps the thought of the talented governess who was to take Mary's place as teacher as soon as possible added the necessary crumpled roseleaf to her lot, though the teacher could hardly be regarded as a skeleton in anyone's cupboard.

Uncle Edward insisted on arranging Mary's wedding at once, for he vowed that two such constant lovers ought to be made happy; but he declared that, with Basil's leave, he would not have a banker in a distant county for a nephew-in-law; Lincolnshire was too far removed from Hampshire.

So he offered him a lovely little house close to his own new home, and the post of general manager of his property, at the rate of £500 a year.

"When I die," he added, "you will find that I have left none of my nephews and nieces unprovided for, and that Mary's share in my property will be much larger than the income I am now offering you; but during my lifetime it will afford me the greatest pleasure if you will accept my offer, and come and live near me; for I am an old man, and my time here may not be very long."

And so, what could Basil Wyndham do but accept? for the idea of a country life was as pleasant to him as to Mary herself; and as soon as the little house was ready, the wedding took place. And, as uncle Edward had prophesied, it *was* a wedding! Mandover had never seen its like before. The very skies rained wedding-cake and favours, and there was not a soul in the village who had not cause to remember Miss Fawcett's wedding-day.

Mary, in her white satin gown, made the sweetest bride the sun had ever shone upon; and her blushing cheeks and soft dewy eyes, bright with the light of love, made her the very picture of a happy English girl; and her whole family exerted themselves to make the day as bright a one as possible. There were to be no tears and no partings, for the honeymoon was to be only a fortnight's affair in the wilds of Devonshire, after which they returned to Mandover to begin their new life.

And what made the day still more bright was the fact that Cecil Hume was talking of spending half the year in the little Hampshire village, and of renting a charming cottage as his second home, or, even better still, acceding to uncle Edward's strongly expressed wish, and occupying a wing of Mandover House. So that, after all, the Fawcett family were not to be separated in their happiness, but were to be one in joy, as they had been in sorrow.

Uncle Edward's speech at the wedding breakfast was brief and to the point, and will make as good an ending as any to this little story:—

"Dear nephews and nieces and friends," he said, rising to his feet after the cake had been duly cut by the bride. A solemn silence fell on the whole party, and their eyes were fixed upon his face, for they knew by his voice that something more than the stereotyped words of a wedding speech was on his lips. "This is, thank God, the happiest day in my life! We've all known troubles of some sort or another, and perhaps the troubles of the Fawcett family have cut deeper than most sorrows. Any way, the waters of tribulation have been over these young heads; but now, 'heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,' and the time of prosperity is, I trust, once more waiting for them; and though we think, on a day like this of those that have gone before, yet the thought of them need not make us sad, for no doubt they are rejoicing with us. And this is what I want to ask you all: friends and relations, to greet this bride and bridegroom with three times three; for he is a brave good fellow; and of her—well, I can only say that she is a true Lincolnshire Lass."

THE END.

Christ is our Corner-stone.

Words by John Chandler. *Music by* Rev. F. Peel, B.Mus., Oxon.

1. Christ is our Cor - ner - stone,.... On Him a - lone we build; With
2. Oh, then with hymns of praise.... These hal - lowed courts shall ring; Our

cres - - - - cen - - - do.

His true saints a - lone The courts of heaven are filled: On His great
voi - ces we will raise, The Three in One to sing! And thus pro -

love Our hopes we place Of pre - sent grace And joys a - bove.
- claim, In joy - ful song, Both loud and long, That glo - rious name.

3. Here, gracious God, do Thou
For evermore draw nigh;
Accept each faithful vow,
And mark each suppliant sigh:
Until that day
When all the blest
To endless rest
Are called away.

4. Here may we gain from heaven
The grace which we implore;
And may that grace, once given,
Be with us evermore;
In copious shower,
On all who pray,
Each holy day
Thy blessings pour.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

OCTOBER 16TH. ST. PETER'S VISION.

To read—Acts x. 1—20. *Golden Text—Acts x.* 34.

NTRODUCTION. Last lesson left St. Peter at Joppa, after raising Dorcas to life. He had taught the disciples there, but now had to be taught himself. His lesson was to be that the Gospel was for all, Gentiles as well as Jews, according to Christ's last words. (St. Mark xvi. 15.)

I. THE CENTURION'S VISION. (1—8.) Who was he?
An officer in the Roman army at Cæsarea.
In command of 100 Italian soldiers.
But had already given up the heathen religion.
Himself and whole household feared God.
Showed his religion by constant prayers.
Also by giving alms to the poor. (St. Matt. vi. 3.)
Was praying at Jewish time of prayer—3.0 p.m.
Time of offering evening sacrifice. (iii. 1.)
Receives a special message from God.
Though uncircumcised, his prayer is heard.
His alms also are noted in heaven. (St. Matt. xxv. 35.)
He shall receive further religious instruction.
St. Peter, the inspired Apostle, shall teach him.
So he at once sends off messengers to the Apostle.
LESSONS. 1. They that seek the Lord shall find Him.
2. The prayer of faith ascends the skies.
3. Alms to the poor accepted by Christ. (St. Matt. xxv. 40.)
4. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.

II. ST. PETER'S VISION. (9—20.) Where was he?
In sea-side lodgings at Joppa, on the coast.
Like David, he prayed at noon. (Ps. xxv. 4.)
Went up on flat roof for quiet and privacy.
His prayers ended, fell into a trance.
Saw like a great sheet let down from heaven.
In it all kinds of animals and birds.
Not only those permitted to be eaten by Jews.
A voice bids him kill and eat any of them.
He objects to eat anything reckoned unclean. (Lev. xi. 32—34.)
But is told that God has cleansed all these animals.
Vision shown three times, to remove all doubt.
St. Peter wonders what the vision can mean.
The explanation soon follows: the messengers from Cornelius arrive and tell their tale.
The Holy Spirit bids him go with them, telling him their coming is His doing.
MEANING. The sheet is the universal Church.
All people are to be united in Christ. (St. John xii. 32.)
No longer distinctions between Jews and Gentiles.
LESSONS. The work of the Holy Spirit.
1. Inclines men's hearts to pray. (Rom. viii. 26.)
2. Teaches God's truths to men. (St. John xvi. 13.)
3. Directs good men's goings. (Ps. xxxvii. 23.)

OCTOBER 23. ST. PETER AT CÆSAREA.

To read—Acts x. 30—48. *Golden Text—Ver.* 43.

INTRODUCTION. St. Peter received the messengers of Cornelius courteously; invited them to stay the night. The next day he took six friends (xi. 12) with him, and the whole party started for Cæsarea. On their arrival, Cornelius was about to worship him, but he at once stopped him, saying he was only a man like himself. He then told the assembled company how God had taught him not to hold aloof from any.

I. THE CAUSE. (30—33.) Cornelius speaks.
He had been fasting and praying to God.
Like Daniel in exile in Babylon. (Dan. ix. 3.)
Probably asking further knowledge and guidance.
Saw a heavenly messenger in bright clothing.
Told that his prayers and alms had come before God.
Bidden to send to Joppa for St. Peter.
All are now ready to hear the Word of God.
Notice about the centurion—
1. His simple faith—at once accepts God's Word.
2. His earnest piety—seen in his prayers, alms, and obedience.
3. His reverence for God's messengers.
He shall receive a great reward.
LESSON. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

II. THE SERMON. (34—43.) St. Peter speaks.
God is no respecter of persons.
All who fear Him and do right are accepted by Him.
The Gospel of peace through Christ sent first to Jews, summed up in the following facts:—
Jesus is Lord of all—Jews and Gentiles.
Anointed with the Holy Ghost at His baptism.
Worked miracles to deliver the oppressed.
Crucified by His enemies at Jerusalem.
Rose again the third day from the dead.
Seen alive after His resurrection by the Apostles.
Appointed Judge of the living and dead.
Saviour from sin of all who believe in Him.
LESSONS. 1. Salvation is through Christ alone.
2. God wills all men to be saved.
3. The meek will He teach His way.

III. THE RESULT. (44—48.) Came at once.
The Holy Ghost given, as at Pentecost.
Followed by the gift of tongues, as then.
St. Peter's six companions much surprised at these gifts to uncircumcised Gentiles.
But Christ had appointed another ordinance.

All new disciples to be baptised. (St. Matt. xxviii. 19.) As means of admission into the Church.

Therefore these converts were forthwith baptised.

St. Peter stayed some time there to confirm them still further in the Christian faith.

LESSONS. 1. They that seek after the Lord shall find Him.

2. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.

OCTOBER 30. THE GOSPEL PREACHED AT ANTIOCH.

To read—Acts xi. 19—30. *Golden Text*—Ver. 21.

INTRODUCTION. The Christians at Jerusalem much surprised at St. Peter's conduct—eating bread in the house of an uncircumcised Gentile, contrary to the Jewish law. So he went to Jerusalem and explained the matter fully. They were quite satisfied, and praised God for His goodness in bringing in Gentiles to the Church. The story now turns to Antioch.

I. THE NEW START. (19—21.) So far Jerusalem been head-quarters of the Christian Church. Now new starting-point.

Why Antioch a suitable place?

(*a*) The third city in the Roman Empire, being only surpassed by Rome and Alexandria.

(*b*) Situated close to Mediterranean Sea; therefore meeting-place of east and west parts of the empire.

(*c*) Crowded with people from all parts of the world.

Therefore chosen by God to be the centre of missionary work among the Gentiles.

II. THE NEW TEACHER. (22—26.) Notice the Christians at Antioch, three classes of men—

Persecuted Christian Jews from Jerusalem.

Cypriotes and Cyrenians—Christian proselytes.

Grecian Jews, newly converted.

A great increase of the Christian Church resulted.

A new teacher sent. Who was he?

Barnabas, one of the early converts. (iv. 36.)

Had sold his possessions to give to the poor.

Had introduced Saul to the Apostles. (ix. 27.)

A man of high religious character. (Ver. 24.)

Now singled out by Apostles to further instruct the Christians at Antioch.

He exhorts them to cleave to the Lord Jesus.

Then leaves them to go in search of Saul.

Finds him and brings him to Antioch.

For whole year the two friends teach, confirm, exhort, with great success.

LESSON. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of God.

III. THE NEW NAME. (26—30.) *Christians.*

Given to them first by Jews at Antioch.

Probably in scorn and derision.

(Called themselves "saints," "brethren," "believers.")

The *word* only found in two other places.

(*a*) Agrippa nearly persuaded to be a Christian. (xxvi. 28.)

(*b*) St. Peter speaks of suffering as a Christian. (1 Peter iv. 16.)

Believers soon learned to glory in the name.

Those at Antioch had learned the spirit of Christ.

Made a collection for the poor saints in Judæa.

Doing it to them did it to Him. (St. Matt. xxv. 40.)

LESSONS. We are Christians by name and profession. What does our name signify to us?

It should teach us—

1. To walk worthy of our Master's name.
2. To bear persecutions and troubles bravely.
3. To help one another for Christ's sake.

NOVEMBER 6TH. ST. PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

To read—Acts xii. 1—17. *Golden Text—Ps. xxxiv.* 7.

INTRODUCTION. Story turns back to Jerusalem. Eight years passed since Stephen's death. Church had had rest. Now fierce persecution broke out again. New king, Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great who slew the children at Bethlehem. (St. Matt. ii. 16.) He was anxious to be popular with the Jews. Hence his persecution of the Christians.

I. THE PERSECUTION. (1—4.) Who were the victims?

James, son of Zebedee, brother of St. John.

Remind of their mother's request to Christ. (St. Matt. xx. 21.)

That her sons should have foremost places in heaven.

Christ said they must first drink of His cup of suffering.

So James first of Apostles to die martyr's death.

Peter—taken next—kept for a time in prison.

Intended for execution after the Passover.

In order to overawe the multitudes that assembled.

So sixteen soldiers guard him night and day.

LESSON. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.

II. THE PRAYERS. (5—12.) Can his friends do nothing?

There is a King mightier than Herod. (Ps. ii. 4.)

There is a power greater than his. (Ps. xcix. 1.)

He, too, has hosts of angel soldiers. (Ps. lxviii. 17.)

He can deliver His own if He wills. (Ps. xxxiv. 6.)

So the Christians gather together for prayer.

Christ had promised to hear united prayer.

They meet at house of John Mark at Jerusalem.

Earnest, unceasing prayer goes up to God.

III. THE DELIVERANCE. (6—17.) See St. Peter in prison.

In inner cell, bound by chains to two soldiers.

Other soldiers guard the doors outside.

Midnight—all sleeping soundly.

St. Peter suddenly awakes—sees an angel.

Bright light shines in the prison cell.

Is he in a dream? Is it the moon, or what?

Hears a voice. Is bidden to do three things.

Rise up quickly—his chains fall off.

Gird himself for action—he does so.

Follow to the light of day and freedom.

Led by Heavenly guidance, obstacles vanish.

The street reached, the angel departs.
St. Peter realises at last the work of God.
The brethren must know of his deliverance.
With what amazement and joy they hear!
Rhoda and all can scarce believe it is true
He tells his tale, and departs elsewhere.

LESSONS. 1. God's angels ever watch the saints.
2. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly.
3. Prayer moves the Hand that moves the world.

See also in this deliverance a picture of a sinner's release from his bondage.

God's light shines in dark cell of heart—chains of sin broken—guided anew, he is led to light and freedom.

Joy in heaven over repentant sinner.

NOVEMBER 13. THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES.

To read—Acts xiii. 1—13. *Golden Text—St. Luke xxiv.* 47.

INTRODUCTION. After deliverance of St. Peter, Herod went to Cæsarea and gave a great festival in honour of Roman Emperor. He made a speech, and was honoured by the people with divine homage. Not checking this, he was smitten by an angel with a terrible disease, and died. Thus God's enemy miserably perished, but the Church grew and prospered. Paul and Barnabas returned from taking the alms to Jerusalem, with John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas.

I. THE CALL. (1—3.) A great work been going on at Antioch.

Believers had largely increased.

Prophets had interpreted the strange tongues.

Teachers had instructed the new Christians.

Fasting and prayer developed spiritual life.

Now comes a call to missionary work.

Two disciples specially called by Holy Ghost.

Had been prophets and teachers. (1 Cor. xii. 28.)

Now to be ordained to higher order of "Apostles."

So a solemn ordination service was held.

St. Paul and St. Barnabas sent on their way by the Church.

LESSON. Lord, here am I; send me.

II. THE POWER OF THE DEVIL. (4—8.) Trace the journey of the two Apostles on a map.

From Seleucia, port of Antioch, to Cyprus.

Landed at Salamis, preached in synagogues.

Went through the island to Paphos—chief city.

Found there two leading men, *viz.*—

Sergius Paulus, governor or proconsul.

Elymas, a noted sorcerer and false prophet.

The governor listened to the new teaching.

Elymas rejected it himself, and tried to turn the governor away from the faith.

Which would be stronger—the devil or God?

III. THE POWER OF GOD. (9—13.) Notice—

The change of name from Saul to Paul.

His righteous indignation against Elymas.

He speaks—moved by the Holy Ghost.

He denounces him as a child of the devil.

He orders him to cease his wicked works.

He punishes him with sudden blindness.

Result. The sorcerer has to seek aid from others.

The governor, awed, believes in power of God.

LESSONS. 1. The flesh lusteth against the spirit.
2. He that is not with Me is against Me.
3. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
4. Do all things through Christ, Who strengtheneth.

MOTHER'S SONGS.

MOTHER'S songs! Across the years
Sweetest words salute my ears—
Songs she sung, when speech to me
Was a wondrous mystery,
When my infant heart was light,
And my soul was pure and white,
As I lay in peaceful rest,
Softly hushed upon her breast!

Sitting by the quiet light
Of my lonely fire at night,
Strains come floating through my brain,
Banishing all thoughts of pain—
Mother's songs and hymns of praise,
Bringing visions of past days!
And once more her smile I see
For the boy beside her knee.

From her spirit undefiled
Influence came to bless her child—
From her gentle motherhood
All I know and feel of good!
Truths she taught, when life began,
Pierce the conscience of the man:
And, though ofttimes wandering far,
She is still my guiding-star!

Surely as the years increase,
I shall find a lasting peace
Only as I seek to win
That sweet love she trusted in—
That calm faith, an anchor cast
Into waters deep and vast,
Where the ship, with winds at strife,
Shall outride the storms of life!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

ONE TOO MANY.

A PEN-AND-INK SKETCH.

I.

ONSOLATION'S like a cup o' tea. It picks you up for a bit, but it don't nourish you."

And Mrs. Sheppard faced the small, fair-haired curate with her arms akimbo.

"It ain't as I'm ungrateful," she went on; "a cup of tea's an acceptable thing, as none knows better than them as does washing like myself; but there's times when a slice of bread-and-butter 'ld do well to follow. You ain't got the needful, or I'm sure you 'ld give it me, which kindhearteder you couldn't have been. Only talking won't fill them children's mouths."

Suddenly she burst into tears.

"God might have prevented the little 'un from coming," she said; "I could have got along maybe with the others, but that is one too many."

As if at hearing itself thus alluded to, the baby began to cry.

Mrs. Sheppard stooped down. On the floor was an oblong tin bath. In this were placed a pillow and an old shawl, and in the extemporised cradle lay a small red piece of humanity, which she took, shawl and all, into her arms.

She herself was a shrunken, weary-looking creature. She had been old at twelve. At sixteen she had married, and now at five-and-twenty she was suddenly made a widow.

"It's a healthy-looking child," remarked the curate, for the sake of saying something. He was a father himself, and in the fulness of his heart even meditated kissing the fatherless mite, but, though not fastidious, abandoned the notion after a brief survey of the infant's unwashed countenance.

His remark had not been a fortunate one. Mrs. Sheppard took it up abruptly.

"Healthy!" she repeated, with fierce emphasis. "Healthy enough! There's the contrariness of things. See them others" (she indicated by a nod of her head, her hands being engaged, three sickly-looking, ragged boys huddled together in a corner, and quarrelling over an old Swiss milk tin). "Every one of 'em's as peaky as a pin—no starch in 'em, so to speak, and that weak in their legs that if it ain't bandy it's rickets. And yet care they've had, and medicines. And here's this gal, born when she weren't wanted and shoved on one side, most of the while, and yet she's that firm and fleshy! The best thing she could have done would have been to have died."

"Don't say that, Mrs. Sheppard," said the little curate remonstratingly.

"But it's true, whether I say it or no. It sounds onnatural maybe, but I can't seem as if I loved it. It gets in the way of my workin' for the others for one thing; and their father loved 'em—and this one he ain't never seen."

She wiped her eyes on the baby's shawl.

"Things go that contrary," she went on presently, finding apparent relief in garrulousness; "mine was that set on a gal as never was, and now she comes after he's been took. It's like that all along. I mind I wanted a feather as my sister had wore for years, a long one as went all around the 'at, and hanged down behind. She used to sport it always on bank-holidays and that, and she died when she weren't but two-and-twenty, and she left me that feather partikler. Would you believe it? Not a week before, mine had been and bought me an identical one out of his savings! And there weren't no sense in two noways. Things ain't a deal too late, but just when you come not to want 'em. The very day after mine fell off that scaffolding, there was a chap came around here and said he wanted a good steady man for some work as didn't have no danger to it. And now here it is with the baby! Seems to me it's a sight easier to do without things than to be tantalised with 'em when you don't want 'em."

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

The story of the feather reminded the little curate of something in his own life which had come to him when he was just beginning to realise that the blessing he sought would be an encumbrance; and as if in obedience to an instinct, he stretched out his hand and grasped that of Mrs. Sheppard with a bit of the baby's shawl in it. If they had stood at the same spiritual elevation, he might have said something, but as it was he remained silent. That was about the best thing he could have done under the circumstances.

"There's a symphony in that little parson chap," she told a neighbour afterwards, "as draws you out. He might be a widder and a mother hisself by the feelin' in him. And when he went away he said 'God bless yer' fit to bring the tears in your eyes it was that hearty."

When the curate had gone, Mrs. Sheppard put the baby back in the bath, and began in an aimless, half-hearted manner to tidy the room. She moved the scanty broken furniture, and wiped the surface with a rag. Dirt and disorder were her native element; neither physically nor mentally did they disturb her. It is surprising how those whose lungs have never been familiar with fresh air can breathe with apparent comfort in an atmosphere which would poison anyone unaccustomed to it. Even the little curate, whose work lies in the slums, invariably gasped when he entered Mrs. Sheppard's room. The combination of disagreeable odours produced a climax which the uninitiated could scarcely imagine, and there was about this climax a primeval staleness; it was impossible to imagine it had ever been less awful, or ever could be.

Mrs. Sheppard's efforts to make the squalid room less squalid had been spiritless at first. Before long she abandoned them. One of the little boys had come towards her crying. He clung to her apron, and impeded her in her work.

It appeared that the other two had agreed to share the contents of the tin, and were now actively engaged in rubbing grimy fingers over the inner surface, scooping up what slight remains of the sweet milk adhered to it. The one who, owing to his feebleness, was defrauded of what he considered his rights, sought comfort from the mother. It was a wretched, fretful creature, and its poor pinched face was disfigured by an eruption. But it was her favourite, perhaps because of that beautiful instinct which makes helplessness or suffering the '*open sesame*' to a woman's heart.

Mrs. Sheppard bent over it and took it in her arms.

"Are you hungry, Tommy?"

The small thing hung its head.

"Would you like some bread-and-dripping?" she asked, thinking of the only available luxury she could offer.

"No."

She put him down on the ground again, and adjusted the once white rags which were tied round its little disfigured face with something like tenderness.

"I reckon I'll have to take you to the hospital, soon as I can find a minute, and get some more of that ointment stuff," she said, rather to herself than to the three-year-old child. "Is your face hurtin' of yer, Tommy?"

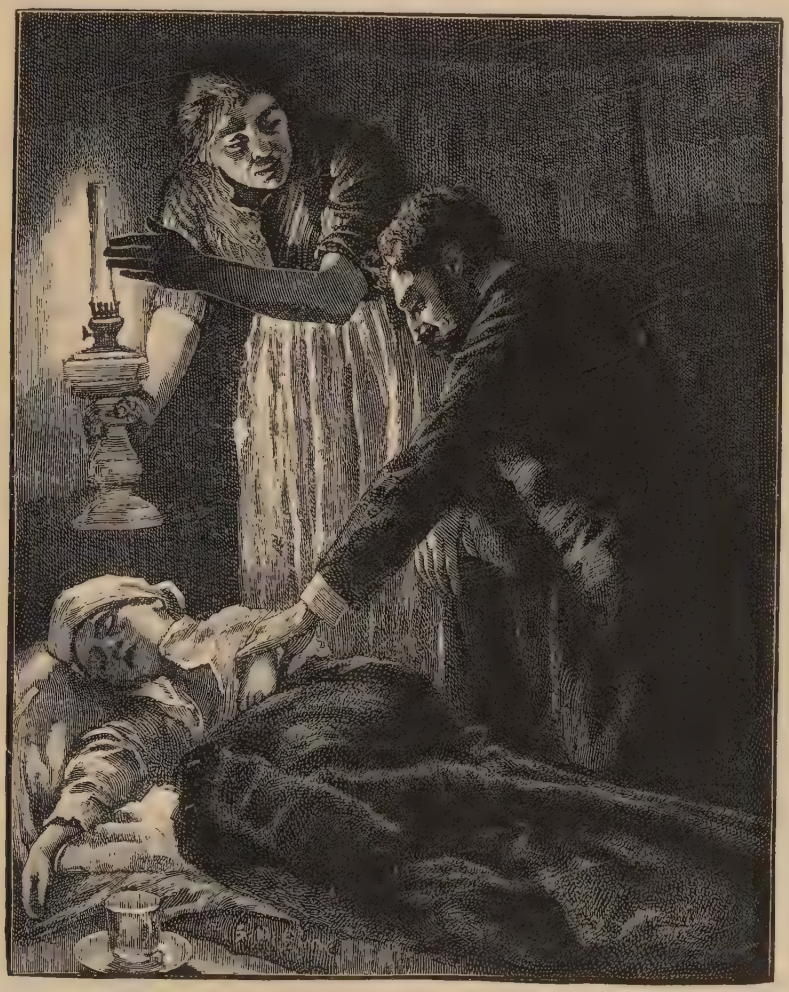
"No."

"What then? Don't whimper, child." She shook it, but not ungently. "Do stop that noise, for goodness' sake. Has Bob and Neddy been unkind to yer? Oh, it's that old tin, is it?"

She went up to the others, and boxed their ears alternately.

"Give up that thing, do! You'ld oughter be ashamed to be so selfish, and him not well."

Then, to make up for the corporal punishment she



"She followed him, and stood watching him."—*p.* 910.

had felt bound to administer, she gave them the bread-and-dripping which the other child had refused.

There was a temporary lull. She took advantage of it to pick up what had been an old coat of her husband's which she was transforming, not too skilfully, into a suit for Tommy.

She had loved the dead man, and her grief was new enough to be passionate. The sorrows of the poor are perhaps quickly healed because the curse of work is in their case pre-eminently a blessing, but they are no less genuine than those of the rich and cultured; there is often found a greater delicacy of sentiment in their grief than among those where one might expect to discover it. The cultivation of heart and the cultivation of mind are not inevitably synonymous.

The very touch of the coat proved almost too much for her, but she went on tacking the pieces together bravely, though her bosom was heaving under her shabby black dress. She tried not to think, but she was tired and overwrought, and by-and-bye, the tears came up and blinded her, and she had to put down her work because she could not see.

Partly for this reason, and partly because she could not sit long at anything, she presently laid it down altogether. Then she went over to the uncomplaining baby, which had been lying all this time in almost unnatural silence. She lifted it out of its queer cradle, and began to nurse it.

One of the heavy tears splashed down on the pretty upturned face.

The baby had not been played with as other young children are, so perhaps this seemed to her like the beginning of a game. Anyhow, as the drop touched the soft cheek, the little face dimpled, and the child looked up at the mother and smiled.

The rare smile of a baby is sunshine itself.

It warmed the heart which had found no room for love of the Giver with a momentary ray. The ignorant, grieving creature was involuntarily touched by the glance of unreproachful and confiding innocence.

"Oh," she cried aloud, "I 'm a wicked woman not to want yer. You didn't ask to come, poor little 'un. It weren't your fault as he couldn't see you. But I can't help it: it's just one too many."

II.

IT was a year later, and night.

The lamp gave but a faint light, and that was carefully shaded from the face of the baby, who lay, as she had lain the greater part of her life, in the old tin bath, which never served any other purpose than that of a bed.

There was a mattress on the ground, but that had another occupant. A four-year-old child tossed on it, wearily moaning now and then, but very feebly. Save for that sound there was silence in the room. There was no longer the noise of quarrelling, nor of children's laughter, and the woman who sat by the poor bed, with haggard face and hollow eyes, neither moved nor wept. Only now and then, if there were a prolonged interval between the moans, her hand went swiftly out and touched the child.

But presently she stirred. Her quick ear had caught a sound which was familiar to it, and for which she was wont to listen. She rose and went with quick shuffling steps to the door. It opened, and the little curate stood before her.

"Ah," she said, in a whisper, "you han't forgotten me."

The little curate looked at her with an expression of great tenderness. He is very small and thin, and not strong, and family cares, added to the many incidental to his work in the large parish, have aged him before his time. There are some who despise him for his frail body and his feebleness, but he is a splendid character, and his heart and soul are heroic in their proportions. Many cling in their troubles to one who never fails to give comfort and never withholds love.

"No," he said gently, "I have not forgotten you."

It was nearly midnight, and he had been working since the early morning.

The influenza epidemic was raging, and, as someone said, the people in this East-End alley were dying like rats. The clergy had to be doctors as well as ministers, for it was impossible to get adequate medical aid.

"Save him," said Mrs. Sheppard piteously, laying her hand on the little curate's arm.

Her child-like, confiding manner made him say, as a father might have done—

"Be comforted, dear child; I will do all I can."

He went across to the mattress. She followed him, and stood watching him, her eyes fixed on his face with feverish eagerness, as if to read his verdict.

"Is he worse?" she asked at last.

"I—hope—not," said the little curate unsteadily, and averting his gaze.

"Ah!"

There was fear in her voice.

"Don't say that, sir. Say, he 's better."

Then, as he remained silent, she clutched him by the arm.

"It can't be agoin'," she cried in a half-whisper. "The other two haven't been gone so long but I looks for 'em sometimes, forgettin'! I ain't used to doin' without *them*. *He* can't be agoin'."

Familiarity with suffering had not weakened the curate's sympathy for that of individuals; and though he knew it was for the best that the diseased, sickly child should not grow to manhood, his eyes were full of tears when he looked at the mother.

"Don't let him die," she muttered once or twice, "don't let him die."

The little curate went down on his knees in the dirty room.

"Yes," said Mrs. Sheppard eagerly, "do that. I can't do it much 'ceptin' 'Our Father' what you taught me, and I 've been a sayin' that over and over. Ask God to keep him here. I've had about my share of trouble."

And even while they prayed the child's moaning ceased.

"He is asleep," whispered Mrs. Sheppard; "he is quiet at last."

And she rose.

The curate bent over the bed. "Yes," he said very

softly, as if he feared to waken the boy, "he is asleep."

Mrs. Sheppard stooped and stretched out her hand to touch the child, but his arrested and kept hold of it.

"Come away," he said reverently, realising the unseen Presence that was near them both.

"Let me watch by 'im, sir. You needn't fear me disturbin' of him. I'll be that quiet, I promise yer. Ain't I his mother?"

Looking up at him for an answer, she saw in his eyes the look which good men wear when women suffer. Involuntarily she tightened her clasp of his hand. It was something to hold to, for the world was slipping away from her.

"Not—not him too!" she gasped.

"My poor child," answered the little curate, "it is best so. He is happy."

The woman wrenched away her hand with a great cry, the cry of all bereaved mothers.

To it there came, as it were, an answering wail.

The sleeping baby had been suddenly awakened from slumber.

The poor thing heard it, and grew silent. For a second she was breathlessly still. Then, rushing to the little one, she raised it in her arms and held it close against her heart.

* * * * * *

The curate was still upon his knees when she touched him on the shoulder. The tears were on her face and her voice was broken by sobs, but her eyes were full of light.

"Look here," she said, "you might jest—ask Him—to forgive me—grumbling about—this one. He knowed best when He let it come. It's a powerful lot of comfort to me. I'll—kneel—alongside of yer."

IDA LEMON.

THE FORCE OF HABIT.

BY THE REV. L. A. POOLER, M.A.

UNTIL quite recently a person's habits were merely a matter of regret, congratulation, or amusement to his friends. No attempt was made to understand the laws or causes of this "Force of Habit." Shakespeare might write, "How use doth breed a habit in a man," but people either did not stop to ask why it should be so, or, if they did, had no adequate means of answering the question. It is only of late years, with the development of the uses of the microscope, that biology has attracted public attention. Yet what subject could be more interesting or important to living men and women than the science of life, and all the questions connected with it?

That miserable old cynic Diogenes is accredited with the historic remark, "Habit is a second nature." He could not have known why it is so, but he did know perfectly well how true it is. Diogenes in his tub! He wants nothing from anyone, except that his visitors will kindly stand a little out of his sunlight. Yes; but if some superior power had forcibly taken him out of the tub, and, putting water therein, had washed him in it, and then put a new suit of clothes on him, and placed him in whatever at Athens would in those days have corresponded to a fashionable drawing-room, Diogenes would have been about the most miserable man on the face of the earth. Just in the same way Simeon Stylites, and the other so-called "Pillar Saints," when once they got accustomed to their elevated; though somewhat circumscribed, position, would have been rendered utterly miserable, had they been compelled to conform to the ordinary usages of society.

Thus habit becomes at any rate a second nature; and the curious thing is that a person may be totally unconscious of a habit that is perfectly well known to others. Take the case of Dr. Johnson. He is said to have so got into the habit of striking the street posts as he passed them, that, if by any chance he missed one, he would always turn round to touch it. Was any clergyman ever appointed to a new parish, that some parishioner did not introduce in his first conversation with him a remark to this effect:—"Yes, sir, but we don't like any innovations here." Or, was there ever an old abuse done away with, that someone was not heard to say, "The old ways were good enough for me." Crabbe's portraiture is still in existence—

> "Habit with him was all the test of truth.
> It must be right; I've done it from my youth."

A very remarkable instance of the force of habit, told by Professor Huxley, brings us a step further. An old soldier, who had been accustomed all his military life to come to a perfectly erect attitude at the word "Attention!" was carrying home his dinner through a London street. An old comrade who was passing on the other side in fun called out "Attention!" Instantly the unthinking soldier came into the upright attitude, and his dinner fell to the ground.

What is the meaning of this? Is a man in a certain sense merely an automaton? It is simply the result of this great fact—that human beings and certain other animals have a twofold nervous mechanism, what are called the influential or volitional and the automatic nerves. For example, bees have only got the automatic nerves. All bees under similar circumstances will do exactly the same thing. Other animals have got both, but developed in various proportions. One of the favourite illustrations, and also one of the best, is that of the fish. You are walking by a trout stream, let us say. You watch in the clear pool a fish darting and leaping; catching May-fly after May-fly, or black gnat after black gnat, with unerring certainty. Now,

suppose you catch that fish, and extract what are called the cerebral hemispheres: what happens? You put it back into the water. The fish is not dead, but you have virtually taken away one part of its nervous mechanism. All its will-power has been extracted. All the May-flies on the river may float above it, but it never heeds them. But it will swim. The action of the water on the automatic nerves, which have not been removed, causes it to swim. But how? It will go on in a straight line till it strikes against something. It will then turn aside, and go off in a straight line in another direction. No more darting about. No search for food. Just on and on in a series of straight lines, till it dies of exhaustion.

Now the power of habit depends upon the action of the automatic part of a man's nervous system. Each day of life makes it stronger. Every action marks its trace on the automatic nerves. Repeat it often enough, and you have *a habit* branded into the nervous system. What was once a new sensation has become habitual. Mr. Herbert Spencer illustrates this by a child learning to walk. Each step is a new experience, and so before each step the child thinks upon it and wills it. But when it has well learned to walk, it thinks no longer of its limbs, or of balancing itself, but only of the place it wishes to reach, and its limbs automatically take it there.

Further, the longer we live, the more automatic we become. The drunkard's thirst, the sensualist's evil thoughts, were not always part of him, but day by day they gained new strength. Return for a moment to the instance of the soldier. There is a man of your acquaintance who has for years been addicted to strong drink. You got him to take the pledge, and he had kept it so long that you thought he was cured. One day you hear that he has fallen again. "I thought he was quite reformed," you say. Probably he thought so himself. But one day when his will-power, which works by the influential nerves, was dormant, then the angel of destruction drew near, and called out "Attention!" and the old habit asserted itself, and perhaps before the man had realised it, he had fallen again.

The question is sometimes asked, "Is the dead-line fifty, or is it forty?" That is to say, at what age does a man's power of originating begin to decline? There is no doubt that such a period does occur in the life of every man. He may make what appear to be new departures, but they will generally be found to be only further developments of old lines of thought and action. The reason is not necessarily any decay of mental activity, but simply that all his past life has gone to make the man what he finds himself at fifty, and the dead automatic weight of the resultant overpowers him. His past life constitutes his very self, until we can almost tell with certainty what he will say or do under given circumstances.

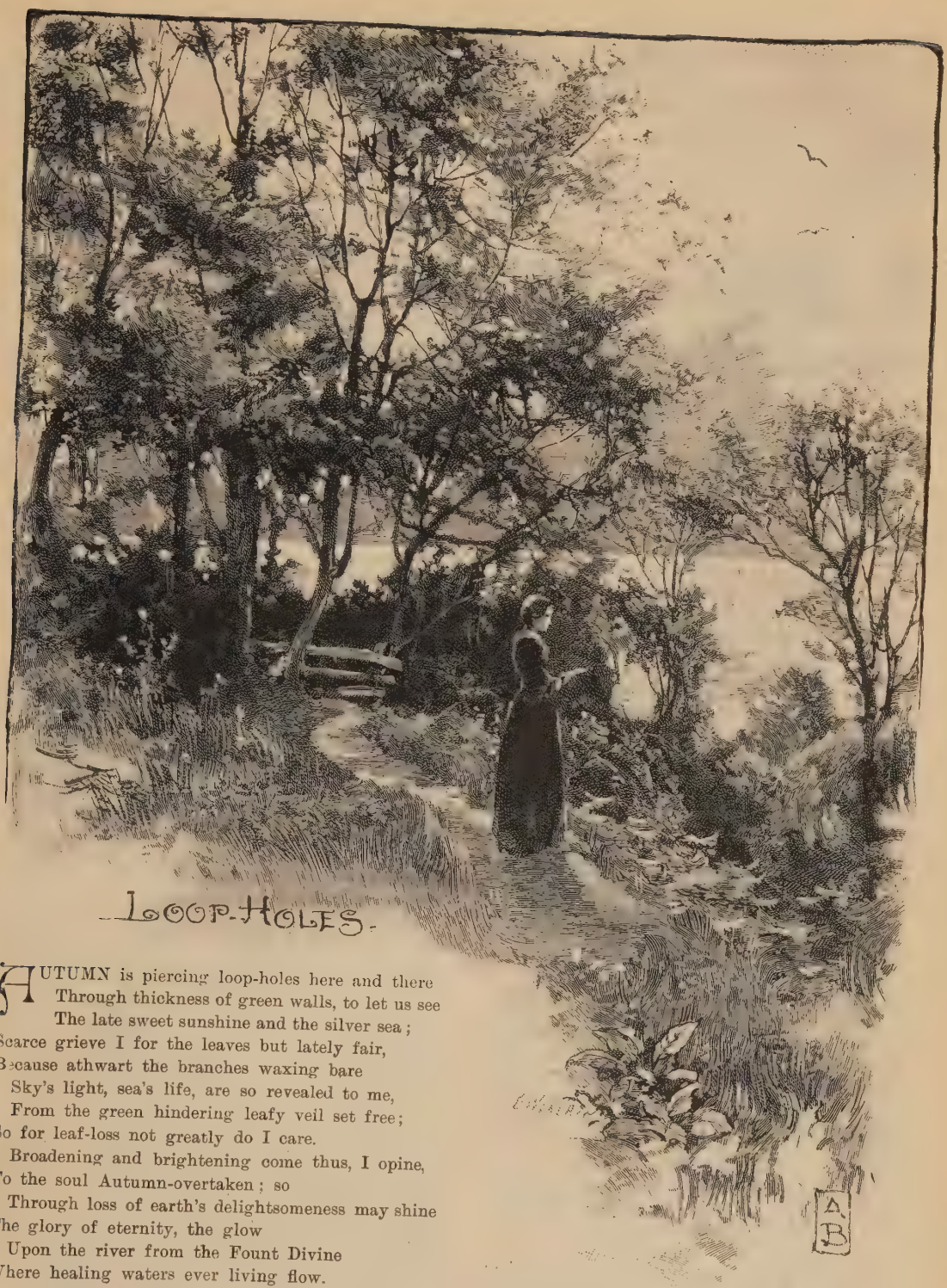
What a sermon does nature preach! We speak of losing a day; speak as though it were possible to blot such a day out of our lives, and to go on as though it had not been. Nature says it is impossible; inscribes in our very bodies the impossibility of it. Everything we have done exists—exists in us. It exists in increased power or loss of power. It exists in greater activity or less activity. It exists in nobler thoughts or in baser aims. The greatest blessing upon good habits, the most penetrating curse on evil ones, is just this fact, that any action by frequent repetition becomes automatic. We do the thing without an effort; nay, almost without realising it at all. Thus it must be true that the longer we live, the more automatic we become. But this law brings its blessing as well as its curse. There is a man you know, and whilst you are struggling with some besetting sin, peace seems to enfold him round. Goodness seems no effort to him. Why? He has been living so long with the Saviour; he has so long been following his Master's steps that "Christ has been formed in him." Christ-likeness has become his second nature. His "conversation is in heaven."

But there is a further question: When by long indulgence in sin a man has become its slave, can he free himself?

Take the drunkard; the man whose whole system has become alcoholised, and whose will-power is dead, or at any rate subservient to the automatic force of habit. Is there any power within the man that can raise him from the slough? Nature answers, "No." The man is what he has made himself. There is nothing within him that has power to undo his undoing. People sometimes say glibly enough, "The man's will should be strong enough to resist temptation." Nature says, "The man's will-power is virtually dead. The lifting power must come from without." Matthew Arnold saw so far, when he spoke of "a power *not ourselves* that makes for righteousness." Or take a wider view. Study the history of all philanthropic institutions that have been founded without God. The result has always been the same. It is written in the confession of their authors, or in the failure of their schemes. And the confession is this:—"We had admirable rules; we had a perfect organisation; but we failed, *because we had no lifting power*." Unless we can direct a man to some external source of strength, we are powerless to help him. Unless the power of a new life can enter him and vitalise the old, nature says the man is doomed. Nothing short of this can do it.

Is there such a power? There was a man whose previous training had gone to make him self-satisfied, narrow, and persecuting, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and Jesus Christ took hold of him, and he is known as the humble, wide-minded Apostle of the Gentiles. There was a drunken bookbinder, without purpose in life, or hope of good, and by the power of a new life he became the preacher of temperance to half the world. What is this stupendous miracle? It is common as every-day life. You want to make a drunkard sober? Try to make a Christian of him not in name but in reality, and the rest is easy. But before you can lift any man who is the slave of sin, in whom years of indulgence have created a habit, you must bring him into touch with a power not of earth that makes for righteousness.

All social regeneration must begin with the Gospel of Divine forgiveness. It must be maintained by the power of a new, an extraneous, a diviner life.



AUTUMN is piercing loop-holes here and there
Through thickness of green walls, to let us see
The late sweet sunshine and the silver sea;
Scarce grieve I for the leaves but lately fair,
Because athwart the branches waxing bare
Sky's light, sea's life, are so revealed to me,
From the green hindering leafy veil set free;
So for leaf-loss not greatly do I care.
Broadening and brightening come thus, I opine,
To the soul Autumn-overtaken; so
Through loss of earth's delightsomeness may shine
The glory of eternity, the glow
Upon the river from the Fount Divine
Where healing waters ever living flow.

K. M. RAE.

LUNA GORDON'S STEWARDSHIP.

BY MARY HAMPDEN, AUTHOR OF "THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

"LU, you have been looking radiant all day long. I verily believe that you like having fires and losing part of your belongings!"

It was evening. The girls were all together in the drawing-room after dinner. Philip was writing letters up-stairs. Luna looked up from the piano, over which her fingers were carelessly straying, and answered by a blush.

"Just look at her, Anne!" Theo went on—Theo, whose own spirits had recovered somewhat, because she was too vivacious to remain long under the spell of sorrow. "She does not seem able to know her reason for being radiant! Lucky girl! if you were miserable, Lu, you would know why that was, easily enough!"

"Do you want me to be miserable?"

"What a question! I am trying to be cheerful myself, though I'm sure I have no reason to be. Oh, how I do hate the army! It's a barbarous institution, and ought to be done away with!"

"Poor Theo!" said Anne, soothingly.

"I wonder why the doctor hasn't been here to-day? Phil said he had promised to come this evening."

"Perhaps he was too busy," Anne suggested.

"It's a pity," Theodora decided. "Luna, can you hear our interesting conversation over there?"

Luna's fingers softly intoned a quaint air from a sonata of Mozart's as she answered—

"I can hear every word, chatterbox!"

"Well, then, do *you* know why we are deprived of the customary presence of that cheerful, blunt, plain-faced, amiable old doctor?"

Luna struck a wrong note, and corrected her mistake before replying.

"He is probably detained. I think he will come presently."

"You seem to have given up quarrelling with him now, Lu. You are always singing his praises."

"I said nothing in praise of him then."

"No; but you *looked* commendation."

"Oh, you foolish girl! My face is turned away from you. How could you possibly see its expression?"

"By aid of a tell-tale looking-glass."

Luna looked up at the mirror before her, met Theo's laughing eyes in the reflection, blushed, and rose from the piano.

"You drive all melody out of me with your nonsense!"

"*Well!*" exclaimed Theo, in a tone of utter amazement, "*I was never so surprised in all my life!*"

Luna went swiftly out of the room.

"What is the matter?" asked Anne, roused from her book.

"*Matter!* Why, a love affair has been going on under our very eyes, and we have not seen it! Who would have believed such a thing possible?"

"I do not wonder at it at all," Anne said, with a smile, "for I guessed the truth long ago; only there seemed to be some drawback to be got over before everything could come right. Perhaps the drawback was burned in the fire last night, Theo: certainly Luna has looked happy ever since."

"Happy!" echoed Theodora, bitterly, rising and going across the room to a distant window. "I suppose Luna has *bought* happiness, as it were, by being good to poor people and fussing over the sick! I'm sure I never did any harm to anyone, nor anything very wicked. I don't see why all the misfortunes should come to poor me!"

Her eyes filled with rebellious tears, as, drawing the blind aside, she gazed out into the frosty night. How beautiful the world of nature was, with the cobweb tracery of the tall trees against a starlit sky, and a streak of silver moonlight running down the broad trunk of each stately pine. But nothing looked beautiful to Theo, because she felt at war with all. The moon seemed cold to her, the shadows of the trees fell gloomily black on the white lawn; the long, arm-like branches looked as though stretched out in some weird warning.

Yet at that moment the selfsame scene was delighting Luna's eyes. She was watching it from the heated conservatory on one side of the front of the house—a conservatory which architectural authorities declared to spoil the antique appearance of the Abbey, but which Anne thought one of Hillborough's great beauties. After leaving the drawing-room, Luna had come here to find solitude; perhaps, also, because through the glass she could obtain a view of the now deserted avenue, down which the doctor must come if he were on his way to see them, as she hoped he might be. She found sweet signs in sleeping nature, hints of wondrous peace, which the night brings after toilsome day; the sighing wind sounded to her ears tender melodies, with none of the sadness which distressed Theo's hearing. She looked up in the face of the gentle moon, and smiled at it—her namesake. The night reminded her of one other night, earlier in summer, when the doctor had spoken of the stars and had quoted Lowell's lines, telling of "The vague and starry magic" which "makes all things mysterious." It was that magic which she felt. And the flowers around her were so sweet! They seemed to have saved their richest fragrance for these undisturbed hours, and to be pouring it out now lavishly.

Suddenly she started. A step was sounding on the gravel—a tall figure was approaching Hillborough.

The doctor must have caught sight of the girl as she moved among the flowers, for he hesitated an instant, then came towards the conservatory, ignoring the welcome lights which shone from the house. Luna stepped to the door to meet him, and the moonlight, as it fell upon her face, showed blushes there, and sweet glad smiles.

"I 'm late, very late; but that is my misfortune, not my fault. I wished myself here hours ago. You believe that, don't you? I wanted to come and thank my benefactor."

"Oh no, Dr. Firth, I am not that! On the contrary, I have been defrauding you for weeks."

The doctor still held the hand she had given him.

"You speak as though you would be sorry to be my benefactor! Would you never give me more than strict justice?"

"I did not want you to be obliged to thank me," said the girl, simply.

"I like to be grateful to you. I want you to give me a gift which is too great for thanks to ever pay for it. Luna, Luna, don't you understand me? Last night, when your danger forced words from me which I should never have let myself speak, you answered by attesting your gentle faith in me. *Dearest* I called you then—*my dearest*—and you did not blame me!"

Luna's head drooped till it almost touched his shoulder; still her reply was steady, calm, resolute, as though she knew the utmost meaning which could be wrung from it, and had been prepared to give it as soon as it was asked of her.

"Blame *you?* No, indeed! Last night in the midst of the danger I did not forget, as you did: I remembered everything. I knew that your words were spoken against your will. My answer was not wrested from me by surprise or fear; I meant it with my whole heart. I was not even afraid, because—because I love you!"

Then was the time for the doctor to repeat those endearing epithets which he had bestowed on her before; his was the right to use them now, with others yet more tender.

There were only the flowers to witness the pretty love scene; only the air to catch the words which passed the lips of this man and girl, to whom had been granted the fullest blessing of the soul's charity.

Self-love fled abashed before the excellence of this noble gift of heart to heart—this God-given gift of human trust. And yet a nobler form of love was not apart from them.

"May *He* guard you," whispered Douglas tenderly, "Who made you fair beyond all other women!"

"Oh, I am not fairer than all others, dear! Phil told me once that because I am fair at all I ought to be better than many girls, and I know I must fail there! I'm not good—not one bit!"

"Worldly powers have not spoiled you, Lu, or you would not have accepted a poor suitor."

"But we shall not be poor. I have plenty of money."

"Would you have faced poverty for my sake?"

"Oh, Douglas, you *know* I would."

"Yet you disliked the poverty you once knew. You were unhappy in it."

"That is four months ago. I feel years older. I was only a silly girl then."

"And now you are a wise woman?"

"No, not that, but a little braver, I hope. Still, I should not be pleased with poverty unless riches parted us; then I should choose it rather than wealth."

What answer could Douglas make to such a speech as that?

For a few more minutes they lingered together in the moonlit conservatory and the company of the fragrant blossoms, then Luna would have persuaded the doctor to come indoors to see Philip and the girls, but he told her he could not.

"I have every prospect of a sick call to-night; even if I am not sent for, I should like to go, darling."

"Then we must say good-bye? You will come early to-morrow, won't you, Douglas?"

"The very first moment that is my own. Good-night, my dear. Give my love to Phil, and remind him that he gaveome leave to steal you from him! If I had such a sister I should be a more jealous guardian!"

With one earnest kiss they parted, and Luna went back to the drawing-room.

"Why, Luna, where have you been all this while?"

"In the conservatory. The doctor has had to go. Phil, he——"

"*The doctor!*" cried Theo. "Ah, I see the conspiracy! You went out there because you meant to monopolise his cheery society. What dreadful selfishness! And now you smile as though you deserved praise instead of blame. Tell us at once all he said, you bad girl, or we shall never forgive you!"

"You must not ask for all, Theo," said Philip, as he took Luna's hands and looked in her face with loving, brotherly pride. "I think that Lu will tell us the *result* of the talk, but the words are for herself alone."

"You are right, dear," said Luna radiantly, "and the result is—happiness!"

CHAPTER XX.

"Lu, your doctor can't possibly be here so early; you know his consulting hours are from nine to half-past twelve, so do fall in with a plan of Annie's and mine."

It was the next morning immediately after breakfast when Theo made this appeal. Luna rose from her seat behind the coffee-urn, and came forward to the hearth, where the younger girl was sitting crouched upon the fender-stool. Anne was scanning the morning papers; she was always well-informed about the news of the day.

"A plan? Some wild scheme of yours, Theo?"

"No, not wild, and eminently useful. I *must* do something to take away my thoughts from—from worries, Lu; so I suggested to Anne that we should devote the next few hours to a systematic exploration of the west wing. We don't know the extent of the damage there till we go to look; and you know before the fire came we had meant to rummage there!"

"It must be orderly rummaging, then," laughed Luna. She would have preferred a quiet morning in which to think her own happy thoughts, but the restless look in Theo's face made her pity the usually bright-spirited girl, and long to help her in her trouble.

"We might make a list of improvements," suggested Anne. "I suppose you will soon set builders to work there, won't you, Luna?"

"I shall ask Douglas for his advice," Luna answered softly; "but we might make notes as we explore about the pictures and furniture."

"See what slavery love is!" Theo cried; "she cannot even decide how her own house is to be built, now that she is engaged."

But the light speech was spoken with a sudden quiver in the girl's voice. *Engaged!* Her own would be a long, long engagement with Jack in India.

"Yes, let us go," Luna decided. "Phil is busy this morning, but he will see the rooms when I show them to Douglas."

So, together, the three girls left the cosy dining-room for the uninhabited apartments where the fire had originated. Luna had not been there since that night, and the scene was full of memories for her. She lingered upon the spot where Douglas had stood when he had spoken his first word of love to her; her mind was occupied with thoughts of him rather than in the consideration of damages sustained by her property.

"Come along, Lu," cried Theo; "don't stand meditating. We want to explore all the rooms, and we shall find that the hours fly, once we get among your unknown treasures."

An exclamation of surprise broke from the two younger girls as they looked into the corner room of the wing. There was no way of entering this, for the flooring was destroyed.

They went up to the next floor; the late Mr. Gordon's library was still intact so far as walls and books were concerned.

"Oh, the books! What a number, Luna dear! I think Dr. Firth will enjoy looking at these."

Luna repaid Anne's suggestion by a smile of gratitude.

"Yes. Girls, won't you speak of him as 'Douglas' now? He will be your brother, you know."

Theo laughed. Anne expressed the opinion that Douglas was a pretty name; and then the two younger sisters began the work of exploration with a will. They soon wandered away from Luna, intent upon making discoveries among the cabinets of curios which stood in the inner room. Every now and again their merry voices would call her to the inspection of some grotesque carving or valuable piece of china; but the elder girl liked to steal back into the old library. She found the dim, ancient appearance of the lofty room pleasing; she was already planning alterations, which should not destroy the character of it, but render it a comfortable study suitable for "her doctor," as Theo persisted in calling him.

Yes, the books would indeed please him. She scrutinised the lower shelves first, then mounted the oaken steps to find out the names of the high-most volumes. She took some from their places and opened them at random by way of sampling their contents. As she raised one volume, it resisted her hand, only giving way with a jerk; at the same time, a sound as of a rusty spring yielding to pressure surprised her. Lightly blowing away the thick brown dust from the place the book had left empty, she saw an opening in the wall—a narrow slit, into which no light could penetrate.

A secret hiding-place indeed! This top shelf of volumes could be locked right away from the others; and even had it been open, what careless hand would have been likely to find the almost invisible spring which opened the receptacle? Luna could see now that that spring had only given its secret up to her because the rust of years had eaten away its iron. Had it not broken, she would have passed unobserved by the handle of the miniature door which looked like a piece of the carved oak moulding.

A secret place! What would she find in it? Papers—gold—jewels—or——?

A sudden fear came to her.

"Oh, Lu!" came a call from the inner room. "Anne has found a dear old-fashioned mandolin! Oh, *do* come and see if you can play upon it!"

"Try yourself, Theo. I am busy—among the books!"

"Bother the musty old books! They aren't half as interesting as our discoveries!"

Luna's voice had sounded tremulous and unnatural in her own ears, but the girls had noticed nothing strange about it. She could hear Theo's attempts upon the mandolin, and the laughter they occasioned, while she stood, pale, awed, upon the steps before the hidden aperture.

Suddenly she summoned all her courage, and plunged her right hand into the darkness. Her fingers struck against the wooden sides, then downwards, till she felt the floor of the hiding-place. It was square, and not more than a quarter of a yard across.

What did it contain? Anything, or nothing?

For a moment her fear was relieved; then it increased, until a certainty took its place. She drew out a paper—no, a parchment—tied round with tape and sealed with the crest of the Gordons.

She had no need to examine it: her reason had prepared her for the discovery. *It was her uncle's lost will!*

"Lu, did you hear? I shall be a first-rate mandolin player before long!"

Luna did not answer. She heard the girls discussing her silence, wondering why she would not speak—whether she were still there or had gone away; but she could not frame the words of an answer.

The lost will! Mr. Godfrey Gordon's lost will! What did its discovery mean for her? Poverty, the loss of Hillborough Abbey, a return to the old dreary life; a long delay before her marriage, because Douglas could not afford to keep a wife; the bitter loss of luxury, gaiety, the power of helping others; and drudgery again, the drudgery she had hated!

The will, of a later period, which Mr. Cliffe had drawn up, and which was supposed to be destroyed, had left the whole fortune to Mr. Gordon's college friend. Was it her duty to announce the discovery

of this unjust document? It would impoverish not herself alone, but Philip, the girls, and Douglas also.

It was her duty, and Luna knew this; but she hesitated.

"Lu, are you lost?—Let us go and find out what she is about, Anne!"

Their steps sounded over the uncarpeted floors. Luna closed the door of the hiding-place, thrust the will into the folds of her dress, and descended the steps hurriedly.

"Why, you look as though you'd seen a ghost! What's the matter, Lu?"

"Nothing—I am not frightened. Silly girl, there is nothing to be afraid of! I am tired—the books are heavy. Have you not explored enough?"

"Oh dear no! You won't be tired when you see the treasures in the next room. You must come, Luna, for your belongings are quite delicious!"

"*Your belongings!*" The casual remark nerved the girl to make the effort which was necessary if she were to preserve her secret.

The next hour or two passed for her like a bad dream. Tapestries, paintings, china, curios, Indian carvings, ancient lace, brocades of rare value, inlaid furniture, strings of coral, amber, and Oriental pearls; ivory-work, old musical instruments, armour, trophies, shells, illuminated books, and countless treasures were held up for her inspection, or pointed out by the girls' restless fingers. She made the necessary answers to their eager interrogations—laughed when they did; but her laugh had no merriment in it.

Over and over in her brain was crowding that one question: Should she give up the will which she had found, or hide it away for ever? No one could know that she had discovered that which her uncle's lawyers had failed to find. She would not be blamed.

An unworthy action would secure the Abbey and wealth to her for life. The rightful action would drag her down to the level of the old wearying poverty.

Which should she choose? Loss and honour, or deception and the continuation of the luxury in which she gloried?

This was the question to which she must make an answer.

CHAPTER XXI.

October faded slowly out of the year, and November took its place, bringing skies more sullen, and robbing the boughs of their last red leaves. December, in its turn, chased November out of time, and entered upon its own snowy reign, preparing for the genial festival of winter.

By the second week of the month, the land round Hillborough Abbey was wrapped in a deep covering of crisp whiteness, and the lake in the park was frozen thickly. By the beginning of the third week there was no change, and the country folk were predicting "a good old-fashioned Christmas."

The two months which had passed since Dr. Firth's and Luna Gordon's engagement had been the happiest Douglas had ever known. It was more sweet to him than it would have been to many men to find himself beloved, because his modest want of self-esteem had always made him doubt whether the gladness of an accepted lover would ever come to him.

Now that he was privileged to spend all his spare moments at the Abbey, he was so heartily happy that no one could witness his radiant beams, or hear his ringing laughter, without sympathising with him, and coming under the spell of his glad nature.

But as December days went by, even Douglas felt an anxiety. Luna's manner puzzled him. One time when he came he would find her frivolous, excited, ready for the wildest scheme of Theo's; the next visit he would discover her listless, nervous, quick-tempered, and looking ill.

Yet she was happy in their engagement. The wedding-day had come so near now—Christmas Eve it was to be—and they had not had even a lover's trifling quarrel. They loved each other too well for Douglas to doubt whether her strange manner did not mean that she had repented of her promise.

It was the 22nd of December when Douglas made one more attempt to fathom the secret of the trouble which he read upon her face. The others were skating; the doctor and Luna had meant to join them, but he proposed instead that they should take a walk together round the wide lake.

"Luna, my dearest, I am going to ask you a serious question."

This grave preface had the effect of calling a sudden flush to the girl's cheeks. She bent her head until her face was half-hidden in the fur around her neck. He went on gently—

"Tell me, dear, if I can do anything to help you. You are vexed about something; you are not your usual bright self, and I think I have the right to ask the reason. If I have not the right now, I shall have in two more days: my wife mustn't try to keep her worries hidden from me."

"I am foolish—but I shall forget every vexation soon, Douglas."

"I want you to be as happy as I am, Luna."

"I will be. You shall see, Douglas, that I shall not be dull and stupid again."

"But you must not grow deceitful, dear."

Luna half drew her arm out of his by a quick movement. The doctor thought that his playful remark had offended her.

"Darling," he cried, "did you really take my words *au sérieux?* Why, my Luna is truth herself—that is just why the slightest shade of pretence is so unnatural to her."

"Douglas, you are far too good to me. I shall disappoint you, I know that I shall."

"How, dear? By making your stewardship a blessing to all my poor patients, until they declare that the doctor's wife is as near being an angel as is possible for a human being? That is what the doctor himself thinks already. Did you know that—eh, my dear?"

But the girl was silent; clasping the hands inside her muff so closely together that they hurt each other, so that the cry might not escape her lips which she was longing yet dreading to utter—a cry which would make full confession of the unworthy deception of which she was really guilty.

Douglas had to leave once again with his heart ill at ease about her. It was true that he did not doubt her, yet it was a bitter thought to him that his love was not enough to make her happiness.

Philip also noticed Luna's manner, with surprise. He had spoken to Douglas about it—he would not by his words interfere between them now they were engaged, so soon to be married—and the doctor had assured him that he would find out the trouble and share it, if he could not argue it out of existence. Having thus done his duty as a brother, Philip left questions to be put by the doctor; and the doctor's questions, as we have seen, failed to elicit any answer.

That day, after Douglas had gone, Luna went up to her own room, determining to look matters in the face, and realise her own fault and all it would entail upon her in the future.

Sitting, with hands clasped upon her knees, before the glowing fire, she looked into her own heart and read deception there. Every day, every hour which sped by, increased the lie which she was telling.

How had she dared keep her secret so long? she wondered. Yet how, having made that secret her own, could she give it up now, and own that she had preserved it during two whole months? What would her sisters say, and Philip? Above all, what would be Douglas's opinion? Would he not despise her? Would the truth not kill his trust in her?

Oh, that first struggle with temptation, and her weak yielding to it! In that moment when she had hidden the will in the folds of her dress, she had not foreseen that her whole future life would be a great untruth, that each good deed she might hope to do would be robbed of all its virtue. Charity?—she was being charitable with the money of others! Kind-hearted?—her very smiles were false, because of the weight of trouble at her heart!

Luna rose from her chair, and went as far as the door of her room. She would go at once and tell the miserable, dishonouring tale to her brother.

But at the threshold she faltered—the temptation had gained strength with the growth of her sin. Douglas!—he was poor; instead of the happy life which was to begin from Christmas Eve, she was going to seek sorrow for him, and that poverty which would separate them for long years, perhaps.

And the Abbey! The dear old Abbey which she had grown to love as a home—must she give it up? Yes, and she could face that trial, if only she need not humble herself in the eyes of all who made her home-world. Was there no way of escaping the need of confession? Yes; surely she could replace the will where she had found it, and then draw it from its hiding-place as a new discovery? *This would not be truth*, but——

Just as Luna hesitated, an interruption came. Theo pushed open the door and hurried into the room, too much occupied with her own thoughts to notice her sister's pallor.

"Oh, Lu, I came to show you at once! I've got a letter from him! A dear precious letter from India! There, you may touch it, you may even see the end—not *all* the nonsense, because the dear boy might not like that. And the signature! doesn't it look pretty? I haven't read it all myself yet!"

Clasping one arm round her sister's waist, impulsive Theo pulled her into the chair before the fire, and opened the letter which she prized so highly.

Jack had been away more than a month now, but before leaving Fanleigh he had asked Theodora to promise to marry him when he should come back to England, and she had given him her word, with all her faith in it. This proceeding of young Dauncey's had been taken against the advice of his uncle and guardian, Sir Lucian, but neither the young man nor foolish Theo cared about the opinions of their elders and well-wishers, regarding all as enemies who ventured to predict a change in their mutual sentiments before the three years of Jack's "exile" were over.

Jack's letter was strongly characteristic of Jack's nature. It began with lavish expenditure of endearing epithets, it continued with long expressions of regret at having been forced to leave England; it ended with a disingenuous and entirely selfish explanation:—

"I can't help seeing that we have made a mistake by binding ourselves with a promise, Theo dear," he wrote. "We are both young, and have not seen much of the world. If we are of the same mind in three years' time, why then we can always make the promise over again; if not, if you find someone you like better than your unlucky Jack, which is very probable, then we shall not have anything to reproach each other with. I'm sure you will understand me—you were always so awfully clever. It isn't fair to you or to me that we should regard our engagement too seriously; indeed, we had better not call it an engagement at all. Tell your people about this; I think they will approve. I have written to Sir Lucian. The fact is, Theo dear, that my mother has other views for me, and made such a fuss when I told her, that I don't believe she would ever receive you kindly; and if you came into our family only to cause quarrels you wouldn't be happy, would you?

"Of course, I am miserable—that is my usual fortune—but time will soften the blow for both of us. I will write occasionally, as a friend, and trust that you will always think of me as—Yours devotedly,

"JACK DAUNCEY."

Theo read this letter as she knelt on the hearthrug before Luna's chair. She gave no sign of comprehending it, no cry of surprise or pain; she remained motionless, with her head bent over the ill-written page.

Luna could not speak herself for several moments. In her sympathy she had forgotten her own difficulties, and was suffering now for Theo's sake.

At last an exclamation of love and would-be consolation broke from her as she wreathed her arms tenderly round the silent girl—

"My poor darling! Oh, Theo, we knew he was not worth the love you gave him! Forget him, dear; put him out of your thoughts for ever!"

Theo lay passive for a minute in the embrace; then she drew herself away, crushed the letter in her hands, threw it into the glowing centre of the fire,

and rose. Her face was white, her lips pressed angrily together, her eyes bright with scorn.

"How *dared* he?" she muttered under her breath. "And I—I was mad enough to trust him! I did, Luna—*utterly*, in spite of all you said."

"Yes, dear; but now——"

"*Now?*" the girl interrupted. "Now it is all over. Do you understand, Lu? Over just as though it had never been. No one shall know that I care at all—no one shall pity me. You won't speak his name to me again? *Don't, Lu! Oh, you mustn't!*"

For Luna's sympathetic eyes broke through the self-restraint of Theo's pride, and the young sister fell sobbing into the arms of the elder.

CHAPTER XXII.

"ANNE dear, you are the only member of the family who never gives cause for anxiety. How do you manage it, you quiet little one?"

It was the evening of the same day, and Philip, finding his youngest sister alone in the drawing-room after dinner, had put this question to her somewhat suddenly.

Philip was worried, that was the truth of it. Theodora went about the house singing snatches of song which were meant to be merry, but sounded wretched to him, for he knew her intention in singing them—she was pretending a gaiety and carelessness she did not feel. Luna's eyes showed signs of tears; Luna's manner was almost as deceitful as Theo's, but neither of the girls succeeded in blinding Philip to the truth. They were both unhappy, and both keeping their sorrow to themselves. The cause of Theo's he knew; but what could be the meaning of Luna's? Even Mrs. Wooley noticed that something was wrong, and gave it, as her opinion, that "Folks who get sad over a wedding had better take care they don't have a funeral to cry for."

When Philip had come slowly into the drawing-room, Anne had seen the anxious look on his face. When he asked that sudden question, she answered gravely—

"It is easy not to give anxiety, because, if I were not so sorry for the others, I should be quite happy."

"Anne, tell me what I ought to do. Let me hear your advice. Shall I speak to Luna, or leave her for Douglas to manage? I believe he has tried, but he has not been successful, for she looks thoroughly miserable."

Anne did not raise her eyes from her work.

"Phil," she said, hesitatingly, "have you made any guess as to the cause of the trouble?"

It was evident that *she* had. He was surprised, and replied quickly in the negative.

"I think it has something to do with—with the Abbey and the money; but I can't tell you all I think. It wouldn't be right for me to do so."

"But you can help me without telling, dear. Speak to Luna yourself; argue with her; persuade her out of the fancy. It can only be some foolish fancy which is vexing her. For Firth's sake, she ought not to let everyone comment upon her troubled look."

"I *will* speak to her—if I have to, Phil. I knew that I should have to do so if nothing changes her to-day."

"What can change her? This is all an enigma to me!"

"She is different to-day from what she was yesterday."

"Anne, you are a wonder!" cried Philip, thoroughly perplexed. "I believe that you see more of what goes on in our thoughts and hearts than we do ourselves!"

"Poor old Phil! If I do it only makes me love you better."

She went to him and kissed him.

"I *know*—I 'm quite *sure*—God will send you happiness some day, Philip. No one deserves it as you do; you are so patient with us all!"

So little Anne, alone, out of his three sisters, had guessed his secret!

Philip returned her caress, but did not speak to her now of Gwendolen Fane. His brotherly mind was burdened with a more pressing care than his own natural grief at the thought of leaving Hilldon.

"Do you expect Luna to tell us what is the matter, then?"

"Yes, I think she has made up her mind to speak, and it will give her great pain to do it."

"Anne! you don't think that she regrets her engagement?"

"No, oh no! it is not that."

"Thank Heaven!" said Philip. "Poor old Firth! that would have been a terrible blow to him. Then cannot you do something to persuade her not to delay the explanation any longer, little one?"

"I will try; but I can only do it by indirect means. Is Douglas coming to-night?"

"I expect he is on his way now. Where is Luna?"

"With Theo in her room. When we are all together here—Douglas, Luna, you, and I—Phil dear, I will do my best to bring about the—the explanation."

Philip had therefore to wait with all the patience at his command. He glanced wonderingly again and again at quiet Anne, her grave face seemingly so intent upon the mysteries of her embroidery. How had she divined Luna's secret, which had baffled the understanding of the man who loved her best—which he, Philip, had striven so vainly even to guess at? But the comprehension of the silent member of a family often embraces facts and possibilities of motive of which no one else, not even the person most concerned, is at all aware. Anne's silent sympathy for human nature taught her how to understand others as well as how to be reticent about her knowledge; it made her tenderly charitable in her inmost heart; it told her not to expect too much of poor weak humanity; it made her at once wise and humble.

Theo was the next member of the family to make her appearance. She came into the room singing; she exchanged a merry word or two with Anne; she threw herself carelessly into an easy-chair, with a new book for company. The spirit—a worthy one in moderation—which kept her from showing grief at Jack's fickleness, she carried to an extreme length. Even her prayers had not been for comfort, but for power to keep anyone from guessing "how much she

cared." Poor Theo! This had been her first bitter experience, and it would take time before she would thoroughly master its lesson.

Then Luna joined them. Philip scanned her face to discover tokens of that change of which Anne had spoken. He could see none; his eyes were blind compared with the keen vision of his little sister. Conversation lagged until the doctor came in; then he began telling them tales of the parish, anecdotes of his day's experience. Luna was more than usually silent; that was the only difference Philip noted.

Presently Anne moved her chair forward, forming a fifth to the group round the fire.

"Winter has come so suddenly," she said, in her quiet tones; "doesn't it seem only the other day that summer was here? Do you remember showing us the new star?"

She turned to the doctor, but gained many answers.

"Oh, time flies; that's a sign we're happy, isn't it?" asked Theo.

"The winter?—oh yes, it has been sudden," agreed Luna.

"The new star? Why, that was the night when I first learned that I had a heart," laughed Douglas, adding softly for only his betrothed, who sat next him, to hear, "I soon lost my heart again, but I've got a valuable exchange, dearest."

"I was thinking of how much has happened since then," Anne went on. "It was then that you began to visit the poor, Luna; then you left off for a while, now you have taken up the work again—your stewardship, Phil calls it. It must be very sweet to have such a stewardship!"

Luna's face wore a strange look, almost of fear; she opened her lips to speak, but no words came; she glanced towards the open door as though meditating flight.

Anne was not observing her, but continued her recollections, to which all were listening—only this time she spoke of days yet further past.

"How strange it is to think that a few months ago we had never seen the Abbey! Douglas, did Luna ever tell you how excited we were when the lawyer brought us word that she had succeeded to our uncle's property?"

"No, I don't believe she ever did. I haven't heard much of the old time, we've been so well occupied with the present and with making plans for the future."

"We were quite poor—you must know that at least; and we used to complain about our poverty. It *was* hard to have to reckon carefully before we could spend a penny; yet many people do so and are happy. *We* were happy in spite of everything, weren't we, Luna?"

"Yes," the elder girl answered faintly.

"I wonder if any of us regret those days? It is better to be 'poor without sorrow than wealthy with care,' as Mrs. Wooley says."

"Sorrow! I *hope* that is far away from us all, though——"

The doctor paused, and looked across at Luna. To his surprise, her face was deadly pale, and tears thronged in her eyes. But Anne either did not notice this, or purposely disregarded it.

"Of course, it is nice to live in a fine old house and to have means to help others; but you don't seem as gay as you used to do when we were badly off, Luna. I don't think you love the dear old Abbey as you did. I fancy that you would not be sorry to leave it."

"*Leave the Abbey!*" A light began to dawn in Philip's mind.

"You think that a later will might be discovered some day, Anne, and Luna would find herself a trespasser upon the fair ground of fortune designed for others?" he asked. Then turning to lay a hand gently on Luna's shoulder, he added, with a wistful smile at her—

"Well, dear, if it comes to any sudden termination, you will be able to comfort yourself with the thought that you can render a good account of your shortened stewardship."

"*Oh, Phil! don't speak so to me. I can't bear it.*"

Douglas started to his feet, and hurried to place a protecting arm round Luna as she buried her face in her hands and sobbed.

She shrank away from him, and recovered her self-control so bravely that she was soon able to answer the alarmed questions which assailed her. Holding him away with one hand, she looked him full in the eyes as she made her confession.

"Douglas, you will be ashamed of me. I have deceived you all. I found that will—two months ago. I hid it at first without realising the wrong—I *dared* not tell you the truth afterwards. To-day I put it back—back in the secret place where I found it. I meant to find it again—to pretend to find it—without owning my fault to you all. Now—I *cannot* deceive you any longer. Douglas—Philip—can you ever forgive me?"

"The wrong was not against me, dear child," said the doctor gravely. He drew the trembling girl to the support of his strong arm, and then he kissed her tenderly. "God knows the temptation; we cannot understand as He does. God knows the pain this avowal has caused you; we can only guess at it."

"I *could not* let you praise me, when I knew I was so base, so wicked."

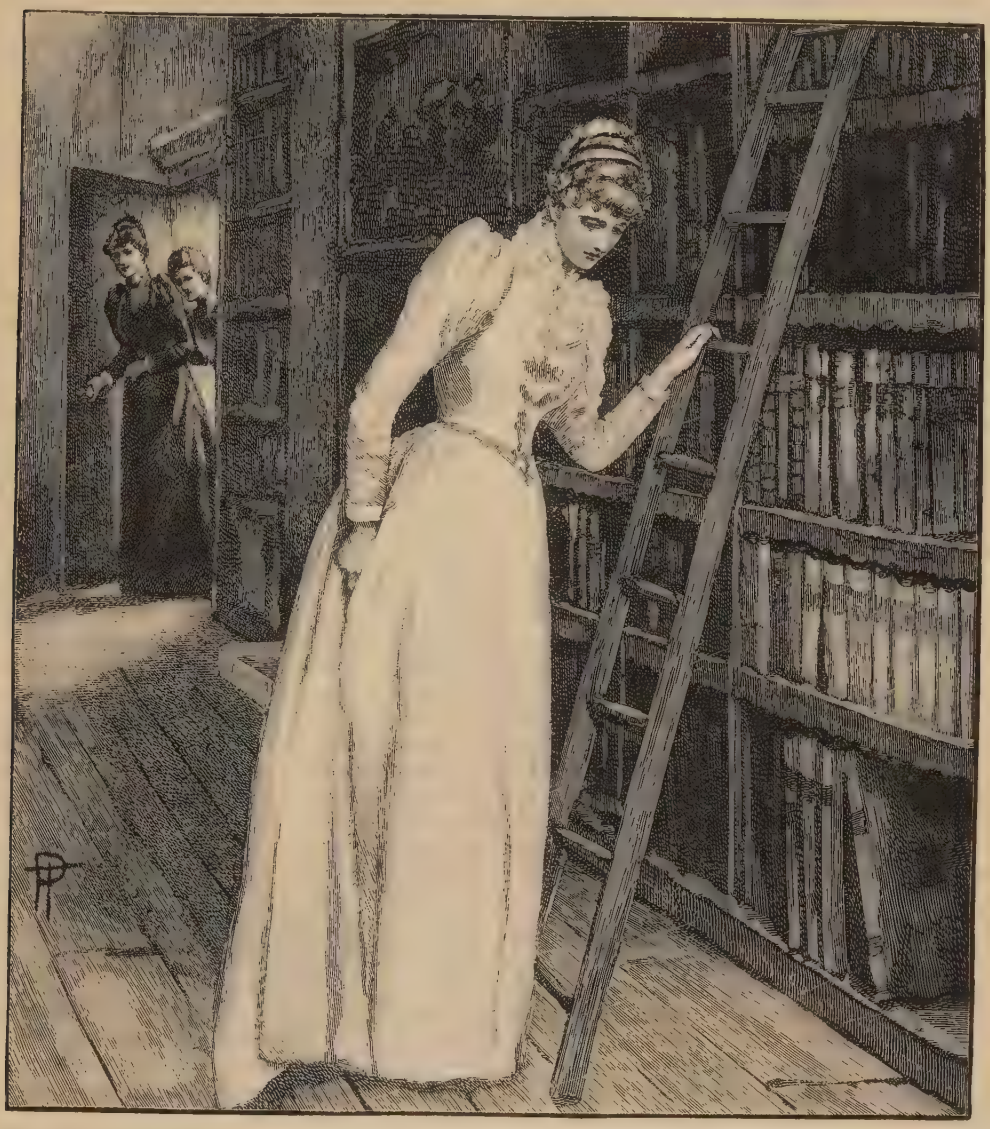
"As Douglas says, 'we cannot judge,' Lu," said Philip from the background. "We praised you for charity, which brings its own reward; perhaps you deserve more praise now, if we knew the truth. This confession is the last act of your stewardship—maybe, its worthiest part!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

IT was late that night when Philip, as was often his custom, accompanied the doctor home from Hillborough.

The December moon and stars were shining brilliantly over the tranquil earth, which lay locked in a frost so intense that the snow was hard and dry as gravel. It was not dark; the moon's light was reflected back from the white surface of the land and mirrored in the unroughened ice which carpeted the lake. The steps of the two men rang noisily down the avenue, the broken branches snapped as they brushed through the shrubbery.

For some time neither of them spoke; each was busy with his own thoughts. When they reached the open lane Douglas was the first to initiate conversation, as he linked his arm in that of his friend.



"Luna thrust the will into the folds of her dress."—*p.* 917.

"Phil, dear boy, this will make a vast difference to us all."

He was doing his best to speak bravely, but Carroll knew all he meant.

"Poor Lu! You and she will have to wait for each other; that is what you are thinking, is it not?"

"If I were to apply, I might get a post in connection with the county hospital; the directors know me well, and there is a vacancy. That would mean a small salary, which would make a considerable difference to me. If you think I might ask her to face a life so poor compared with the one to which she has become accustomed here, I will speak to the directors tomorrow."

"She would not shrink from economy now. Luna has learned a lesson. Ask her, by all means; she will feel that the most bitter experience of her loss is spared her, if it does not involve being parted from you. Douglas, dear fellow, I should like to thank you for your goodness to my sister."

"Don't," said the doctor, in a husky voice. "It was bad enough to see her in tears, without being thanked for not being unkind to her. *Good* to her, indeed! That's what I want to be all my life, but there's no

man alive who deserves the privilege of 'being good' to such a—a darling!"

"Then let nothing be said to alter the arrangements for your wedding; to-morrow you will see about gaining your post, and to-morrow the lawyer will come down to read that will and take possession of it. As for poverty, Firth, what do you think I could give Lu but poverty? My picture at the gallery has sold, not without attracting some praise, but fame and wealth are not gained in a day."

When they reached the doctor's cottage, they parted with one of those hearty hand-clasps which relieve the feelings of men who do not wish to put their cordial friendship into words; and Philip hastened home, thinking as he went of Gwendolen Fane and the new barrier which now separated him from any hope of winning her. True, the Abbey had never been his, but there is a difference in social status between the brother, even the half-brother, of a rich girl, and the working guardian of penniless sisters.

Perhaps Theo's behaviour under the new circumstances was one of the most remarkable developments of the situation. She made no bitter complaint, expressed no dread of the life of daily anxieties to which they must all return.

"We haven't been so happy at the Abbey that we should care much about leaving it, Phil," she said. "If Luna does get married, I shall have to do my best to keep house for you, and watch over the pence which make pounds."

A telegram was despatched first thing next morning summoning Mr. Cliffe to Hillborough. Luna had placed the sealed document in Philip's charge, and when the brother and sisters met at the breakfast-table their thoughts were naturally taken up with surmises as to the contents of the will so long concealed.

"I wonder who will come here?" said Anne. "Mr. Cliffe said that the will which he drew up for our uncle left everything to a college friend, did he not, Phil? I hope it will be someone who will take care of the flowers."

"An old man, I suppose! Well, then, Mrs. Grantley won't have a very interesting neighbour."

Since reading Jack Dauncey's letter, Theo had lost some of her admiration for Mrs. Grantley and her fashionable friends.

"I love the old Abbey; I cannot help loving it, though part of the time here has been miserable to me through my own fault," said Luna humbly. "I shall never forget it. I shall treasure those sketches of it you made, Theo. Will you draw the corridor where the fire was, before we go away?"

"Yes, I will indeed. I know why you want that sketched, Lu dear. At any rate, you have reason to be glad we came here!"

A ring at the hall bell startled them. Mr. Cliffe had promptly answered Philip's telegram.

Carroll had a short preliminary conversation with the lawyer, informing him how the will had been found, but not the date of its discovery. There was no duty to compel him to disclose the tale of Luna's past deception.

Mr. Cliffe, whose geniality had formerly pleased the Gordons, felt sincere sympathy with the fair young girl who was to be robbed of that which had seemed her just inheritance; but he was a man of the world, and was too wise to express his sentiments or to seem to notice her look of fatigue telling of past trouble.

They all adjourned from the drawing-room to the late Mr. Gordon's library, and there, in sight of the secret receptacle where the document had lain, the lawyer read aloud the last wishes of his deceased client.

It was not the will which Mr. Cliffe had drawn up. It was of far later date, and, though sufficient for the testator's purpose, was of simplest form, evidently accomplished with no aid but that of the two witnesses. The date was just a month before the death of Luna's uncle.

Neither Philip nor the girls felt any great doubt as to its provisions; yet they listened to the words as they were read out by the lawyer's clear voice.

They heard the commencement—

"I hereby revoke all wills made by me at any time heretofore."

Their attention flagged as the names of the chosen executors followed, with the paragraph desiring the payment of all debts and funeral expenses. Then came the all-important clause, couched in the dead man's own terms—

"In repentance of an old wrong and the bitter enmity I cherished for long years against my deceased brother, Ambrose Gordon, and his wife, the widow of the late James Carroll, I give, devise, and bequeath, in two equal parts, unto my niece, Luna Gordon, and unto Philip Carroll, the son of the said James Carroll, for their absolute use and benefit, all my real and personal estate wheresoever situated. In witness whereof I, the said Godfrey Gordon," etc., etc.——

Even the lawyer hesitated. Luna gave a cry of wonder, which was echoed by the other girls. So this was the document which she had striven to hide—this act of reparation made by her uncle in his last month of life!

"I congratulate you, Miss Gordon," said Mr. Cliffe, bowing towards her. "Your position will suffer but little from this arrangement, and I make no doubt that the late Mr. Gordon's recognition of your claim will be a source of satisfaction to you."

"Phil, he thought of you. He regretted being unjust to our mother. I am so glad of that!"

"Well, we shall have to give up our dreams of contentment in a garret, and make the best of the Abbey!" muttered Theo.

"But, Philip, if you and Luna are to divide the property, who will have the Abbey? That cannot be cut in half."

"You raise a question, Miss Anne, which my late client has solved for you. The minor clauses of this will are unimportant, dealing merely with small legacies to servants, with the exception of one, which decrees "that Hillborough Abbey, in the county of Hertfordshire, be sold and the proceeds of the sale divided as above-mentioned."

"*Sold!*" Theo cried.

"The Abbey sold!" said Luna. Tears came into her eyes as she thought of it.

"Yes, sold," answered the lawyer; "you will not be able to prevent that."

It did seem a pity even to Mr. Cliffe. The grand old historic home, which had been for years in the possession of the Gordon family! But, as he said, there was no escape from that provision.

When the lawyer had departed, taking the will with him, Luna threw herself, sobbing, into her brother's arms.

"Oh, Phil—Phil, my darling, to think that for two months I kept you out of your rights! This shows me more than ever how wrong I have been—how selfish and mercenary! If it were not for Douglas's sake, I should wish that uncle had left everything to you. Wealth has spoilt me! I don't deserve to escape the trouble that I feared so much."

"Luna, my dear, you will have to bear with retaining one-half your stewardship."

"Oh, I wish the poor old Abbey hadn't got to be sold," put in Theo impetuously. "Yes, I know I was grumbling at the place just now. I said we hadn't been happy here, and that we should not be sorry to leave it; but now—well I feel as though my ideas had undergone a revolution. Just fancy any rich stranger, some common person very likely, coming to make a home here!"

"And all the flowers will have to be sold with it," said Anne sorrowfully. "But we mustn't think of the sad part of the wonderful change; think how glad we ought to be! And, Luna, your wedding won't have to be put off now, will it?"

"No," answered Luna, with one of her radiant smiles.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SIR LUCIAN FANE was sitting before his secretary-table that afternoon engaged in correspondence, when the footman informed him that Mr. Carroll had called.

The baronet lost no time before seeking his visitor in the drawing-room.

"You will be surprised to see me here, Sir Lucian," Philip began, "as I gave you my word that I would not intrude upon you; but circumstances have occurred at home which I wish to explain to you."

"You are welcome. I am sorry that events should have deprived us of your society."

The words were spoken sincerely.

"Thank you," said Carroll simply. "I believe from what your daughter once said, in this very room, in your presence and hearing, Sir Lucian, that she returns my love for her. My position in life has changed. We have found a later will of Luna's uncle; and though my income will seem small to you, being some three and a half thousand pounds only, I think I am entitled by it to ask for your leave to speak to Gwendolen. Am I right in believing that you have no objection to me personally?"

"On the contrary, I know no man in whose hands I could more confidently place my daughter's happiness. I own that I have had other views for her; but fathers are subject to disappointments of the kind."

"Believe me, sir. I regret your disappointment, just as I regret that I am not more worthy of your daughter's love."

"We will say no more about that," said Sir Lucian hastily. "I have discovered that Gwendolen is resolved not to marry at all if she does not marry you—it is wonderful what strength of purpose these quiet, gentle girls have—and I desire her happiness beyond other advantages. Now tell me about this will. How was it found, and what does it alter?"

Philip gave a succinct account of the events which had taken place, omitting exact dates, as he had done when telling the same tale to the lawyer. He explained also the provisions of the recovered document, and laid a clear statement of his own financial position before the baronet. The point round which Sir Lucian's interest seemed principally to rally was the arrangement relating to the sale of Hillborough.

"So the Abbey is to be sold," he repeated slowly. "Sold! It is a fine building, though the land is insignificant."

"Yes, we may not keep the place," Philip assented; "but I hope to be able to provide some smaller home not altogether unworthy of your daughter."

"Ah, of course: you want to see Gwendolen! I will send her to you. Don't bear me any ill-will because my prudence was opposed to your wishes, Carroll. We must forget past differences now you are to be my son-in-law!"

"I have never been tempted to think of you with ill-will, Sir Lucian. I should not have spoken to her until to-day had you laid no command upon me."

The few moments that Philip waited after the baronet had left the room seemed interminable, though they were occupied with happiest thoughts. Gwendolen—his fair, gentle, timid Gwendolen, had cared for him so well that she had never varied the determination of which her father had spoken. She would never consent to marry should circumstances part her and Philip. Ah! but now there was no question of parting! This girl had been brave in her love; she had not been ashamed to avow it, to be true to it, to cherish it.

"How shall I ever repay you, dearest?" Philip cried, as she came towards him from between the velvet curtains, looking so lovely, with the blushes mantling on her cheek, and a sweet, shy lowering of her blue eyes, that, he said to himself, he had never known before *how* fair she was.

"Repay me, Philip? Why? for not forgetting you? I could not do that, not since I heard you telling father that—that——"

"I love you." Carroll finished the sentence for her. "Gwen, you might have made a grand match! I cannot give you all the luxuries you have known. I may never win fame for you, though I shall not cease trying. Don't you know that you have thrown away great chances, as the world would say?"

Gwendolen drew her head back from his shoulder, that she might look at him. His eyes were laughing, though his lips were grave.

She laughed aloud—a laugh of perfect content in her choice, and of contempt for those "great chances," and let her head fall back where he had drawn it.

The whole world had altered for Philip Carroll by the time he left Fanleigh. The earth seemed a region

"Holding him away with one hand, she looked him full in the eyes as she made her confession."—*p.* 920.

of entrancing joy; the sky a gracious, smiling canopy sheltering that happy earth.

Before going home, he went to the doctor's and entered unannounced. No need to ask where the master of the house was to be found; a chattering, chirping, cooing chorus told of his presence in the bird-room. Douglas was surrounded by his winged friends—a linnet perched upon his hand, two doves upon his shoulder.

"Ah, Phil! just come from the Abbey? I suppose the sweet girl there is busy over feminine vanities for Christmas Eve—the great to-morrow? Vanities, I call them, as though I weren't a hundred times more vain for her than she can ever be for herself!"

"If a girl's vanity is ever excusable, perhaps it is when she admires her own orange-blossoms," laughed Philip. "Ah, doctor, so your pets aren't jealous? How will they like it when a mistress comes to rule over them?"

"If any bird among them dares to resent her authority, it shall be banished from my aviary! Phil, my dear fellow, what is the meaning of your face? You look in the best of spirits. It isn't only sympathy, I 'm sure. Ah! tell me all about it!"

Philip did not need pressing; the two men spoke confidingly to each other of their romances. Theirs was a hearty friendship, likely to strengthen with the tie of brotherhood.

The doctor's wedding was not deferred, and all Hilldon wished him and his wife a long life and all happiness. Mrs. Wooley cried during the ceremony, but hers were the only tears shed for the occasion.

She had told the girls "not to cry, because cryin' for nothing was like temptin' Providence!" But then, as she herself said in excuse for falling short of her own counsels, "Advice is cheap, but example fetches a long price."

Philip smiled as he gave his sister away, and whispered to her when the ceremony was over—

"To-day you take up a new stewardship, my Luna."

The wedding-party adjourned to Hillborough for an old-fashioned breakfast. Luna looked round at the familiar rooms, but could only afford a slight regret for the home which was to be sold away from her. She had no room in her heart for any sorrow.

"Phil," she said, when the good-byes were being spoken, "do you remember my superstitious fears that trouble would come to us within these walls? If trouble did find us, it has left nothing but happiness behind it. Theo looks brighter—I think she will get over the pain of her disappointment in Mr. Dauncey. You are happy—oh, I—I cannot tell you how glad *I* am!"

"May God give you a wealth of gladness in your life! You are right, Lu, in laughing at your fears. See," he added, pointing to the sculpture above the old stone porch—they were all standing on the steps awaiting the carriage which was to take the doctor and his bride to the station—"See, the angel there is holding a scroll which tells of peace! We have been blessed with the presence of peace under our home-roof here—may angels guard you in your new home, dearest."

There had always been great love between this brother and sister.

"Dear old Abbey! I am saying good-bye to it for ever!"

"Not exactly, I hope, Mrs. Firth," said Sir Lucian, as he pressed her hand; "I think your brother will welcome you often here. It is my plan to buy Hillborough and settle it upon my daughter as a wedding gift!"

"Oh," cried Theo, "you are a dear man!"

"I can never thank you, Sir Lucian!" said Luna, as she turned to him with a radiant smile. "The Abbey is full of memories for us all!"

How dear those memories were, only she herself could know. She had come to the place a wilful, inexperienced girl; she was leaving it a woman.

From this day she would date a new life, which she resolved should be the better and the brighter for those recollections of a chequered girlhood.

The light of God's love had shone upon her days; the shadows of doubt and grief were flitting from her.

As Philip had said, she was entering upon another stewardship, as the wife of the kind-hearted and hard-working doctor whose name was beloved and honoured in the homes of Hilldon.

So we leave her, on the threshold of one of life's great changes.

THE END.

A LITTLE HOMILY FOR MOTHERS.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM COWAN, INCUMBENT OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S, LONDONDERRY.

"Shew piety at home."—1 TIMOTHY v. 4.

"PIETY" consists in the fear, love, and service of God. It is not religiousness, but religion; not outward assent to the articles of a creed, but inward and practical obedience to the will of God; not connection with a Church, but union with Christ.

"Piety at home" is religion carried out in the domestic circle, influencing our conduct, sanctifying our social relationships, and regulating our entire home-life according to the principles of the Word of God. Where there is "piety at home" there will be harmony and happiness, parental love, and filial reverence. God's Word will be read and honoured, family worship will not be neglected, kindness and charity to the poor and needy will be regarded as a duty and performed as a privilege, husbands will love their wives and wives their husbands, and both will unite in the delightful exercise of bringing up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The relative influence of such a state of things must be of the happiest kind. It will tell for good upon the household where it exists. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." The clear stream of his piety which refreshes and gladdens his home will richly give back, as one has said, the soft distillations of mercy to fructify his own heart; and it will have a very wholesome effect upon those about him. The stream will flow into this house and that, amongst this family and that, irrigating and fertilising soils that were hitherto hard and barren.

"Shew piety at home." Home is the peculiar sphere of woman; and of all the members of the family, *the mother* has pre-eminently the greatest influence, either for good or for evil. "The hand that rocks the cradle," it has been well said, "rules the world." The mother that clasps her little one to her bosom is the first to instil into the opening mind of her child those principles which shall "make or mar his character" in the days to come; for "a child left to himself," left without proper training, "bringeth his mother to shame." A distinguished philosopher has said that "all the world is but the pupil and disciple of female influence." And a

celebrated French preacher has remarked that "the greatest moral power in the world is that which a mother exercises over her young child." Upon the training of a child depends his after life–

"The child is father of the man"—

and the training depends before everything else upon the mother. No one is so well adapted as she is to guide the bias of the youthful nature—

"To rear the tender thought,
And teach the young idea how to shoot."

Man lacks what God has given to the woman for this purpose—aptness, freedom of mind, time, patience. No one else so clearly discerns the nature of her son, the strength and weakness of his character, the allowance to be made for his temperament, the degree of severity and indulgence suited to his disposition. It was considerations such as these that led Madame Campan on one occasion, when asked by the Emperor Napoleon what the French nation most needed in order that her youth might be properly educated, to reply, "Mothers." And it was a wise reply. No one else possesses so truly the art of awakening the child's curiosity, of gaining his attention, of keeping his eyes open, and of instructing him by degrees in the practical knowledge of things. No one else has a hand so gentle, and at the same time so firm, to give to the rising plant its early bias—a hand at once too strong to be resisted, and too tender to awaken a wish on the part of the child to resist it. It has been said that, as a general rule, "superior men are all the children of their mother"—that is, she has had most to do with the formation and development of their character. And in proof of this statement we may point to St. Augustine, Alfred the Great, Sir Isaac Newton, John Wesley, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Doddridge, Sir William Jones, General Washington, Legh Richmond, all of whom were blessed with pious or eminently judicious mothers. Listen to the Bible: What is the object of the short preface placed at the head of the life of Samuel, it has been asked, if it is not to explain this holy man of God, this giant in prayer, this first link in the chain of prophets, this great reformer of the State and of religion, by the faith, the vow, the fidelity, and the songs of Hannah, his mother? And is not the piety of Moses, and David, and Josiah, and John the Baptist, and Timothy, to be attributed in great measure to their respective mothers?

The wise man says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It is not enough that we surround our children with all the advantages of a Christian home. There is a direct guidance, an individual discipline, required, if we would have our children walking in the right way. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The very words, "train," "nurture," tell us it is a gentle, constant, gradual process, like the culture of the tender vine, the enfolding of the mother's arms. We are not to force, but to guide; we have to do with the tender twig, not the sturdy oak.

"Children, like bended osiers, take the bow,
And as they first are fashioned always grow."

It is daily, hourly work, requiring increasing watchfulness and care. And it is specially the mother's work. Her training has chiefly to do with the moral nature: the *heart*, the *affections*, the *will*; and she may train her children for God without much learning or many accomplishments, if only she has a consecrated heart, guided by the Word of God. The examples of maternal influence are countless.

A distinguished American statesman, who had been much exposed to the seductive influences of infidelity in the society into which he had been thrown by his position, used to say, "I believe I should have been swept away by the flood of French infidelity if it had not been for the recollection of the time when my sainted mother used to make me kneel by her side, and taking my little hand in hers, caused me to repeat the Lord's Prayer."

"I have found out what made you the man you are," said a gentleman to President Adams. "I have been reading your mother's letters to her son." Washington's mother trained her boy to truthfulness and virtue; and when the messenger called to tell her that her son was raised to the highest station in the nation's gift, she could say, "George was always a good boy."

Mothers, understand your power, feel your responsibility, "shew piety at home." Happy the child who has a pious mother. Happy *your* son if he has a pious mother. Your instructions and examples and prayers will never be lost on him. They may appear to be fruitless at present, but the time will come when the silent, but potent, influence which goes out from them will show itself in the salvation of your child. He may *disregard* your piety, but *forget* it he can never. A good man was once hastening towards a church where a religious service for sailors was being held. Opposite the church, at the door of an inn, he saw seated an aged sailor, who, with folded arms and a cigar in his mouth, looked with indifference, or else with disdain, upon those of his comrades who repaired to public worship. "My friend," said the stranger, approaching him, "come with us into the church." "No," answered the sailor roughly. The stranger quietly remarked, "You appear to have seen hard times. Have you still a mother?" The sailor, raising his head, fixed his eyes upon the speaker and remained silent. "Ah, well! my friend," said the other, "if your good mother was here, what advice, think you, would *she* give you?" The old man arose, and wiping away with the back of his hand a tear, which he vainly attempted to hide, said, with a choking voice, "I will go."

Mothers, "show piety at home" for the sake of your children. They grow up under your care. They form their first ideas under your teaching. They are the constant observers of the passions, the graces, the virtues, and the faults which come forth in your words, tempers, and actions. And they will copy you. They are imitative creatures. Let your children see in you *a holy reverence of God*. Fear His name, honour His Word, and strive so to shape your whole demeanour that they may see that you have been with Jesus, and that, unlike the wicked, God *is* in all your thoughts.

Maintain always, if possible, *a kindly and cheerful temper.* Be anointed with the "oil of joy." Wear "the garments of praise." "True piety is cheerful as the day." Let the streams which issue from the fountain of your piety play and sparkle in the sunlight of a thankful gladness. While you are grave and sober-minded, do not be morose and gloomy, sour and ascetic.

Be truthful. Scorn "the baseness of a lie." Shun every form of equivocation. Imitate Him of whom it was said, "neither was guile found in His mouth." Sacredly keep the promises made to your children and to others, even though the observance involve difficulty and sacrifice. It is better that you should be a loser than that your religion should become so. "Let integrity and uprightness preserve you." Cherish a *strict regard for the public means of grace.* "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." Be found with your family regularly in the house of God. Do not rest content with sending your children there, but accompany them. Do not say to them, "Go," but rather, "Come." "O *come*, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

Do not forget to *pray for your children and with them.* How often have a mother's prayers been blessed to her children! A good woman, on being congratulated on her domestic joys and dutiful children—for they were all walking in the right way—said, "My husband and I have offered up thousands of prayers for our children, and there is not one of them but I have prayed for scores of times before they were born." "Pray without ceasing" for your children. Even in the darkest hour persevere in the spirit of the mother of Augustine, and her reward may be yours. "Go and take heart," said Bishop Ambrose of Milan to her; "it is impossible that the son of these tears should perish." And he did not. Monica lived to see the son for whom she had wept and prayed many years at the feet of Jesus.

It was once said to a mother, "You must lay your account with some one of your children going wrong: what are they more than others?" "Never, never!" was the answer, "while God is in heaven to hear prayer." This was the utterance of a true mother, and a true Christian.

In conclusion, speak a wise word to your children when you have opportunity; always set before them a Christian example, pray for them earnestly, sincerely, perseveringly: in a word, "show piety at home"; and God, faithful to His word, will give you the desire of your heart in the salvation of every child of your bosom. Here is the promise: "I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

THE JEWISH NEW YEAR.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BURNET, M.A.

NEW YEAR CARD.
("May you be writ for a good year.")

New Year is ushered in by most nations with social rejoicings and religious solemnities. There is something in the dawning of a New Year's Day which imparts new vigour to the most languid, and infuses hope into the most desponding. Amidst the uncertainty of life, men hasten to congratulate each other on having passed safely through another stage of their journey, and brace themselves to set out upon the next with fresh confidence and courage. It is a time-honoured custom in our land to ring out the old year and to ring in the new; and as the music of the bells rises and falls upon the midnight air, they seem to speak of thankfulness and hope. So it was that in ancient days the first day of its civil year was, by Divine command, celebrated as a Feast of Trumpets and a season of rejoicing, and to some extent it is so still amongst the Jews of the present day. Before describing the modern usages on this occasion, it may be well to notice briefly what we gather from the Mosaic Law upon the subject. There we find the Feast of Trumpets ordained for the first day of the seventh month, Tizri, and spoken of as a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing trumpets, and a holy convocation, during which no servile work was to be done, and certain special sacrifices were to be offered. At first sight it might not appear to be a New Year's Day.

"The master of the house divides the apple."

According to Exodus xii. 2, compared with xiii. 4, the Jewish year began with the month Abib and the Passover. "This month," said the Lord to Moses and Aaron, "shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." Still these words imply a change, and a new arrangement of time after the departure from Egypt. It has therefore been thought, with considerable reason, that until then a lunar year of 360 days, similar to the Egyptian, had been observed from a very early period, beginning with the month Tizri, which about corresponds with our October. Certain it is that the later Jews had two modes of reckoning the year—the one civil, the other ecclesiastical; the former introduced by the Feast of Trumpets, and used for ordinary purposes—especially those of agriculture—the latter starting from the Paschal Feast, and, like our own Christian year, connected with the religious festivals. It was the ancient Hebrew custom to divide the year into two seasons—summer and winter—Abib being the first month of summer, and Tizri of winter. In the summer half-year the Passover was linked on by the offering of the first sheaf, and by the feast of weeks to the feast of the perfected first-fruits at Pentecost. In the first month of winter were grouped together the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus, each season was consecrated by its own appropriate observances. Hence arises the fact that the Jews everywhere in the present day keep the first day of Tizri as the "Rosh Hashanah," or the beginning of their civil year. It is still a Feast of Trumpets, whilst it is marked by other traditional rites, both interesting in themselves and suggestive of important truths more clearly taught in the New Testament. These we now propose to describe.

The day before the feast is kept as a fast; and after morning services the Jews visit the graves of their friends, on whom they call for intercessory prayer. In the evening they again attend the synagogue; and when at sunset the New Year has begun, they greet each other with the words—"May you be writ for a good year," to which they reply—"And you also." This is said only once, as to repeat the wish would imply a suspicion that the person so greeted had not yet been enrolled in the Book of Life, and a reflection on his piety. After their return home, before supper is served, a cup of honey and a sweet apple are placed on the table. The master of the house divides the apple amongst those present, and each dips his portion in the honey, saying—"To a good year and a sweet one." The next day the devout repair early to the synagogue. In addition to the usual morning prayers, the service then consists of the reading of certain passages of Scripture, of blessings and legends appropriate to the occasion. The first lesson from the Law is Genesis xxi. and Numbers xxix. 1—6, and the second from the Prophets, 1 Samuel i. and ii. 10. After these follows the most striking and important rite of this festival, the blowing of the Shophar, or trumpet made of ram's horn or of metal wrought in a similar form. To the uninitiated stranger this may appear an empty and an almost puerile ceremony; but to the earnest and well-instructed Israelite it is fraught with a very serious significance. As many as ten distinct reasons have been given by the Rabbins for this practice, which need not be here enumerated. That most worthy of notice is the fact that this is the first of the ten days of penitence closed by the Day of Atonement, and that the trumpet is sounded to arouse the attention of all, and to call them to turn to God

and repent. Indeed, the oral Law teaches them to regard this festival as nothing less than a day of judgment, in which the Almighty Judge pronounces sentence on every individual. "As the merits and sins of a man are weighed at the hour of his death, so," it is said, "every year on the New Year's Day the sins of every man that cometh into the world are weighed against his merits. Every man that is found righteous is sealed to life; every man that is found wicked is sealed to death. But the judgment of the intermediate" (doubtless the most numerous class) "is suspended until the Day of Atonement. If in the meanwhile they repent, they too are then sealed to life. Penitence, prayer, and almsgiving, can avert the evil decree." Since, then, such is the doctrine associated with this ceremony, it is not surprising that, to those that believe in its meaning, the sounding of the New Year's trumpet is invested with peculiar solemnity. For the blowing of the Shophar four qualified persons are selected, three of whom stand by, whilst the fourth blows it. The blasts are thirty in number, each having a proper and separate name, and so long as they continue, all the congregation listens with the most devout and reverent attention. The whole scene reminds the thoughtful spectator of that never-to-be-forgotten day when during the promulgation of the Law their forefathers stood trembling at the base of Mount Sinai, and when

> "On Israel's awe-struck ear,
> The Voice exceeding loud,
> The trump that angels quake to hear,
> Rolled from the deep dark cloud."—KEBLE.

Special prayers are appointed for the day, which conclude with these words: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments, and commandest us to hear the sound of the Shophar. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who hast preserved us alive, sustained us, and brought us to enjoy this season." The person appointed to do so now calls out the names of the different notes of the trumpet, to which the trumpeter responds in order, thus :—

> "Tekeingah, Shevorim, Terungah, Tekeingah;
> Tekeingah, Shevorim, Terungah, Tekeingah;
> Tekeingah, Shevorim, Terungah, Tekeingah.
> Tekeingah, Shevorim, Tekeingah;
> Tekeingah, Shevorim, Tekeingah;
> Tekeingah, Shevorim, Tekeingah;
> Tekeingah, Terungah, Tekeingah;
> Tekeingah, Terungah, Tekeingah;
> Tekeingah, Terungah, Tekeingah;
> Tekeingah, Tekeingah, Tekeingah, Gedoulah."

With this singular melody and other recitations the public ordinances of the festival are brought to a close.

There is, however, one other peculiar custom of a more private character connected with the Feast of Trumpets, which is observed at least by Oriental Jews. At the end of the day they go down to the banks of the nearest river, and in some quiet spot offer a prayer, whilst they shake the skirts of their garments over the water, to signify that their sins are cast away. If fish are seen in the river it is a good sign, as it is supposed that, like the scapegoats of old, they will take away their guilt. This is called the Tashlick, or "casting away," and is derived from the promise of the Prophet Micah: "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Well would it be for our Jewish brethren if they all saw the

"The blowing of the 'Shophar.'"

"They shake the skirts of their garments over the water."—*p.* 929.

true meaning of this prophecy, and, as very many of them have already done, would have recourse to the Fountain opened in the blood of Christ for sin and uncleanness. To a Christian mind there is a painful contrast between these barren rites and that worship in spirit and in truth which our Lord has taught us as alone acceptable to God. The principle which underlies much of this ceremonial, that of human merit, though so natural to the unrenewed mind, is distinctly opposed to the teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments. Even in the Law acceptance with God is made conditional on perfect obedience. "It shall be our righteousness," said Moses, "if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us;" and it was added, "Cursed is everyone that confirmeth not all the words of this Law to do them." Still plainer is the language of the prophet: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." In the New Testament the truth on this subject is written as with a sunbeam, and on the dark background of man's guilt the one way of reconciliation with a just and Holy God is revealed in the Cross of Jesus. It was this message of love and peace which fired the heart of Mr. Spurgeon, and made his ministry such a mighty power for good. From the time when in his youth he first took home to himself the invitation, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," he never ceased to proclaim it with fervid eloquence and zeal; and when, at the beginning of the present year, his end was drawing near, the truths that he had preached did not fail to support him in his hours of deepest need; for in his last letter to a friend he wrote: "The Gospel is good when it is green and new to us, but it suits us better and better as our autumn of life mellows our knowledge. We have no inclination to change—I might almost say no temptation to alter. None but Jesus, nothing but Grace."

LOVE'S PORTRAIT.

A SERMON PREACHED IN AUSTRALIA.

"And though I shall have all faith [enough] to dislodge mountains, and yet should have no love, I am nothing."—1 COR. xiii. literal translation of part of ver. 2.

THERE is no slight cast on faith here; rather is there an acknowledgment of the supremacy of love in the Kingdom of God. St. Paul was the last man to undervalue faith; nay, he did not despise even the gifts bestowed on the Corinthian Christians for temporary uses, such as prophecy, insight into mystery, and pre-eminent knowledge. But love, he says, is nobler, more divine than all of them: nay, more—so essential a characteristic of the Christian life is it, that without it a man is nothing—a moral and religious cypher.

In this chapter we have St. Paul's picture of love; a picture which, by universal consent, is allowed to be the most exquisite and finished portrait ever drawn in words. Neither Michael Angelo's chisel nor Raphael's brush ever produced anything so touching, so all-subduing, so all-satisfying, as this representation of charity by the Apostle of the Gentiles. And I would call attention to the fact that it was *the champion of faith* who drew the picture. But although that alone challenges our attention, are there not also *special* reasons why we should earnestly gaze on and reverently study this portrait of love in these days? Are we not in danger of forgetting the *body* of Christianity by dwelling too much on its *outer garments*, by putting its drapery on the throne which should be occupied by its substance?

Love is the substance of Christianity.—If love be not crowned queen of our soul and life, then, St. Paul be witness, we are nothing! Observe that he does not say "not a Christian," but "nothing"; a cumberer of a place which might and should be occupied by better men.

In the heat of controversy, amid unsettling debates

on the questions of the hour, it will surely be well for us to fix our soul's eye on this glorious figure of charity. We *may* fall in love with it, and so make it our own, and, instead of being nothing, become something, at any rate. Something? Yes, something divine; something of use for the glory of God and the service of man.

I. Let us, then, first look at its *attributes;* and while doing so, I would have each ask himself, Am I at all like this? Have I these Christian qualities?

"Love suffereth long." Are we *patient* with people whose views of Church and State, of society and life, differ from our own? Have we that *long-mindedness* (that is the meaning of the original word for long-suffering) which is tolerant of other men's ideas and habits? or do we fire up into violent speech or print against all who do not see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and speak with our tongues?

"Love is kind," or, better still, *gracious.* I cannot but think that one chief cause of the little headway made by Christianity is due to the lack of this graciousness of love amongst us. Let us show we are Christians indeed by the *winsome attractiveness* of our charity.

Have this graciousness, and you will have a magnetic force that is bound to influence others and draw them to the Master. Men will say of you, "Those men are gracious; surely the love of God is in them."

Again: which of us is not abashed at finding the following qualities conspicuous by their absence in St. Paul's portrait of charity?

"Love is not envious; love swaggers not nor swells; love is not ungentlemanly nor selfish; love does not fly into a rage, nor take note of an injury, nor treasure up an insult; love delights not in injustice, but in truth."

Is *our* love like that?

Again: has our love these master-strokes? Can it "bear all things?"—that is, is it tight-proof against the showers of attacks from enemies, against affronts, slanders, persecutions? Does it "believe and hope all things?"—that is, does it put the best construction on other men's words and actions? And does it "endure all things?"—that is, has it the cardinal virtue of fortitude, the courage of a soldier of Christ?

Sure I am that, if you make this love your own, you will be less disposed to speak evil against others than before. That wholesale condemnation of men of other views than yours, whether in political, social, or religious matters, is certainly no sign of a genuine Christian love, common (alas, how common!) though it be.

Swayed by love, you will see more and more clearly that such a spirit is not in harmony with that of your Lord.

His spirit is a spirit of love, and he who misses the love of His character misses the very soul and life of Christianity.

To the followers of Christ there is one thing, and *one thing only,* to be indignant with, and to denounce: that is, *canting hypocrisy.* The man who puts on the garment of piety when there is none of it in his heart and life; the man who pretends to be speaking and working for God and His Church when all the time he is aiming at his own self-interest, is a man you may rightly denounce with might and main. Such a man brings not only ruin on his neighbour, but contempt on religion and the Church; nay, on God Himself. For your battle against such you have the warrant of your Master's example; and, following Him, you can never go wrong.

II. Let us next examine the *attitude* of love. Like a statue it stands ever *erect:* "Charity never *fails.*" And why not? Because it is, like God, eternal. "God *is* love." Love is the maturity, the perfection of the full-grown Christian. Thus it has *even now* a touch of the future life of heaven. Of all of us, even the best of us, St. Paul's words are true: "We see in a mirror, in an enigma;" the mists of earth and flesh distort our soul's vision; nevertheless, he who has love shall not go astray amid the perplexing problems of life; love is ever true; love ever shows and leads in the right way. Faith may waver, hope may at times be timid and doubtful, but love, true Christian love, masters all, and never fails of its mark. It will bring us at last to "the King in His beauty;" and then will take place that grand transformation and final completion of our character; for "we shall be *like* Him, for we shall see Him as He is." The open vision of Him who is love will metamorphose, transfigure us into His likeness, and the full meaning of the poet will then be realised—

"Love is heaven, and heaven is love."

III. Let us now consider some results of our study of St. Paul's portrait of charity. (1) Clearly we ought to *pray* for this love. It is not a *natural* quality; it is a *grace,* a gift of God. Good-nature is not Christian love, though it may become so under the purifying touch of the Holy Spirit who is "the fire of love." *He* can change the hot-tempered James and John into the gentle imitators of the Christ. Even the persecuting Saul, and the sensual Augustine of Hippo, under His converting and sanctifying power became the meek and pure and loving ministers of Him who meekly carried the cross. The wolves became lambs; *but not without prayer for the grace of charity.* All of you know of the work they did for Christ and His Church after the portrait of love had been impressed on their souls. You, too, would wish to do something for Christ and His Church. Pray, then, for this grace of love. Always remember that you can help man but little *unless you love him as a brother.* Devotion to the service of man as a brother is a sure sign of devotion to God in the soul.

Did not Zacchæus set about the restitution of wrongs and the redemption of past neglect as soon as the Saviour had called him?

Did not Samuel ask his people to point out to him anything he had robbed them of, and say, "I will restore it"?

Their actions were prompted by love, by the spirit of brotherhood within.

We may discharge all debts and yet one will ever remain: "Owe no man anything save to love one another."

Pray for this love, then, and you will not be slow to see your brother's bodily and spiritual needs.

Love places us near Christ, and to be near Him is to be under the attraction of pity and tenderness, of forgiveness and benevolence.

He who is near the Master will ever hear a voice crying, "love is supreme; He who follows Jesus must, like Him, go about doing good."

The portrait of love is the portrait of Jesus; and its teaching is this: "Go, and be, and do like Him." Surely that is worth praying for!

(2) In conclusion, let me urge upon you, especially, the duty of loving *the Church as a Church.*

It is our portrait-painter St. Paul who says, "While we have time let us do good unto all men; and specially unto them that are of the household of faith."

Those who are baptised into the Name of Christ, those who are preparing for the Christian life, our fellow-communicants, our ministers and teachers, have a special claim upon our love; and of these your pastors more especially—*in these days more than ever.* If St. Paul felt the need of the prayers of his flock, how much more do we need your prayers and sympathy and co-operation!

But you cannot pray for us unless you first pray for and obtain this grace of love. The flock is ever crying for the Pastor's love; does the flock ever reflect that the Pastor *needs and has a claim on its love?*

Brethren, pray for love, and then pray for us.

(3) Remember the end. *By the grace of love to the face of love.*

Love is the very essence of God, the very life and service of heaven. When the great Italian prophet-poet Dante has surveyed the mysteries and glories of Paradise, he ends his immortal "Divina Commedia" with these words:—

> "The glorious vision here my pow'rs o'ercame,
> But now my will and wish were sway'd by love
> (As turns a wheel on every side the same);
> Love—at whose word the sun and stars do move."

Yes; love is the glory and power of heaven: every thought, every wish, every deed *there* is prompted and swayed by love. Who, then, will not echo from the depths of his soul the words of that beautiful hymn—

> "From the overshadowing
> Of Thy gold and silver wing
> Shed on us, who to Thee sing,
> Holy, heavenly love"?

A GOLDEN FORTUNE.

"JACK! Jack!"

"Sh! can't you see I'm busy now?" returned Jack, without glancing up from his block and the boot he was vigorously brushing. It was a very big boot, and seemed to need a good many finishing touches, but it was the second of the pair, or Jamie would have found it still harder to wait; as it was, he stood by, drumming impatiently on the lid of his box, till the customer had paid down his penny, and crossed the street into the railway station.

"I thought he never meant to go," cried Jamie, with a sigh of relief. "You needn't have wasted all that time on his old boots. Look here what I've found; it was down by the big lamp in the square."

"Why, that's half a sovereign," gasped Jack in quite a startled voice, "a regular fortune!"

"Isn't it? how many hundred boots should we have had to brush for that? We'll go in here, and get something to eat first thing; it's months since we got anything really nice."

They were standing close to a coffee-shop: a warm fragrance streamed out from the doorway, cakes and pies and muffins and rolls filled both the windows, there was a shining coffee-urn dimly visible on the counter behind. The two outsiders gazed in with eager eyes. They would be welcome guests with that magic coin in hand, and the streets looked very bleak and bare by comparison—not a likely customer in sight; nothing but a solitary policeman pacing his beat, a distant acquaintance of their own; but at the sight of him, all the glow suddenly faded out of Jack's face.

"What use is it?" he said. "We can't spend it, after all; it's not ours, and we'll have to go to the police office with it, and if some fellow claims it, we'll perhaps get a sixpence for it, or perhaps—and that's a deal more likely—we'll get nothing."

Jamie's face clouded blankly. "There's no need to go telling the police anything about it," he cried; "who's to know if it belongs to anyone? It was sticking in a crack in the gutter: if it was a purse or a parcel—well, there might be some sense in going to the police-station about it."

"It's the rule, though," persisted Jack; "I've heard Andrew say so, no end of times. Why, there was a man sent to gaol, only the other day, for keeping a five-pound note he'd picked up somewhere."

"Then I might as well have kicked it down the nearest drain, for it's the last we'll ever see or hear of it," was Jamie's angry comment. Jamie never hinted at kicking unless he was in grim earnest. His kicking days were over; it's not possible to cultivate that accomplishment with only one foot to stand upon, and a runaway cart had crushed the other till it was very little use even for standing. Jack had been his great standby through that woful time, and since then their beats had lain close together, and any good-

fortune that befell one, was as a matter of course considered common property.

"We'll go and speak to Andrew, at any rate," suggested Jack after a minute or two which had been filled up by staring solemnly in at the baker's window. A fresh tray of hot pies had just been deposited in the background, but happier people would buy and eat them if that unexpected fortune was to be handed over to safer keeping.

"I wish I'd never seen the thing!" said Jamie mournfully; "once Andrew puts eyes on it, we're done for. It's too bad of you, Jack!"

Nevertheless, Jamie generally came round to Jack's way of looking at things: five minutes later they were taking counsel with Andrew in a convenient doorway.

"Of course take it up to the office, my laddie; and if it's no claimed, ye'll get it back in a bittie," the policeman promptly decided. "Anyhow, you've done the right thing, and there's aye a satisfaction in that; you're a pair of honest laddies."

"It's Jack; it's little the office would see of it, but for him," grumbled Jamie, with what Jack considered rather unnecessary candour.

The policeman laughed. "Good for you, then, that Jack is at your back. You had better go up with it now."

It was not far to the office—only the length of the street. A superintendent took the precious coin and dropped it into a big drawer, and took down the names and beats of the finders; and then they went down the steps and into the street again, just as poor as before—nay, a great deal poorer, it seemed to them, after their brief possession of that golden fortune.

As Andrew truly remarked, they had done the right thing, and that ought to have been a consolation; but somehow it wasn't. The streets had never looked drearier, customers were few and far. The baker's window was lighted up now, and Jamie propped himself against the door and surveyed it forlornly. All the brightness had gone out of his small face, and Jack looked quite as dismal out of sympathy.

"'How many hundred boots should we have to brush for that?'"—*p.* 932.

"It was the only chance we ever had, and there you've gone and thrown it away," was all Jamie could say, in response to a faint suggestion that it *might* come back again. "It's all very well for rich people to be honest; it doesn't mean as much for them."

Jack couldn't help agreeing with him; and after that, they did not often talk about the lost fortune—it was rather a sore subject. Whether it was claimed or not, they were none the wiser. One thing was certain, no reward came their way, and in course of time they gradually forgot the one fleeting glimpse of wealth that had come to them out of the gutter that dull wintry afternoon.

That was a rather hard winter for the two lads. Jamie's leg interfered with business sadly. Some days he was hardly able to limp to his corner by the station, even with Jack's arm to help him, and he could not run after customers to attract attention as the other boys did. Jack kept to his post in all weathers, but people would not take the trouble to get their boots polished, when the first half-dozen steps made them as muddy as ever, and the pair had to hold many a council-meeting as to the best way of laying out their scanty gains.

As long as they could be together they did not greatly mind occasional hard times. There had been lots of them before, but they had always contrived to pull through, and get a good deal of fun betweenwhiles, too. That corner by the station was a splendid place for seeing all that was going on. Sometimes there were excursions, and processions with banners and bands. Once the Shah came with a troop of soldiers behind him, and two old ladies gave them threepence each for the loan of their brush-boxes, to stand upon and see his dusky majesty. There were few days that there was not a fire somewhere or other, and a grand dash-out of the engines from the fire station close by, or a runaway cab-horse, or an accident of some kind, or at least the possibility of one; and whatever it might be, Jack and Jamie never failed to get the earliest tidings of the disaster, and see it through to the end.

But this winter there was a difference. Jamie seemed to lose interest in sight-seeing. Even an omnibus breaking down one evening—and omnibuses did not break down every day by any means—was not sufficient to stir him up to the proper pitch of excitement. Jack put down his box, and looked at him in sorrowful surprise.

"Why, Jamie, I raced the whole way down Circus Road to tell you in time. I thought you would have waked up for that."

"I can't," said Jamie wearily; "I believe I'm sick, Jack."

"You're not to be anything of the kind," ordered Jack authoritatively; "what time have we to go and be sick like other people? You sit down and take a rest in that corner, and we'll go home early tonight—you'll be right enough by morning."

But not even the rest in the corner could put Jamie to rights. He lay in his box bed for a couple of days, and Jack got an old soldier from the next house, who was said to have been a doctor in his youth, to come in and look at him.

"There's nothing much the matter with him yet," announced that worthy, "but I'm no saying what it'll turn to. He wants mair food, and a bottle or two of that cod-liver oil to feed him up."

"I could have told him that much myself," said Jack, going back to the invalid's couch—"it don't take much to make a doctor, after all."

He looked longingly at the rows of pale green bottles in the druggists' windows he passed that day. It was not a decoction he had ever had any craving for on his own account, but just now it seemed worth all the pies and muffins in the baker's opposite, and there seemed as little chance of getting one as the other.

"Why, Jack, it's surely something new for you to be looking at drug-shops," said a gruff voice at his elbow. Jack looked round to see his acquaintance the policeman.

"I was wishing I'd got one of those big oil bottles for Jamie. They say he wants it badly."

"Where is he? I've not seen him about of late."

"In bed," returned Jack briefly. There was a huskiness in his throat that made talking inconvenient.

"Do you remember a half-sovereign one of you found last November?" inquired Andrew suddenly. "Go you up to the office, and ask for the inspector. I was hearing something about it a day or two since, but I didna come across you."

Jack asked no questions. He shouldered his box and trudged off at once, passing by two possible customers on the way: Some other boy might get the benefit of them that morning.

"Half-sovereign? ah, yes, I remember," said the great man, turning over the leaves of a ponderous ledger. "The six months expired a few days ago, so if you sign your name here, you can have it back. No one has claimed it."

Jack signed; it wasn't in his best hand, and he forgot to put any flourish to the tails of the capitals, as he remembered rather regretfully afterwards. He was hardly likely ever to have a second chance of recording his name in such a volume; but at the time he did not think of that. He held that precious coin in his hand once more. It had meant pies and pastry once, now it meant food, medicine, life itself for Jamie, the lifting of an awful cloud of fear and dread for himself. What would anything in the wide world have mattered to him again, if Jamie had been out of it?

And so they pulled through this hard time also. Till one has lived on pennies and halfpennies, it is impossible to realise how many luxuries can be extracted from a whole half-sovereign. The very sight of such a sum is an important reason for getting better.

"Yet we should just have gone and eaten it all up in a week or two," said Jamie the first time he came back to his beat in the bright spring sunshine. "As it is, it came when we wanted it a great deal worse; and not even Andrew can say we didn't get it fairly, or tried to hush it up, as lots of other boys would."

Jamie had forgotten the debate over that point in front of the baker's window, and Jack was not given to raking up past shortcomings. Besides, was it not his name that would go down to posterity in that ponderous ledger in the police office?—after that, was it worth while arguing over comparative trifles?

SARAH PITT.

THE NORNES OF LIFE.

BY THE REV. ROBERT MUNRO, B.D., F.R.S.E., MINISTER OF OLD KILPATRICK, GLASGOW.

IN Scandinavian mythology life was regulated by three Nornes, or fates, whose decrees were irrevocable. These Nornes were represented as young maidens, and were named respectively Urd the past, Verdandi the present, and Skuld the future. The Past, the Present, and the Future, they presided over life, and they spun the threads of its destiny. The thread that is spun, that is the past; the thread slipping through the finger, that is the present; and the thread that is still on the distaff, that is the future.

This old-world idea of life, if grim and fatalistic, is also picturesque, and not without deep philosophic insight. Our life is not one and single; it is triple. It has its roots in the past—in the threads that have been spun; it has its hopes in the future; and its activity, its outgo, is confined to the present. These stages of the mighty triad are inseparable. The forces of the past are not annihilated; they are living in the present. We are to-day the sum-total of what we have been. The years through which we have come are with us still, inspiring us to nobler deeds or dragging us down into deeper depths. And as we are now, so we shall be. The future is no strange unrelated sphere; it is the evolvement of the present—the spinning of the thread on the distaff.

I. First of all, let us consider the past.

There are two ways in which the greater part of the world deal with the past. They try to forget it, to hide it, to sink it out of sight in the dark waters of Lethe. They do not care to be confronted with evil as with a spectre. They do not care to wander, as in a charnel-house, amidst its baleful, deathful memories. They do not care to look into the folly and the madness of the past, and to see there, as in a mirror, the ghastly picture of themselves.

Then there are those who, instead of ignoring the past, live in it as if it were the atmosphere in which their souls can alone breathe. They are always speaking about it, they are always travelling back into it, and acting over again its little personal drama. Like the Ancient Mariner, they hold with their glistening eye every one who cares to listen. They tell about their past happiness or misery, about their joys and sorrows, the things they hoped for, the things they feared, the things they achieved, and the things in which they failed. Never are they so enthusiastic as when they are away in the mists and the cloudlands of a day that is dead.

Now, each of these relations to the past is utterly false. Granted that your yesterday is full of guilt, and that the shadow is upon it, you do not regard it rightly when you draw the veil over it and try to forget. The past, even though it should be one of fire and flame, has in it a force that may be, that ought to be, remedial and helpful. Bring it into the light, let it glare upon you with open eye, let it search your soul; and if you do, you will not seek to get away from it by forgetting: you will seek to bring it to God, to the Cross of Christ, to the feet of Eternal Righteousness. There alone it can be blotted out; there conscience can be at rest, and the will can begin a new life, chastened not less than guided by the bitter experience of yesterday.

Again, by living in the past—past feelings, past emotions, past memories—many become utterly unfitted for the work of the present or the future. I have known several students with a great university reputation, and of whom much was expected, who came to nothing. They never got beyond their academic glories. They rested in them, they talked and bragged about them, and they became gigantic failures. It is so with many in the moral and spiritual life: they promise well, but they achieve nothing. They live upon the experiences and victories of the past, and they are practically dead to the thousand forms of activity around them.

Let us see, then, that we occupy ourselves rightly towards the past. Let us neither try to forget it nor to dwell in it. Let us learn its lessons, and take them with us into the business and the duty of each day. Let us gather together its influences, and may they be as the motive power, propelling us to better and more hopeful action.

II. Further, consider the infinite importance of the issues involved in the present.

In the present the Norne Verdandi draws the thread of destiny through our fingers. Goodly or badly executed, it passes out and away continuously. There is no ceasing in this weaving process of life.

> "In the currents of life, in the tempests of motion,
> In the fervour of act, in the fire, in the storm,
> Hither and thither,
> Over and under,
> Wend I and wander.
> Birth and the grave,
> Limitless ocean,
> Where the restless wave
> Undulates ever
> Under and over,
> Their seething strife,
> Heaving and weaving
> The changes of life.
> At the whirling loom of Time unawed,
> I work the living mantle of God."

What is our present? What are the energies that enter into it, the aims that shape and dominate its activity?

Are we one with the great stream of life—mere drops merged in the mighty whole, and borne on resistlessly into the vast ocean where all the rivers of time are emptied?

One with life's stream we are. We go in its current;

its forces enter into us and carry us forward; we are the product of the great living organism of humanity; we are the outcome and the result of thousands of generations, and the life that we live to-day is coloured by the thought and the action of the ages.

But we are more than this—more than links in the huge chain of human life. We are individuals having our own distinctive significance and vocation. Each becomes a world to himself. He has his own soul, his own disposition, his own destiny. The sphere within which he moves is the common sphere of the race; but for him there is a sphere within that—the sphere of individual action and responsibility.

It is this that makes life so real, so tragic. The individual has to act his own part, to bear his own burden, and to struggle up through conflict to the true height of his manhood. As the offspring and representative of God, he must keep his soul in fellowship with the Divine; he must rise above his fall, and become freed from the deeds of the flesh. A cross must enter into his life—that cross that can destroy the power of sin. He must die to self, that he may live to God. As lord or king over the earth, he is further called upon to conquer the world. But if he is to conquer the world, and come out of the battle pure and strong, it can never be by using the world's own arts and weapons. It is only as we conquer ourselves that we can hope to occupy a right relation to the powers and temptations that surround us. Unless Christ reigns in the soul, unless He sustains us in the unequal combat, we must inevitably go down before the world, we must sink under its materialising sway.

Ah! what a task is this that each morning's sun brings with it! There is the forming of character the doing of duty, the battling against error and selfishness and sin that, Laokoon-wise, seek to enfold us in their horrid embracement. We may think each day as it comes little and poor and commonplace; yet it is God's own gift, calling upon us to enter on our inheritance, and to wrest from life and the world the victories that are possible to all. It is a point in the eternities, an island in the wide infinite sea upon which we can stand and grasp the life of heaven or sink into the anguish of despair.

To-day is our day, and we must make the best of it. To be disloyal to the present, to disclaim its duties, to refuse its burdens, is to be untrue to ourselves and to the Kingdom of God. "Let the dead bury their dead; follow thou Me," must be the motto of our lives. Our work lies around and before us. We must follow Jesus; His cross must become our cross, and His will our will.

III. The Future constitutes the next great element in our lives.

The future is what is to be—the to-morrow that has so much in it for all, and that, in the main, brings gladness to the weary and heavy-laden heart of humanity. Disappointment may be in the past, the present may be hard and troublous, yet as we look out into the future we think of it as containing some brighter and happier day.

The fatalistic view of existence has given place to the Christian. It is no Fate, no Norne, that watches over our destiny: it is the God of love, the Father of mercy. The part of it that is to be, need not then go on evolving itself from what was as by an unchangeable and iron law. At any moment there may be a break in it—the introduction of a new power and a new hope. The prodigal, hungry in soul, and seeking to satisfy his hunger on the empty swine-husks, can return to the old home and the old love. The mentally perplexed, the morally bad, the weak, the helpless, the despairing—for all the future may become as a new year, the birth-hour of a life fresh, and spiritual, and ennobling. Christ, the Son of God, has made that possible. He has come to seek and to save the lost, to break the threads that bind men to the past and to the world, and to unite their hearts by the cords of love to the throne of God. No one need despair of himself. In Christ there is life and hope and a welcome for even the chief of sinners: "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

Our relation to the future should therefore always be a hopeful relation. There are some who as they allow their glance go out into what is before are filled with strange fears and forebodings. They dream all kinds of evil will come, and the cloud not bigger than a man's hand is magnified into a mountain. This is a foolish, even as it is an unhealthy, attitude of spirit. It lacks faith, and is weak and shortsighted. It does not see the light of the Divine presence gilding with gold the mountain-tops, and appearing through each rift in the darkened heavens. It does not discern the form of Jesus going in life's pathway as the Great Captain who leads His people to conquest and to glory: it simply projects its own form and its own fears into the future. And as it does, what wonder should the outlook be dark and uncertain?

Further, the thought of the future should not only be filled with hope and brightness: it should be as a stimulus and inspiration to higher and better things. The future is, for us, an unexplored and unconquered territory. Shall we not, then, go forward boldly, and make it ours? To be indifferent to it, to be oppressed by the thought of it, is to play the coward, and not the man.

And yet of how many is this, alas, too true! There is no spur in the future to lead them on—no inspiration to conflict and to victory. The years come and go, and they find them pretty much where they found them five, ten, or fifteen years ago. There is little or no progress in their lives, little or no advancement up the heights that lead to the palace of God.

May it not be, too, that we, as we look back this day along the way that we have come, feel utterly disappointed with ourselves and our meagre attainments? How few of life's infinite possibilities have we realised! How few of its prophecies of greatness and achievement have been fulfilled in us! How many are the failures and the wrecks that lie behind us, and rise up to shame and upbraid! Let us awake, then, to a true consciousness of what we are and may become. The thread is still on the distaff; let us have a care that as it rolls off it will be better and smoother and stronger than that which has been already spun.

IN BIRCHEN GLADES.

QUIET woodland ways!
Where grass is deep and drooping fern-leaves quiver,
Where through the distant haze
The village spire points heavenwards for ever;
Where the receding view
Is lost in blue,—

When earthly worries cling,
And strife disturbs the peace that should be ours,
How sweet it is to bring
Our cares, and leave them with your trees and flowers,
Amid the glimmering shades
Of birchen glades!—

To leave them buried deep
In greenwood moss, where nothing may awake them;
To let the kindly sleep
Of sylvan solitudes and byways take them—
To sepulchre each grief
In mould and leaf.

For here there is no death,
No dark despair, no hopeless, sad decaying
The bitter north wind's breath
But sows the blossoms of a future Maying;
The storm that tears the bowers
Is scattering flowers.

Perchance our sorrows, too,
Left in the tenderness of nature's keeping,
Will blossom forth anew
In living bloom and fragrance from their sleeping,
Nourished by mother earth
To happier birth.

Perchance our buried woe
Will burst in light, its dismal fetters riven,
And we at last shall know
There is no death beneath the eye of Heaven:
No death below, above,
But God's great love.

ARTHUR L. SALMON,

TOLD UNDER THE SCISSORS.

BY THE REV. FRED. HASTINGS.

"LIKE it cut short, sir?" said one to whose tender mercies I committed myself while lounging back in the high adjustable chair of a hair-cutting saloon.

"Short, please."

I gazed in the glass in front of me, and tried to form some estimate of the man who was performing tonsorial rites. He had a strongly marked face that could not fail to attract attention. Brow low and wrinkled, big bushy eyebrows, well-shaped nose and chin, black, well-trimmed moustache, firm-set mouth. But the eyes—well, there was a sort of dark lightning in them. The face was that of a man who had seen more than ordinary in life. It was not wrong to ponder what the man had possibly passed through.

Conversation opened by remarks about the weather, then the state of business. Soon we were having a confidential chat, while snip, snip, snip, went the scissors. By-and-bye I was listening most attentively to the tale of the life of this shaver and hair-cutter.

"I have not always been in this business. No, I was never apprenticed to it, but I know it well. Learned it first on board ship. Then improved the art in the army. I ran away to sea when I was only fifteen. Was brought up in Aberdeen. Fancied I would like to see the world. Did not care much for school. Father was very strict, very exacting. I could never do anything to please him. Mother had to side with father. I often got the 'tawse,' and even something worse. I did not care for so much repression and punishment. I bore it up to the age of fifteen; then I left home as a 'stowaway.' Thought a sailor's would be such a free life; but, my word! I had to work! I rose from cabin-boy to be able to take the place of an A.B: you know what that means, I suppose?"

"Yes, an able-bodied seaman."

"Right, sir."

"Don't cut my hair too short, mind."

"All right, sir. Well, I got tired of the English merchant service, and shipped in a Yankee clipper. Didn't we have to work on board that ship! It was bad enough on board English ships; but they are not 'a circumstance' to the Yanks. However, I saw more of the world. Then I got tired of the sea, and enlisted in the army. Was sent after a time to India. Served eight years. Wanted to see active service. Was disappointed. I was always parading, moving, cleaning, card-playing, flirting, drinking. I did not drink much of the strong drinks, or I should have been dead ere this. I was weary of the everlasting parade. Resolved to quit. Alas! I deserted. Was caught, unluckily. Got six months in prison—terrible time! Thought I should go mad. Tried once to dash my brains out; but my head was thick and hard. I believe it is really stronger than the stone wall. Got longer punishment for attempting suicide. That imprisonment broke my spirit. You don't shrink from me because I have been in prison, do you?"

"Certainly not—go on; but don't take all my hair off."

"Well, when I was free I went back to my old sailor-life. Went to America. I tired again of the sea. Tried then for a barber's billet. Could cut hair well; had learned it thoroughly by cutting the hair of soldiers and sailors. I got a berth in Brooklyn, and learnt a number of dodges in the Yankee saloons. Still, I didn't stay long. I could not bear the long hours. I had become, through my sailor and soldier drilling, a clever athlete and horseman. I took to doing trapeze work. Then I went with a travelling caravan. Shan't easily forget how that was. I had thrown myself out of a place by bad temper, and had wandered about till I was right down in my luck. Had parted even with my shirt for bread. Had had to sleep under any bush. Why did I have to find such quarters? Because I lacked the money to pay for lodgings at night. I often crept into an outhouse; but was afraid I should get caught.

"One morning, after a very cold night under a bush, I strolled into the presence of the proprietor of a travelling show. It was very early; the people were packing up and moving off.

"'Can't you give me a job?'

"'Can you groom horses?'

"'Yes.'

"'Groom that.'

"I began.

"'Better pull off your coat to it,' said the boss.

"'No, thank you. I prefer to keep on my coat and do my work.'

"He saw through my shuffle.

"'Oh, that's it,' said the new employer. 'Ah! you want some breakfast, my good fellow. I fancy you would like some.'

"'Rather!' (He elongated that word.)

"You can imagine the keenness of my appetite. Then I got a rig-out, and then I set to work.

"He soon saw I was equal to my undertaking. He *was* a good fellow, and no mistake! Generous. Saw through a fellow at once! He did not scowl at you because you were down in the world. I took to him, and stayed with him for years. I became even his star performer after a time. Rose from trapeze to bare back-horse performances. Why, I could run after a horse, put my hand on its side and leap up without any trouble. It is only a knack. It wants confidence, that's all. It was exciting work, going round and round in the face of such numbers of people, at times."

Snip, snip, went the scissors. It was doubtful whether any hair would be left on my head.

"You enjoyed your roaming, exciting life?"

"Yes; but I fell in love with one of the girls of the circus. She was an uncommon good girl. I had watched her for a long time. She could ride bare-back, too; could leap through hoops as easily as I could. However she kept so pure and good in such a life, I don't know. She had an old and crippled father dependent on her in Connecticut, and she used to send best part of her earnings to him. I had often tried to speak to her about my feelings, but she always hindered me from coming to the point. She would bolt rapidly, and would have something to attend to, something to get which she had forgotten. So I was put off. Then I noticed that she seemed kinder to another fellow. She had eyes for him, none for me. She didn't scamper away when he was talking; and yet he wasn't as good-looking a fellow as I was, I am sure. But there! women don't marry men for looks; but—well, I don't know. I did my best to win her, but my love was only 'pearls before swine'—not that she was to be spoken of as a pig; but you know the phrase; I think it is found somewhere in the Bible. She half-promised to have me once, and I thought I should go out of my mind with joy. To think that I should have that girl of the long hair, blue eyes, and slender figure for my wife! why, sir, it was wondrous joy. I made a slip once from the horse, I believe through thinking of her. I came off the horse so quickly that I bounced up against the clown and made him take a somersault very suddenly indeed. Of course, he made faces at me for that, and made the people laugh at my expense. Well, to cut my story short——"

"I strolled into the presence of the proprietor of a travelling show."—*p.* 938.

"But you have cut my hair very short, too."

"No, sir; it looks swell. Why, you look younger."

With that bit of flattery I escaped.

The next time I went to have another clip I had the rest of the story. It seems that the equestrian young lady jilted him. Then he became tired of the circus life. He could not bear a word. He became very moody. Fancied his "boss" was a little out of temper with him one day.

"The boss could not make me out," he said. "He used to watch me, and he saw I had not the nerve I formerly had. I knew he thought I had taken to drinking. He hinted that one day. It was enough. He was not pleased with me. Had fancied he wanted to get rid of me, but I was mistaken; still, I all at once jacked up the circus business. I was tired of it, too. It was pleasant enough when you could settle down in a town for a time, but the getting up so early and riding many miles, the camping, putting up the tents, and going round the town with the show, then performing at night, took it out of me. I was restless. Then came tidings of great finds of gold in Australia. I sailed from America, and with my savings went to the gold-fields. I had met a fellow on board bent on the same errand. We 'chummed' together, and went up to the field. There we took out our licences, pegged out claims, rocked our cradle, and sunk our shaft. We didn't get much. Our savings quickly vanished, for it was expensive living at such a place. The whole field was a disappointing one, and was soon forsaken. I found my way to Melbourne, and had to take to the scissors again instead of the pick. Now I am tired again. Oh, sir, it is dreadful to have a restless spirit! I never can settle down long after I have mastered a thing. Must go on to something else. Have taken to boxing, and have even trained numbers of men. Don't care for that now. You see, I am so agile. No fellow can get near me. I should like to give you some boxing lessons, though you are a parson. Though I have earned plenty, I have again and again been short. I spend so much."

"You should get married, and have someone to take care of you and your cash at the same time."

"Oh! I am married now. Have two dear little girls. They give me more joy than anything else has ever done in life. I lavish any amount of money on them. They anchor me to where I am."

"So you transferred your love for the circus-girl easily to someone else."

"No, sir; I was faithful to her right along. I am changeable enough in most things, but I never could love anyone else."

"But if you married your wife, loving another, that was not right."

"It would not have been; but then, as I married the circus-girl herself, that was all right, wasn't it?"

"Certainly; but however came that about? Did you go back to America to find her?"

"No; listen. I was in Melbourne, and a great circus was established there. I went one day, just to see how men were doing things. My word, sir; but you will think it 'drawing the long-bow,' when I tell you that I saw her actually come in on one of the horses. I knew her movement, I knew her face. The powder made her look almost as young as ever. She went through her performance splendidly, but she didn't know that her old Sandy was watching her. How I trembled! Was she married, or a widow, or what? I waited to ask her. You may imagine her surprise when she found me waiting outside for her after the performance. Oh! it was a moment to be thankful for. I did begin to be grateful to God, and to think He had heard the miserable prayers I had sometimes blindly sent up to Him. I had her really before me. Her hand was in mine. Her voice was the same, only a little worn and husky. She had had a hard life with the wretch who robbed me of her. He, after his marriage, chose to live on her earnings, and spent his time drinking. By-and-bye he had D.T.—the 'blue-devils'—and the second attack he died. She was free. She came over to Australia by a strange muddle of circumstances. I met her, and we soon fixed up things, I can tell you. She is the happiest woman in the world when she can keep me contented."

"You have two girls? What a pity one is not a boy!"

"Ah, sir, I had a dear little fellow! He was the bonniest boy I ever saw. He was so clever, too. Why, he didn't need teaching anything. My heart was bound up in him; but—but" (here the poor fellow's voice suddenly betrayed deep emotion) "God took him. His head was always bad. He complained constantly. Then he had fits. Oh! how it agonised me when I went home to see him rolling about in the bed, and the poor wife sitting there trying to soothe him! He died. God took him. I know I have sinned, and deserve to suffer, but I would rather have suffered myself than little Jack should. He went, and a great gap was left in home and heart. I thought it cruel of God to take him, but then you would say, 'It is all for the best.' It is a parson's duty to say that. Anyhow, the boy was as well off as I could make him. I did everything for him, and when he was buried I wanted to be buried too; but time softens it. I can speak of the loss now, even to you. Perhaps it is for the best, for it has made me think more of that other world than I did. Indeed, I try sometimes to picture him in the green fields and golden streets, holding on to some angel hand, and learning gradually something of the wonderful things there must be there; but I don't feel I shall ever be good enough to go to him. I want to go sometimes. Indeed, I should like almost anything for a change. I get tired of this. Cutting head after head, and shaving chin after chin. Lathering, scraping, cutting, and combing, brushing and perfuming, day in and day out, I am tired of it! You would be tired, too."

Of course, I reminded him of certain Christian truths, and further that he had to consider that he was filling a useful function; and that such men as himself were needed to the make-up of society; that he could serve God in the hair-dressing saloon as well as in any other place. He only replied—

"Ah! you be in here hour after hour, and see others go by free in the street, and you would want to be out too."

He only in that expressed what many must feel

who have to remain long hours in such heated rooms. The late period to which they are occupied on Saturday evenings is most trying. Then in some cases they have to attend gentlemen at their homes on Sunday morning. This is felt to be a great hardship.

"The chairs are sometimes so low that your back aches fearfully," said one; "but you must still keep up. A fellow doesn't feel ready for church-going on Sunday morning, but for a long snooze. You may, perhaps, think us an irreligious lot, but we men of the scissors aren't much worse than others. If only we can get to the Good Land at last, it will be all right. No, I don't trust to my goodness as, for I am bad as, and perhaps worse than, others. Suppose God will make some allowance for a fellow's blunders and sins. If He doesn't, you, though a parson, will come off badly as well as myself."

"'He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust,'" I remarked, as the brush flicked off the dust from my shoulder, and I put on my hat.

I walked away, feeling far greater sympathy for the knights of the scissors than ever before. Very few, however, have had such experiences as the one whose life-story I have, from repeated visits, been able to piece together.

THE SMOKE KEY.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," "THE VANISHING OPAL," ETC. ETC.

PART III.

FOR some few years after his wife's death, old Mr. Moran hung on in life at Moran's Cross. With her departed all his joys, and, indeed, almost all the interest he used to take in the property, or anything else. The old man now left everything in the hands of his son Valentine—waking up, indeed, for a little to ordinary interests when Valentine married; but dropping off into apathy again when his only boy died, and only a girl was left in the direct line for Moran's Cross. So far as he could, he had made sure of Moran's Cross going in the male line, and Pierce must inherit before that girl did; but he was troubled, for he did not want Pierce to be heir; and the only grandson had died.

So the old man dropped off, as many an old man does, amid uncertainties and disappointments; and with the future of the property all unknown.

The reader knows the unhappy provision in old Mr. Moran's will—that Pierce should have lodging and bit and sup in Moran's Cross—and that right the young man determined to enforce.

It was in vain that Valentine's wife had shown her dislike to him and of him—that did not move him one bit; in vain that his brother Valentine, who was considerably older than he was, pointed out to him the anomalous position in which he was placed, and offered him a handsome share of the Moran's Cross property if he would go; stir an inch he would not—not even four horses should drag him out of the house where he had a right to be.

And so Pierce Moran took up his abode in an off corner of the old building; and bit and sup were honourably, and indeed liberally, supplied to him by

"He used to hide himself behind a rick of turf."—p. 942.

his brother. And that suited Pierce very well. He did not want Mrs. Valentine's company, even as she did not want his; but somehow, now and again, when Mrs. Valentine was out in a lonely part of the grounds without her husband, she used to come across Pierce when she was least expecting it; and then she was sure to be laid up for a couple of days. And, in truth, Pierce hated her; for some day might she not have a son? and then farewell to his hopes of Moran's Cross. If only he could frighten the life out of her, he would. No one could say that that was murder; it might all be pure accident. Many people died by accident—why should not she? And then there was the daughter, Eileen; who wanted her in the world? True, she was a girl: so much the better for him. Still, Valentine had charged the property with a very fair provision for her, as he had the power to do, and that might as well be saved. These were some of the lighter thoughts which crossed Pierce Moran's mind. He had graver ones too; but, light or grave, he kept them all to himself.

Pierce Moran made few friends; the chief, almost the only one, was Mistress Nigra, Pat Mahoney's wife. The pair of them were dark-skinned (and it might be dark-souled), and that perhaps drew them together. Anyhow, Mrs. Nigra was often up at Mr. Pierce's rooms. Her husband, Pat Mahoney, didn't want her about him, and didn't care where she went; so, as she was never looked for, she might be said never to be missed.

The poor idiot had been disposed of. After having been the plague of Pierce Moran for a great length of time, the latter fired at a real or supposed hare which he believed to have sprung up quite close to Jimmy's legs; and the boy was so crippled with small shot that he could never get as far as Moran's Cross again. The farthest he could now get was to the hole where his little friend in years gone by had lost his life; and there he used to hide himself behind a stack or rick of turf, and peer through its interstices, and then come and walk round and round the hole, and in his own way "keen"—*i.e.*, make mournful sounds for the dead.

But the poor boy was not without a home or friend. Dan Crunaghane made up a little bed for him in an out-house, and employed him in one small way or another about his herbs, and kept him near him: for which he had his own reasons.

That Jimmy had a secret Dan fully believed, and that by patient study he might get possession of it he fully believed also; at any rate, he would try. Jimmy's was, no doubt, a strange language; but didn't people learn strange languages when they went abroad? There was no knowing what patience and perseverance might do.

And Dan Crunaghane succeeded. He was like a man reading cypher, but he read it—all poor Jimmy's pantomimic actions, all his imperfect sounds, they were as clear a story to Dan Crunaghane as if they had been written in a book; and when the gossoon died—as he did die, from a breaking-out in that wounded leg, a long time after the hurt was received—Dan said, as he looked at the body, "The Heavens be praised, Jimmy, but 't is a clane breast ye've made of it in yer own way. If the twelve jurymen and the crowner could have understood yer talk, ye'd have thrown some light upon what bothered the whole country-side. But ye've done yer best, and no more can't be expected of anyone; and 't isn't everyone that'll do that same. 'T was a mighty bright idea, me poor boy, to set you rehearsin' all you had to say wid showing you a piece of an old blue rag; and you'll forgive me now out of the other world, whenever you are there, for startin' you off like a bull with a red rag; but how else was I to come by the truth? And now that I believe I have it, what am I to do with it? Who'd believe me if I told it to them? and if they did believe me, what would come of it? I'll just keep it until I have an opportunity of doing something good with it; and if I don't get an opportunity, why, it must die with me."

There was nothing that Pierce Moran dreaded so much as that young Mrs. Valentine, as she was still called should have a son; but his fears came to an end in a way which gave the whole country-side the greatest subject for gossip which they had had since poor little Phil's mysterious and, up to the present, unaccountable death. Mrs. Valentine, when out walking in a lonely spot, to which she used often to go, saw moving amongst the bushes what frightened her out of her five senses. It was going on all fours like a bear, and its skin was brown: for all the world like one that used to be in Pierce Moran's rooms long ago, when she was last in them; but that was a long time ago now; and the creature had horns like a cow's, and it stood up for a moment on its hind-legs, which was almost proof positive that it must be some kind of horned bear. It made a step or two towards Mrs. Valentine, as if it wanted to get near her and hug her, but she fled; and when she reached Moran's Cross—which she did in an incredibly short space of time—she dropped on the threshold of the hall door, and it was some hours before she could be so brought to herself as to give a coherent account of the matter. No one believed what the poor woman said, especially as Pierce went out with his gun, and a sword, and scoured the whole place. He was the only one who would go—everyone else was frightened out of his wits; but he and the dogs spent two hours in the wood, and nothing could they see.

"I shouldn't be surprised if 't were the death of her," said Pierce to the old butler at Moran's Cross; "and if she's going to die, you may be sure you'll hear the banshee to-night; but we'll wait and hear what the doctor says."

And the doctor's report was very bad. "She'd be dead, Mr. Valentine, only that the breath is in her still; she only wants that to go, to finish her entirely. She's cold all over. She must be kept quiet, without even a sound; her life's hanging on a thread; and if she's disturbed, even so much as by a heavy footfall across the room, I wouldn't answer for the consequences."

Pierce Moran, who had come back from a vain search for the horned bear, lay in wait for the doctor as he was leaving, and got a report on his own account.

"She's almost as cold as death already," said the

medical man; "she'd almost want the kitchen fire inside her to warm her."

"What is it, doctor?"

"A sudden seizure," he answered; which was indeed a safe diagnosis; "but not a sound anywhere near her, mind."

"And suppose she hears the banshee to-night!" said Pierce Moran to himself; "'t would be a bad business if the white woman were to come now. She only comes to say people have got to die; but now, in this case, she'd make someone die."

And the banshee came; the woman in white was seen to flit across the terrace. Poor Mrs. Valentine, of course, did not see her from her bed; but she heard her; and that cry finished what the terrible apparition in the wood began: Mrs. Valentine joined her last one loud cry to the banshee's, and she was gone.

History repeats itself in homes as well as empires, and it did so in the Moran family. Just as old Mr. Moran, Valentine senior, lived on at Moran's Cross for some years after the death of the wife he loved, so was it with Mr. Valentine junior. There he remained, his only companion his daughter Eileen: all he had in the world now; for Pierce Moran kept, as indeed he had ever done since his father's death, in his own rooms, almost his only visitor Mrs. Nigra, who came and went on one pretence or another pretty often.

Valentine Moran was a man of education, and much of his time was spent on Eileen; indeed, all the education the girl had, she had from him. Bad French and bad piano-strumming—the excruciating of humanity's ears—Valentine could not pretend to teach; but I would far rather have what Eileen had than what half the so-called finished girls have—finished, before they are well begun!

Yet I am wrong in saying that there was never anyone else at Moran's Cross; for Mr. Valentine Moran allowed Jack Hartrey, Colonel Hartrey's only boy, to come across when he liked; and Jack did like very often, and Eileen liked him to come; and there were times when Mr. Moran used to say somewhat bitterly to himself, "My land marches with the Colonel's; if only my father hadn't made the will he did, maybe some day the two properties would have become one." But there was Pierce: he stood in the way, and he might marry; perhaps he would, just to spite Eileen, and keep her, or hers, out of the estate at last. As to Jack himself, he got to believe that there was no one in the world like Eileen; and as to Eileen, she got to think the like of Jack. Jack was fast putting the "come-hither" on Eileen's heart, and Eileen, without intending it, was doing the same by his. For you see, good reader, that this is one of those things in the world in which, without intending it, people do a great deal; and then, strange to say, are wonderfully surprised when it is done.

Isn't it a thousand pities that the world will talk—even the little world about Moran's Cross and the bog? that it won't mind its own business? that old Norry, Jack's old nurse, should tell her gossip, under strict seal of secrecy and over some very strong tea, that she discovered in Mr. Jack's room, in the drawer of a desk, a long curl of hair? and "Hould yer whisht about it, my dear, but 't is the very colour of Miss Eileen's at Moran's Cross!" And as old Norry's gossip was a gossip who had a gossip, who also had a gossip, the lock of hair got known at every station, and "pattern," and fair, and in the chapel yard, until it came to the Colonel's ears, who had his own ideas for Jack, and consequently got savage, and immediately began to devise savage deeds suitable to his frame of mind.

Poor Jack Hartrey was packed off within a week of the enlightening of the Colonel's eyes, and was sent travelling with a tutor until it was time for him to enter the army; for in those days there were no stiff examinations to be passed; and when there was interest enough to get a commission, that was all that was required.

Although I have been writing a good long while, I have never yet been able to hit upon the exact kind of ink with which to chronicle aright true lovers' woes. If I try red, it isn't red enough at all to worthily describe their poor eyelids; if I try black, it isn't half black enough to paint their desolation; green I always found work in the direction of jealousy, of which there is so little in real love, that I found it wouldn't work at all; I might, indeed, have put just a pen-full in the ink-bottle, but it would have been practically lost. It must be enough for the reader that in both Eileen's heart and Jack's there was, as they believed, all the misery in the world rolled up into one dark ball, and divided between them two.

But there was no help for it. Jack had to go, and Eileen had to stay behind; and that, without Jack's being allowed a chance of making sundry private arrangements which he should have liked to do. Jack went out into the darkness, and he left Eileen in the dark.

But Eileen was not left loverless on that account. She had one devoted admirer, and indeed, lover, and that not very far off: Mr. Daniel Crunaghane was utterly devoted to her. Many an evening did Dan sit by his fire ruminating on the mysteries of love, and how his heart was made so "quare" that it wanted something outside itself to fill it, and comfort it. I, too, believe it does; it needs in soul-longings the only One who can fill the soul; but on the lower platform also of earthly love, it must go out of itself if it is to look upon verdure, and listen to music, and have its fever fanned by spice-laden breezes which are wafted over sunlit seas from an unknown shore; and Mr. Crunaghane's heart—a real heart—hungered and thirsted for someone to fill it. He was too old now for any of the girls about; and besides, he longed for a refinement that there was not in them. There was but one on earth that could fill his heart: she was one far away above them all, and her humble servant he was ready to be as long as he lived; and that one was Eileen Moran.

Perhaps, good reader, you have not the good or bad luck (which is it?) to be an Irishman; but know this—that Irish people have sometimes imaginations which prosier-hearted people know not; and they sometimes have these in love.

And now Mr. Crunaghane had an imagination; and it was this—could he once feel Eileen Moran's heart beat close to his heart, or could he in any way feel

the beating of her heart, or could she in any way feel the beating of his, she would then leave such an image of herself there, such a presence, that in his lonely cabin he would never be alone. But what opportunity could he have for anything of the kind? He must go on, a lonely old man to the end of his days.

But the "hour that is darkest is the hour before day." What Mr. Crunaghane could not go in search of came to him of itself; there was a knock at his cabin door; and when the old man opened it, who should be there but Eileen Moran herself.

"Ciad mille fialthe," said the old man, wiping a chair for the visitor to sit down upon; "and how is every inch of you, Miss Eileen? Shure 't is a 'big house' [the squire's or landlord's] I 'll call this now you 've condiscendid to sit down in it; and 't is niver another 'll sit on that chair ag'in after you're gone. And what can I be doin' for you, Miss Eileen?" And as the girl hesitated and blushed, old Dan seemed intuitively to guess what she required. "Ah!" said he to himself, with a spasm of his own poor heart, "she's come for a love-charm to keep Mister Jack Hartrey close to her, even though he's far away. The poor thing! 't is hard enough to have heart-hunger—and she so young—och! but 't is bad enough to have it when ye're ould; but the young needs more than the ould, and 't is sorry when their bread's taken from them."

As Eileen stammered, and stuttered, and blushed so much, and was making such a miserably poor hand of letting her wants known, the old man took the lead himself.

"Ah, Miss Eileen, shure and you won't be angry if an ould man guesses a guess; and if I guesses wrong, sure you can put me right. I've heard the talk of the country-side, Miss Eileen, and 't is something for the heart you're wanting: 't is a charm, now. Jist nod yer head, Miss Eileen, if it is."

The girl nodded her head.

"And you want to hold Master Jack fast, wherever he goes and whoever he sees? Nod yer head agin, Miss Eileen, if the guess is good."

Again the girl nodded her head.

"I 'll send it to ye, Miss Eileen, when I've thought about it; or you shall come for it in a week's time, mavourneen; for 't isn't a common thing that 'll do for the likes of you; and even if it would, it isn't a common thing I'd like to offer you." And after some cheering words, poor Dan, though his own heart was sore enough, let his visitor go.

Jack Hartrey had a charm with him, though Eileen didn't know it; for the Colonel got possession of only one-half of that long curling lock, and Jack went off to foreign parts with the other half.

But Mr. Crunaghane had to provide a charm, and how to set about doing so he did not know; perhaps the week's end might have found Eileen Moran in his humble abode again, and he would have been no nearer to his charm than before. "Av 't was a medicine you wanted, mavourneen (worse luck!), 't is plenty of them I could give you, scald or burn, cut or breaking out, or stitches in the side; 't is common stitches I mean, and not heart-stitches—I've bottles and powders for them all; but these charms are quare things; they work and they don't work, and you never know where you have them; and his riverince is always agin them; but I'll lie awake all night thinking of it, and maybe the right thing will come to the fore."

And so Mr. Crunaghane went to bed that night, determined to lie awake until morning, seeing what could be done in this very difficult case. Like many of us who think we lie awake *all* night because we are sleepless during parts of it, Dan Crunaghane declared that he never slept a wink that night. I will not dispute the point with you, Mr. Crunaghane, for I am only concerned with what you saw, and how it influenced you in preparing what turned out to be the most powerful charm you ever made in your life.

"I was sittin' up in my bed," said Mr. Crunaghane, when he related the matter afterwards to his friends, "and, savin' yer presence, scratchin' one side of my head to make me think—for I was a puzzled man—and my nightcap was hitched up on the other side, when what should I see, right through the wall, and not through the window at all, but the bit of the bog where poor little Phil lost his life! There it was, with the hole and the turf-rick behind it, jist about a hundred yards away, as it was on the day that the little lad met with his death; and Phil was in his shroud, or something white, and he began to beckon to me to come to him to the hole. At first I was afeerd to stir; but I was soon there in spite of myself, for something seized me by the hair of my head, and brought me through the air and sets me down jist by the hole. Then I saw that it was Phil indeed; but not smilin' like as he used to be on earth, but very serious-lookin' indeed.

"It wasn't for the likes of me to speak first, and I in the prisince of one of the holy angels, for all I knew, so I waited for a minute or two to see if he'd begin. And sure enough he did. Says he, 'Daniel Crunaghane, take what I give you; 't will be what you're looking for. 'T will do by powers that you don't know anything of what ought to be done—'t will do justice.' With that he stoops down, and with his finger cuts out of the bog at the side of the hole—as nate and clean as if he did it with a pen-knife—a piece of turf about the size of a child's marble, or maybe half as large again. Says he, There's right and might in that; that's what you're looking for, though you don't know it yourself.'

"'T was then I took courage to speak. 'Och, then! yer riverince' (for I didn't know what to call him), 'wid submission, will you give me a whole sod? for sure she's worthy not only of a sod, but of a creel—aye, and of the whole bog itself.'

"'This will do all you want, and all I want too,' said the child, and vanished out of my sight.

"Well, whether I was asleep or not when I saw the child, says I to myself, ''T is a vision I've had; and as sure as my name's Dan Crunaghane, the charm I'm seekin' is a bit of that same turf, and cut from the side of that very hole; and knowin' what I do, or think I do, from poor Jimmy, sure I ought to be the last not to follow any kind of a guidin' that 'll throw light on what now is dark.'"

"Moreover," said Mr. Crunaghane to himself, "didn't the child say that there would be 'right' and 'might' in the bit of turf? It wasn't for the likes of me to ask him—and he coming straight from the other world—to be questioning him about the 'how' and the 'when,' and he not over-talkative at all; but there's 'right' and there's 'might' in that bit of turf, and if they're in it they can come out of it; and, knowin' what I do, 't would be a haythin I'd be if I didn't give them the chance. Asthore galh machree [the beloved white (girl) of my heart], you shall have the bit of turf for a charm, and shure I'll lave it to those who sent it, to work it."

That was Mr. Crunaghane's account of the matter which he gave in after-times, when there was a general clearing up of mysteries. All we are concerned with now is that the following day our friend, having provided himself with a very sharp penknife, went to the bog and cut out from the side of that particular hole just such a little bit of turf as we have already described. It seemed presumptuous to him to think it would come out clean as it did with little Phil's finger (for surely it was he); so to be on the safe side Dan stropped up the penknife like a razor, and secured the piece all right. But he ventured on an improvement, which he felt could in no wise hinder the "might" and the "right" which was included in the bit of turf: he pressed it very close and subjected it to great heat, so that it should not crumble in any way, and would be more presentable, too. Moreover, this would save it from injury, if, in the changes and chances of this mortal life, and the future all unknown, it should get rough usage of any kind.

"'Lay your hand upon my heart,' the old man went on."—*p.* 946.

In due course Eileen Moran came to Mr. Crunaghane for the promised charm. The girl half believed in it, and she half did not; but anything that had a chance of keeping Jack's heart for her, and for her alone, was worth having; and wasn't Mr. Crunaghane famous for all the matches that had come about through his charms?

So now she came, at the week's end—the charm could do her no harm, if it did her no good—and Mr. Crunaghane was ready for her. The choicest thing that Dan Crunaghane possessed was a small silver snuff-box that had belonged to his mother. This he had diligently polished, and into it he put the piece of turf. 'T was the best he had, and if he died he didn't want it to get into common hands. She was the worthiest to possess it, and let her have it now.

"You've come for it, Miss Eileen," said the old man, "and here it is."

"And will it do what I want?" asked the girl.

"Maybe 't will do more than you think."

"And how am I to use it?"

"'T is more than I can tell you; when the time comes that you're to use it, maybe 't will come into yer mind how to use it; but there's 'right' and 'might' in it, that I know!" And that satisfied the girl, for she felt that it was quite "right" that she should have Jack, and anything in the way of "might" that could secure that, was the very thing she wanted.

"Keep it, Miss Eileen, always in yer pocket, or in some safe place always near by, for you don't know the day nor the hour, nor do I, when 't will be needed, and when 't will work; and there it is, and my blessing with it."

There was that about the old man that seemed in some strange way to touch the girl's heart as he said these words, and, looking earnestly at him, she said, "And now, Mr. Crunaghane, that you've done your best for me, tell me if there isn't something that I can do for you."

The old man's face changed so much that the young girl was almost alarmed.

"There is," said he, after a long pause; "but I'd be too bould in asking it."

"I'll give you anything I have," said the girl.

"I don't want you to give me anything; 't is something I'd like you to do *for* me, to do *to* me, that would do me good. I've given you a charm, Miss Eileen, that, though I'm only an ignorant man, except in the matter of herbs and the like, I'm sure will work some day and in some way; now, I want you to give me the like, and leave the working—you have no need to be at trouble about that. I won't ask you to promise until you hear what it is. Now listen, Miss Eileen, with both your ears. Lay your hand upon my heart," the old man went on, "and feel its beating, and don't speak, and then lay my hand on your heart, and don't speak. Keep it there for a minute by this old watch, and keep sayin' to yerself, 'I'm in that old man's heart,' and I'll say, 'I'm in Miss Eileen's heart'; and then I'll feel that you'll be plainer before me when I think of you, and maybe you won't mind having me plainer before you as a friend. I'm lonely here at times, Miss Eileen, and if once I felt the beatings of your heart, I'd think then I had you plain before my eyes."

From that day out Mr. Daniel Crunaghane never felt that he was quite alone. Eileen Moran took a charm away with her, but she also left one behind her; and is there any charm which is more potent than that which brings a living personality into a lonely heart?

* * * * * *

Valentine junior followed almost exactly in the path of his father. He lived on a while at Moran's Cross after his wife's death; but though death did not come to him at once, yet it practically laid its hand upon his shoulder when his wife died. It was plain that he was no longer the same man after that sad event, and, moreover, that he would never be so again; but no one was expecting his death at the immediate time when it came. Mr. Valentine was, as people thought, sleeping over-long one morning, but he was in his last sleep—the sleep from which on earth there is no waking. Mr. Valentine was dead. True, no one had heard the banshee—perhaps Mr. Valentine had died too unexpectedly, and had given her the slip; but it was universally believed that she had cried, though folk were too fast asleep to hear her.

And now Pierce Moran was safe in the possession of Moran's Cross. No living power could take it from him, and henceforth many cogitations took possession of his mind. He knew that his brother had put by a sum of money for his daughter, he knew that it was invested in bonds, and he knew where the bonds were kept; and he had long planned what he would do in the way of making Moran's Cross more profitable when it came to him; and without raising money on the property, these bonds, if they were turned into cash, would do all that was required. Mr. Valentine had always intended to make a will, but he was a dilatory man at all times and in all things, and so the bonds were at the mercy of his brother Pierce. He showed his mercy by sweeping the safe clear and clean.

Those bonds were soon turned into cash, and the dark woman of the forge departed one dark night from Moran's Cross with a part of the proceeds. She was paid up at her own price for two secrets she told Pierce Moran—neither of which did he deem it expedient that the public should know—and never again did she appear at the forge; and as day after day passed, and she did not put in an appearance, the blacksmith hoped she never would darken his door again. He had his wish; she had the money, and Pierce Moran had the two secrets.

But these secrets made him very uncomfortable, and he determined to leave Moran's Cross for a while, and to take with him and get rid of his niece, who was practically a pauper. To the girl's great surprise, he announced to her one night that the next morning they were both off to London; and, without giving any time for saying good-bye to anyone, they both left at daylight the following morning. It took time in those days to get to London, but there they arrived at last. It was little that Pierce Moran did in the way of showing his niece the sights: he was bent on something else. And in that he succeeded. Pierce Moran's idea was to put Eileen into some place where she could earn her own bread, and become lost, as it were, in the great crowd; and then in due season he would return to Moran's Cross, and hear no more of her.

By means of an advertisement which he answered, he got Eileen a place as humble companion, in the family of Skunkfield, to Miss Martha, the only child. Irish pride might have rebelled, but, at any rate, she would be quit of her uncle, of whom she recently began to feel an indefinable extra dread.

Many were poor Eileen's mortifications, but she meekly swallowed them all; and all the while her heart kept pondering where Jack could be, and what little benefit she had had as yet from Mr. Crunaghane's charm. Why had not Jack ever written to her? Where was he? She was true as steel to him; what was he to her?

"You will please sit with your back to the horses, Miss Moran," said Miss Skunkfield (aged eighteen); and so they drove day by day—Miss Skunkfield in solitary grandeur, with her mean common face to the horses, and Eileen Moran, with her beautiful one, facing the other way.

And so they drove round and round the park; and even when they left the crowd, a certain horseman used always to keep riding *behind* the Skunkfield equipage, looking at the girl *with her back to the horses.* He was a handsome young man, and by his moustache (not worn commonly in those days) was no doubt a cavalry officer. Oh, if Miss Martha Skunkfield, the great ironmonger's daughter, had only known that she was sitting with her back to a dashing young cavalry officer who was always looking at the girl with her back to the horses, wouldn't she have made her change places with her in a jiffy! But you see, Miss Martha, you didn't know; and so poor Eileen escaped what otherwise you would have given her fast enough.

Out on a road in the country went the Skunkfield carriage, and when it had gone a few miles the horses bolted, and Miss Martha shrieked. The coachman seemed powerless; and who can tell what might have happened had not a horseman suddenly shot past the Skunkfield carriage, and, heading the horses, seized the broken reins and stopped them in a moment? Thanks! Skunkfield blushes! Moran pallor!—it is Jack Hartrey.

Jack saw—Eileen saw. Now he could get close enough to make sure, 't was she! Didn't he know the shape of her head and neck and mouth, in spite of the green spectacles which Martha made her wear? He had suspected, and day by day followed to make sure; and now that the spectacles were off, didn't Eileen, too, in spite of his moustache and filled-out face, know Jack? Jack Hartrey put his finger straight up across his lips. Miss Skunkfield warmly invited her rescuer to her house in the Regent's Park —"pa and ma [and she!] would be delighted to see him." (No doubt, Martha—moustaches were rare in those days.)

All the way home Martha Skunkfield was ruminating how to get Eileen out of the way. The moustache would surely come; she had, she knew, £100,000 besides expectations to offer, but Eileen had a beautiful face; and men, especially men with moustaches (oh! pa and ma said they were generally wicked, but this one she felt was not—don't we always make our own wish the exception?), were too often caught just by a pretty face.

But Miss Skunkfield was saved a heap of trouble, for when she came home after that eventful drive, there was a note waiting for her humble companion. It was from her uncle Pierce, saying that he had been detained in London and was ill, and wanted someone to nurse him, and she must come to him directly; and that night saw her installed as nurse to the man she dreaded more than anyone on earth.

The illness ran on for a fortnight, and the girl tended him day and night, and at the end of it the sick man was paralysed from the waist downwards. "He will recover eventually," said the doctor, "but not for months."

Weeks passed on—weary weeks—and how was it that Jack had never found her out? Ah! poor Jack was having a time of it. In hope of being able to find out where Eileen had gone, he had been dosed with "pa" and "ma" and Martha Skunkfield, and was believed to be on the eve of a proposal, when Martha, in a melting moment, let out what had become of her humble companion—"Half-servant, you know," said Martha; and Jack could have eaten her raw on the spot.

Poor Jack! he had toiled long and caught nothing, but now the right moment had come, and he was about to get a wondrous haul indeed.

The sick man was apparently dozing on the sofa-bed on which he lay, and poor Eileen was sitting at the table, with the candles burning before her and her work-box open, and she was thinking mournfully of Jack; and then she took the silver box out of her pocket, where it ever was, and took out Dan Crunaghane's charm and began to examine it, and said, "If you can do anything for me, now is the time." So saying, she stuck the needle with which she was working into the little round black thing, and held it up to the light to see if she could make anything out of it, and how it could help her, when, putting it a little too near the candle, the bit of turf took fire, and immediately the aroma of it spread over the whole room. In a moment it brought to Eileen's mind Moran's Cross and all belonging to it, and, *penetrating the brain of the slumbering man, it did the same to him.* The mighty law of association was at work—the smoke key unlocked the memory, the brain, the lips. "'T was long and long ago," he said; "and why I pushed him into the hole and kept him down with my stick on his shoulder was because he was made more of than I was. None know but myself how the blue mark came there, and I thought no one knew it but my mother, and she saw it from a distance, and would have hanged me at last if I had not bought her off." Then the sick man got excited, and fancied the police had apprehended him; and he writhed and wriggled, but, owing to the paralysis of his legs could not get off the bed. The turf kept burning, for the girl, in her horror, had no thought of putting it out; and as the aroma strengthened, so the more the sick man talked. "And I murdered Mrs. Valentine too. I frightened her to death—I was the beast and the banshee too—and I've robbed her child's fortune. There! as I'm to be hanged, you know it all."

The brain-fever returned on the unhappy man, and he was never coherent again. The key to the inmost

secrets of his memory and conscience had been found; it was turned in the door, and the dark things therein crawled forth to light.

Jack Hartrey had found out Eileen's abode at this juncture. He had pledged his honour to his father that he would not write to her, but he had always intended to marry no one but her; and now he would at least look after her until the Colonel could be apprised of all these wonderful events.

As soon as news arrived at Moran's Cross of what had occurred, Dan Crunaghane came to the fore.

"'T is no shame," said he to the Colonel, "for Mr. Jack to be marrying into a family with a murder in it, for the black scoundrel was not a Moran at all. Read that!" and he produced the tinder-box with a dirty piece of paper, signed by old Bridget Mahoney; and this is what was on it: "'T is little Phil that was Mrs. Moran's son, and Black Pierce belonged to my poor boy's wife, though I don't believe he's my boy's son at all. She threatened my life if I didn't change them, and I wish I had died afore 't was done."

Moreover, Dan produced the results of his studies of the idiot while he lived with him, from which it appeared that the poor boy must have witnessed the scene from behind a turf-stack, but could not make clear to everyone all he knew.

Poor Patrick Mahoney was taken by Dan Crunaghane to live with him for the rest of his days. They never told him that little Phil was not his own son, and he worked away at the forge Dan put up for him, sometimes striking out showers of sparks; for, as he thought, little Phil and the idiot to catch; and often, and more often, leaning on the end of his sledge, immersed in thought.

The Colonel agreed to the marriage of Jack with the heiress of Moran's Cross; the two properties were joined; and Dan Crunaghane, when he died, left a goodly something that was in the bank to his credit to Eileen. "'T will do her good when I'm gone," said Mr. Crunaghane; "but, whatever it does for my darlint, 't will never bate

"'THE SMOKE KEY.'"

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

WHY SHOULD WE GO TO CHURCH?

A LADY said in the hearing of the writer the other day—"I don't go to church now, because in no church in my neighbourhood can I get any comfort." This lady seems to have thought that the only reason for going to church was in order to get something. Another and a better reason for going would be to give something and to do something. We are distinctly told not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. We should go to church in order to obey this command, and to do an act of worship that is pleasing to God. This cultivates our religious feelings and prepares us for the duties of the week. Then we give something to our fellow-man by going. Our example benefits him, and his devotion is warmed by ours. A number of sticks burn better together than one alone. So long as we hold the what-can-I-get theory of church-going, we shall get little by going to church. We shall merely sit in the seat of the scornful, and criticise the parson and the choir.

"DON'T WORRY!"

This was the advice of a very old man when asked his secret of attaining to a long life. "Don't worry about what you can't help," he said; "for it will do no good. Don't worry about what you can help, but go to work and help it." Cold philosophy, however, will never keep us from worrying. Rather we should bring our burden to the living, loving Saviour who invites us to come to Him. Let us cast our anxiety on Him, who cares for us, and He will forgive the past which we cannot help, and strengthen us to help what we can help in the present.

HABITUAL UNSELFISHNESS.

In a graphic account of the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava in the *Nineteenth Century*, one of the Six Hundred writes about several acts of heroic unselfishness which he witnessed. A bullet had passed through one of the writer's knees, and another had wounded his shin, so that when he tried to get back from the scene of the struggle he found that he could scarcely limp. A soldier of another regiment, seeing his difficulty, said to him—"'Get on my back, chum.' I did so, and then found that he had been shot through the back of the head. When I told him of this, his only answer was, 'Oh, never mind that; it's not much, I don't think.' But it was that much that he died of the wound a few days later; and here he was, a doomed man himself, making light of a mortal wound, and carrying a chance comrade of another regiment on his back. I can write this, but I could not tell it in speech, because I know I should play the woman." The writer then goes on to tell of another soldier who, though wounded himself, walked fifty miles in order that his wounded comrades might have more room in the carts provided for them. Probably acts of unselfishness like these

occur upon every battle-field, but we may be sure they are not done by those who habitually lead selfish lives. Brave and noble deeds are not done on conspicuous occasions without preparation. They are only the flower, so to speak, of seed that has been sown long before. If we are habitually unselfish in reference to the small acts of everyday life, we shall be unselfish in large matters at critical moments, but not otherwise.

ABSOLUTE SILENCE.

Why is it that some teachers in Sunday or week-day schools maintain more discipline and exercise greater influence than others? The possession of learning does not do it, nor the infliction of punishment, and neither do shouting nor nagging. One teacher comes into a school-room and calls out: "Silence!—Perfect silence!—I must have silence!" and his exertions only succeed in giving additional impetus to the conversational powers of his hearers. Another quietly walks to his table and touches a bell. In an instant there is order and attention. The last-mentioned teacher has force of character and the first has not. There may be in the last something of that animal magnetism which is said to control wild animals and vicious horses; but the chief reason of his success in keeping order is that he understands children and they him. Unlike the bad disciplinarian, he is not always telling his scholars that he means what he says, but they feel that he does. Several elements go to the production of what is called personal influence, but the principal ingredient is, we suspect, strength of will. Calm force we all respect as much as we despise blustering impotency. A steady eye, an energetic manner, distinct utterance, a good presence, well-cut clothes—these all help to maintain discipline, but nothing can dispense with tact and the possession of moral worth. The almost magical influence which General Gordon exercised is said to have been owing to his transparent sincerity. Children, soldiers, and all who have to be disciplined, feel when a man is in earnest. Trust children, and treat them as at least half-reasoning beings. Never lose control over yourself, and do not be above taking a hint from the London police, who keep order chiefly by civility.

> "O'er wayward children wouldst thou hold firm rule,
> And sun thee in the light of happy faces?
> Love, Hope, and Patience—these must be thy graces,
> But in thine own heart let them first keep school."

REMINISCENCES OF MR. SPURGEON.

Here are two of the most interesting of the many reminiscences that have been recorded of the great preacher. It was his custom to have a photograph of his twin sons taken once a year. Beginning with early infancy, these were continued until twenty-one pictures, included in one frame, hung on his dining-room wall. To a friend who was looking at them, Mr. Spurgeon remarked, "If we could only grow in grace like that!" On another occasion the same friend was shown through his gardens, when Mr. Spurgeon related that he had had gardeners who, although professors of Christian perfection, had neglected their work, especially in the vinery. "You see, these men were so holy that they did not get here till eight in the morning when they should have been here at six," remarked Mr. Spurgeon; "and therefore I discharged them, and took on sinners in their place."

THE DESIRE OF MANY PROPHETS.

It is touching to read how those "wise old spirits" who preserved natural religion in the midst of heathen darkness used to yearn after knowledge which the least in the Kingdom of Christ may now possess, and which we all value too little. Plato quotes the following noble sentence from a conversation with Socrates on the evening of his death: "In regard to the facts of a future life, a man must either learn or find out their nature, or, if he cannot do that, take, at any rate, the best and least assailable of human words, and, borne on this as on a raft, perform in peril the voyage of life, unless he should be able to accomplish the journey with less risk and danger on a surer vessel—some word divine." Was not that "word divine" here wished for "made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel"?

THE SEASON FOR READING.

As October closes in upon us and we pass once more from the lingering light of summer and autumn to shorter days and darker evenings, we realise that the season for reading has again come upon us. And with this thought comes also the search for something new. Here, then, is a character-study of the great explorer, under the title of "The Career of Columbus," by Mr. C. I. Elton, Q.C., published by Messrs. Cassell. This is the year in which the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's first voyage has been celebrated, and there is an interest added by this fact to the story of the sturdy old sailor's life. Readers who have to travel by sea may well be thankful, as they read Mr. Elton's pages, for the God-given skill which has so largely reduced the tedium and danger for those "who go down to the sea in ships" in these four hundred years. But the conditions under which "the Admiral" made his voyages are only indicated by casual allusions in this book, which strives much more to show us the man and his aims. It is a work to make one think, and a book which does that is always worth reading. And, more particularly, it makes us think of the great navigator and the influences which went to build up the character which Mr. Elton has been at such pains to put before us.—Curiously enough, the third volume of "Cassell's Storehouse of General Information," which is just published, also deals, among hundreds of other subjects, with that of the great navigator—though necessarily in brief. It is a severe test for a work of this kind when a reader turns to its treatment of a given subject from the fuller scope of a volume specially devoted to it; but, in this case, the work stands the test. The third volume carries on this popular encyclopædia from "Castro" to "Deodar," with the same comprehensiveness and conciseness which were characteristic of the former two volumes. "The Storehouse," indeed, answers to its title as a handy work of reference for busy readers and speakers.—Certain rearrangements of the exhibits at the British Museum have necessitated the issue of a new edition of the Rev. J. G. Kitchin's "The Bible Student in the British Museum" (Cassell), and all who would learn the sidelights which are thrown by our national collections on the sacred history should pay a visit to Bloomsbury, armed with a copy of this handy guide.—From Messrs. Isbister we have received a volume of "Speeches and Addresses" by the late Archbishop Magee, of York, the greater number of which were delivered in the House of Lords. Many who were thrilled by the eloquence of the gifted prelate will be glad to have these addresses gathered in permanent form by the loving hands of his son. The subjects dealt with are many and widely varied, and in some cases are such as have become, or were at one time, matters of controversy among Christians. But so many of these controversies are closed, or have entered upon new and different phases, and the speaker's tone was throughout so high, and so obviously sincere, that we have no fear that his words will rekindle dead fire. We prefer to look upon them as the records of a God-given talent, well and nobly used in loving service of the Master.—"A conviction that all translations which have been made of St. Paul's works, from the Latin Vulgate downwards, are lamentably inadequate, and, indeed, positively misleading, ... and that, consequently, the teachings of the Apostle are sadly misunderstood," led Mr. Ralph Sadler to study the writings in the original, and to attempt the translations contained in a bulky volume, entitled "The Gospel of Paul the Apostle," which is published by Messrs. J. Nisbet and Co. We have not space to do more than draw the attention of students to this well-meant effort. How far it was necessary, or has proved successful, they must decide for themselves.

JUDGING OTHERS.

Never pronounce anyone to be a wilful niggard until you have seen the contents of his purse. The distribution should be in accordance with the receipts. This is what our Lord meant when He spoke of the generosity of the widow who threw into the treasury two mites. We ourselves knew an army doctor who, because he drew good pay and was very saving, was considerably chaffed by his brother officers. One day he quietly remarked to one who hinted that it was shabby not to contribute more towards getting up some entertainment—"If you had an old father and mother in Ireland to support, perhaps you would not be so free with your coin."

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

The other day we went into Westminster Abbey during the scantily attended morning service, feeling very sad owing to a family bereavement. The sweet tones of the boys' voices sounding through the

"fretted aisles" relieved our melancholy, but not so much as did the beautiful windows and stonework of the building that spoke eloquently of the patience that had been expended upon them. Wordsworth's words came into mind, "They dream not of a perishable home who thus could build"; and it soothed us to think of that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, into which our loved one had gone. After the service we wandered into the "Poets' Corner." Here we had an illustration of the unfitness of things. Underneath the monument of Shakespeare, and beside the one that recorded the "gentle manners" of the poet Gay, was a group of Americans whose manners did not appear to be "gentle," for in such a place they talked loudly of cookery. They discussed the cooking at the hotel where they were staying, and that on board the ship that had brought them over. This led on to a discussion about sea-sickness and the number of meals it had caused them to miss. At last they moved away, their "grovelling thought" not being in the least removed by the associations of the Abbey. They remarked with a familiar jerk of the head towards the effigy of the perhaps greatest poet —"There is Shakespeare!" and felt satisfied that they had "done" the "Poets' Corner."

A CORDIAL FOR LOW SPIRITS.

For once that low spirits are caused by doing what is right and denying ourselves, they are caused nine times by laziness, wrong-doing, and self-indulgence. Obedience to duty is at first very irksome, but afterwards it becomes a habit requiring no self-denial, but on the contrary producing the purest pleasure. This is what Paley meant when he said—"No man's spirits were ever hurt by doing his duty: on the contrary, one good action, one temptation resisted and overcome, one sacrifice of desire or interest, purely for conscience' sake, will prove a cordial for weak and low spirits, far beyond what either indulgence, or diversion, or company can do for them."

A CEASELESS ROUND OF INTERESTS.

When Sheridan's granddaughter, the "Queen of Beauty," who married Lord Seymour, was left a widow and had lost her only son, she lived a very dull life at her place in the country. Still, the old Sheridan humour would flash up now and again. "She delighted in the smaller tyrannies," as one who knew her pleasantly describes it, and prescribed to those who accompanied her to feed her pets, the duty of holding shovels of corn. This she turned into a solemnly grotesque office, and when all were laughing would wave her hand tragically, and say to her friends: "My only amusement!" How unlike all this is the ceaseless round of interests we know as claiming the attention of an old lady friend. She certainly does not take Lady Seymour's delight "in the smaller tyrannies." Even the insects that injure her beloved flowers are not tyrannised over, but put to death as quickly and painlessly as possible. The old lady is never lonely when with her flowers. They speak to her of God's goodness. By them He sends messages of love and comfort. Flowers never cease to interest, because they continually want something done for them; and we all like to be wanted by some person or something—even by a flower

SOME MORE NEW BOOKS

Most readers of THE QUIVER are familiar with the verses of our old contributor, Mr. W. A. Gibbs. They will be glad to hear of a more extensive work from his pen than would be suitable for our own pages. Under the title of "The Idylls of the Queen," and a "Prelude" to the same work, Messrs Sampson Low and Co. have published two volumes of dainty verse from our friend's pen, to which we are pleased to direct the attention of our readers. "The English Year-Book of Y.M.C.A.'s for 1892" (Exeter Hall) contains a well-arranged mass of facts and figures regarding these valuable organisations all the world over, and leaves but one thought in the mind of the

"A ceaseless round of interests."

reader—may God speed the work.—Messrs. Lang, Neil and Co. are issuing some prettily bound little booklets called "The Allegory Series," the first two of which are before us. They would be very useful for gift and remembrance books, but it is a pity the illustrations are not a little stronger.—From the same firm we have received a very useful and helpful little work on the figurative language of Scripture, under the title of "Strange Figures," by the Rev. James Neil, M.A.—Mr. Elliot Stock has just issued two volumes, each containing four sermons. The first is "Sermons from Browning," by the Rev. F. Ealand, in which the preacher has cleverly interwoven lessons and quotations from the works of the great poet with sound Gospel teaching. The second is "The Ten Virgins," by the Rev. M. B. Moorhouse, who treats the well-known theme earnestly and faithfully.—The managers of the National Temperance Publication Depôt send us a number of their telling little leaflets, among which not the least useful are the "Portrait Envelope Series" of "Temperance Testimonies." And with them they send us "Alone and not Alone," a capital story for boys, by Mrs. Zillah Dugdale, which should be added to every Band of Hope library.—Last, but not least, or least useful, we have received from Mr. John Murray a beautifully illustrated book on "Garden Design," by Mr. W. Robinson, F.L.S., which forms a most eloquent protest against clipping and otherwise maltreating trees, with the mistaken idea of making them "harmonise" with the work of architects. We heartily second his protest.

ALL CAN BE USEFUL.

It is sometimes cynically remarked that no one is necessary, and that when we cease to exist we never shall be missed. But though God does not need the aid of any of us, He is good enough to allow us to be helpers together with Him in carrying on the affairs of that little corner of the universe which we call the world. It is our bounden duty to do something to make it a little better and happier than we found it. Let the weakest—let the humblest remember that in his daily course he can, if he will, shed around him almost a heaven.

BIBLICAL ADULTERATION.

St. Paul speaks of "handling the Word of God deceitfully," using a word which means literally to adulterate, as some hucksters do their goods. This may be done in many ways. A text may be quoted apart from the context. You may take no account of time, place, and circumstances, and so pervert the meaning of a passage of Scripture. Anything may be proved by putting together fragmentary texts. An atheist might say that the Bible teaches "there is no God," if he omitted the words that precede these—"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

"THE QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from July 27th, 1892, up to and including August 24th, 1892. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver*" *Waifs Fund:* W. M. S., Sheffield, 5s.; J. C. F., Stockton-on-Tees, 2s.; A Glasgow Mother (28th donation), 1s.; J. J. E. (58th donation), 5s.

For "*The Quiver*" *Heroes Fund:* A. W., 10s.

For *The Children's Country Holiday Fund:* N. L. E., 10s.; M. M., Birkdale, 5s.

For *The Convalescent Home Fund of the East London Hospital:* R. H. P., Manchester, £1; Amicus, Lymington, 5s.; Miss Bodkin, £2 2s.; A. Compton, Morthoe, £1: and £5 from E. B., which was sent direct to the Secretary.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help external movements referred to in the pages of this magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 880.

121. The great boldness which was given to the Apostles. (Acts iv. 13.)

122. Jesus gave to Judas the sop which He had dipped in His own dish. (St. John xiii. 26.)

123. St. Paul tells us he received his information by direct revelation from God. (1 Cor. xi. 23; Gal. i. 11, 12.)

124. The third cup of wine at the Paschal feast, which was drunk just before the grace after the meal. (1 Cor. x. 16.)

125. Damascus, a very ancient city, having a large Jewish population, and situate about six days' journey from Jerusalem (130 miles). (Gen. xiv. 15; Acts ix. 3.)

126. There still is a street in Damascus called by that name, leading from the Western Gate, and extending in a straight line about three miles. (Acts ix. 11.)

127. St. Paul tells us he saw our Lord Jesus Christ as well as heard His voice. (Acts xxii. 7, 8, 10; 1 Cor. ix. 1.)

128. Ananias, who was sent by God to open the eyes of St. Paul and baptise him. (Acts ix. 13.)

129. He healed the man sick of the palsy at Lydda, and restored Dorcas to life at Joppa. (Acts ix. 34, 40, 41.)

130. It is an ancient seaport now known as Jaffa—the nearest harbour to Jerusalem, and thus used in the time of David and Solomon as the landing-place of cedar-wood, etc., for building the Temple. (2 Chron. ii. 16; Acts ix. 36.)

131. She spent much of her time in making garments for the poor, and thus has given her name to the meetings now held for carrying on the same good work. (Acts ix. 36, 39.)

132. In miracle at Lydda St. Peter used the words "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," and before the miracle at Joppa we are told "he kneeled down and prayed," thus seeking for power. (Acts ix. 34, 40.)